

IMP thinking and IMM: Co-creating value for business marketing

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ABSTRACT

We have extensive knowledge about the thematic development of the business-to-business marketing research. Much less is known, however, how major research contributions are created and disseminated, in brief, how the academic value is constructed between human and institutional actors. We address this issue by examining the relationship between IMM (Industrial Marketing Management journal) and the IMP (Industrial Marketing and Purchasing) research community in the creation of B2B marketing theory from the early 1990s to present. We argue that the relationship between the IMP community and IMM, led by Peter LaPlaca over the past 23 years, offers an exceptional living laboratory for studying academic value creation in the B2B domain. Based on documents and citation data from the late 1980s to 2016 we will show how the parties created new academic knowledge and value for each other through intensive interaction and collaborative activities. In conclusion, we discuss the forms of coordination between IMM and IMP and provide an outlook for the future of this unique relationship.

1. Introduction

Business-to-business marketing (B2B) has become a recognized subfield within the scientific study of marketing. Remarkable progress has been made since the early 1970s when scholars like Robinson, Faris, and Wind (1967), Hill, Alexander, and Cross (1975), Sheth (1973), and Webster and Wind (1972) published seminal frameworks identifying key aspects of organizational buying behavior and industrial marketing. The evolution of the key themes and most influential authors in B2B marketing has been examined in several studies organized around the contributions made to this field by specific journals: *Industrial Marketing Management* (LaPlaca, 1997), *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing* (Johnston and Lewin, 1997), *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing* (e.g. Dant and Lapuka, 2008; LaPlaca, 2008; Lichtenthal, Mummalaneni, and Wilson, 2008; Mummalaneni and Lichtenthal, 2015; Young, Wilkinson, and Smith, 2015).

In addition to these journal-specific reviews, a number of scholars have studied the evolution of business marketing research in a more general fashion. Backhaus, Mell, and Sabel (2007) provide a comparative review of the major B2B marketing textbooks, LaPlaca and Katrichis (2009) examine the relative presence of B2B research in the marketing literature, and Backhaus, Lügger, and Koch (2011) offer an extensive analysis of structure and evolution of B2B marketing revealing key trends, influential researchers, and their main themes. Focusing on the theoretical content of scholarship, Möller (2013) provides

a “theory map” laying out the key differences between various research approaches addressing business relationships and networks, while Hadjikhani and LaPlaca (2013) chart the long-term evolution of B2B marketing theory from the early 1900s to the present, emphasizing the transition from studies founded in economics to those built on the behavioral sciences.

These studies have provided invaluable information for anyone interested in business marketing research, its themes, methodological orientations, researchers and publication outlets. Though imposing and even beautiful—to the mind of a scholar—this literature is relatively silent about how these research contributions are created and disseminated, how various human and institutional actors collaborate to construct academic value. This is a major shortcoming, since a better understanding of academic value creation could improve the effectiveness of our research efforts in the field.

We address this issue by examining the relationship between the journal, *Industrial Marketing Management* (IMM), and the *Industrial Marketing and Purchasing* (IMP) research community in the creation of B2B marketing theory from the early 1990s to the present—during the period of Peter LaPlaca's editorship. Three factors support this focus and timeframe.

First, the extant reviews indicate a significant shift in the late 1980s and early 1990s from studies addressing organizational buying behavior, segmentation, and sales management to studies focusing on business relationships (Dant and Lapuka, 2008; LaPlaca, 2008). The

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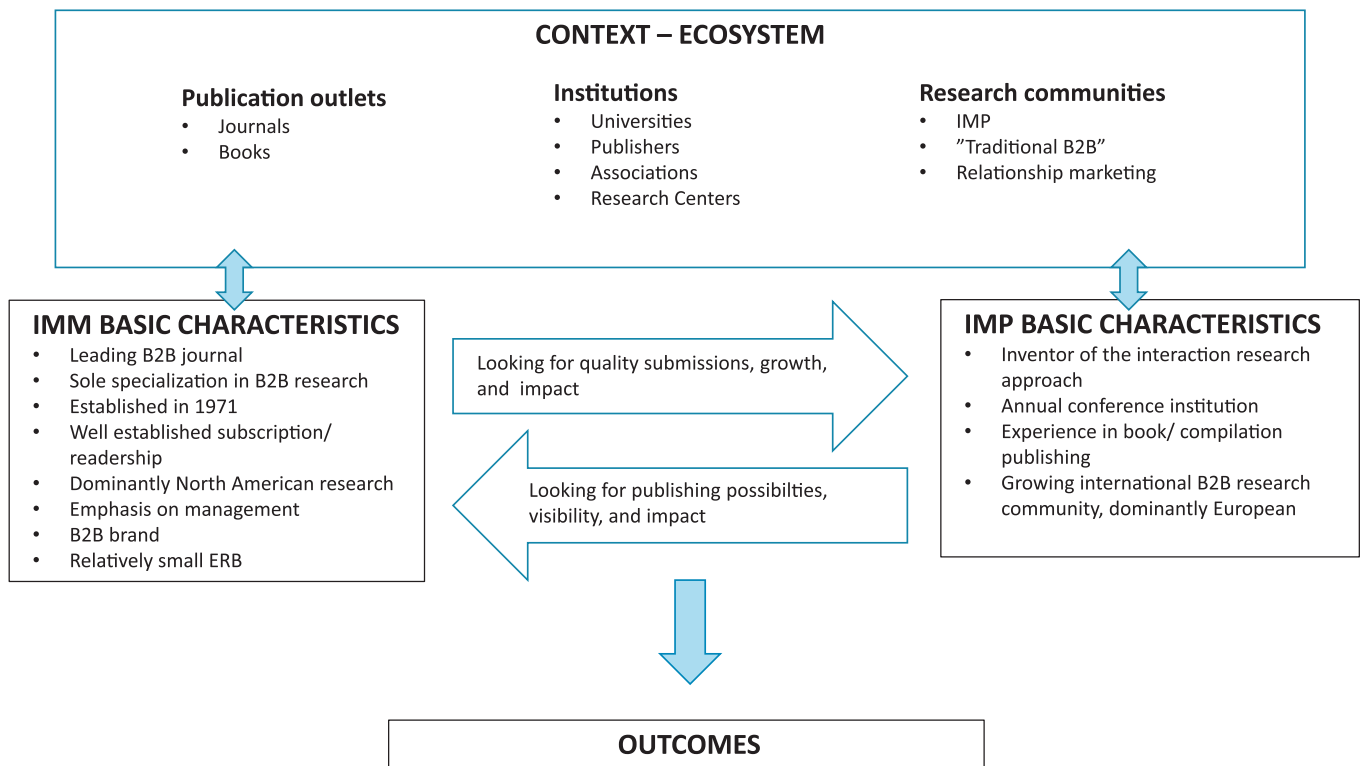


Fig. 1. IMM and IMP within the academic ecosystem of B2B – The status at early 1990s.

transition was significantly influenced by scholars of the IMP Group, who applied the interaction approach to understand the dynamics of mutually rewarding exchange relationships (Håkansson, 1982; Turnbull, Ford, and Cunningham, 1996). The interaction approach was followed by the industrial network approach, introduced by IMP researchers beginning in the early 1990s (e.g. Anderson, Håkansson, and Johanson, 1994; Håkansson and Snehota, 1989; for a bibliographic overview see Engwall, Pahlberg, and Persson, 2016). The network approach asserted that actor behavior or dyadic business relationships cannot be fully understood without taking into account the actors' positions and history in a wider network of relationships (Håkansson and Snehota, 1995). Moreover, the environment was not regarded as transparent; actors perceive and construct its structure and meanings and learn about them through enactment (Henneberg, Mouzas, and Naudé, 2006). Both the interaction approach and the network approach represent significant theoretical innovations in business marketing research. The network approach in particular signifies a major departure from mainstream marketing research (for a discussion of its ontological and epistemological assumptions see Möller, 2013). Studying how IMP researchers made their way to IMM provides a concrete example demonstrating how a new paradigm is communicated and brought to the awareness of the community of B2B scholarship.

Second, the dramatic theoretical innovations made in the introduction of the network approach suggest that it can be treated as an exemplary case revealing the creation and dissemination of radically new knowledge in business marketing. The network approach is particularly interesting since we know how difficult it is to publish theories that challenge the dominant research paradigm. These aspects support the selection of the IMP network research for this study, and dictate the relevant time frame.

Thirdly, the Industrial Marketing Management was chosen for this study because of its importance as a publishing forum for IMP thinking. We will demonstrate that, compared to the other major academic journals specializing in business marketing—Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing (JBIM) and Journal of Business-to-Business

Marketing (JBBM)—IMM forms by far the most important publication outlet for research derived from the IMP Group. In fact, we argue that the relationship between the IMP research community and IMM, led by Peter LaPlaca over the past 23 years, offers an exceptional living laboratory for studying academic value creation in the B2B domain.

The paper will proceed as follows. First, we depict the status of IMM and the IMP Group in the early 1990s, at the beginning of the study period. We apply a simple ecosystem perspective to describe the context of academic value creation. Second, we examine the relationship between IMM and the IMP community, focusing on how the parties developed and adapted their behavior and resources to enhance value creation. Special attention is given to the prevalent forms of collaboration and to the activities of the IMM Editor-in-Chief, Peter LaPlaca. Based on documentary evidence and citation data over the period from the late 1980s to 2016, we show how the parties created new academic knowledge and value for each other through intensive interaction and collaboration. In conclusion, we discuss the forms of coordination that have existed between IMM and IMP and provide a prospective account of the future of this unique relationship.

Before beginning this undertaking, a few caveats need to be noted. We feel privileged for being invited to offer our views for this IMM special issue honoring Peter LaPlaca's long-term editorship. Although we both admire Peter's achievements for the journal, we will do our best to preserve the researcher role and pursue a document-based evaluation of the impact of both IMM and IMP. It may be helpful that neither of us is a member of the IMP "inner circle," whatever that may be. As the paper is "writing a history," the reader should understand that the interpretations provided are based on our own experiences with the IMP movement and working and publishing in the field, including but not limited to IMM. Obviously, other scholars with access to the same documents and evidence could arrive at different conclusions.

2. IMM and IMP—players in the academic ecosystem of B2B research

2.1. An academic ecosystem perspective

IMM and the IMP Group can be presented in a simplified ecosystem perspective (Moore, 1993, 1996). This approach resembles the industrial network approach (Håkansson and Snehota, 1995) or value-system thinking (Möller and Rajala, 2007) and is increasingly employed to describe the interdependence and co-evolution characteristic of innovation activities in many contemporary business fields (Adner and Kapoor, 2010; Autio and Llewellyn, 2014; Frow, McColl-Kennedy, and Payne, 2016).

An academic ecosystem can be seen as a system of value creation based on the notion that new theoretical contributions require a set of prior activities performed by a number of actors utilizing their specific resources. Fig. 1 presents an academic ecosystem focusing primarily on the creation of knowledge through publishing, reflecting Peter LaPlaca's insight:

Finally, a simple fact of academic life is that academics can't exist without publications and publications can't exist without publication outlets. In turn, publication outlets can't exist without the revenue that is produced by subscriptions. (LaPlaca and Katrichis, 2009, p. 18).

We want to underline the simplistic nature of the framework delineated to focus on the relationship between IMP research community and the IMM as a publishing forum. A more encompassing study of the B2B scientific ecosystem is unfortunately not conceivable within the limits of this paper.

We see that the academic knowledge creation and publishing ecosystem consists of the following interlinked elements: research communities, institutions such as universities and publishers, and publication outlets. Intellectual platforms for sharing ideas, and users of scientific knowledge are also relevant, but have been omitted from Fig. 1 for conciseness. Researchers build research communities and are central to the production of new scientific knowledge. Communities share intellectual goals and generally also share basic assumptions and world-views, while involving both competition and collaboration at a personal level. Successful research communities create paradigmatic research traditions that influence the evolution of entire disciplines. Working within the same discipline, research communities compete in knowledge production (as IMP competes with the Service Dominant Logic movement), conditioned by the resources they receive from universities and other funding institutions (Bourdieu, 1975). Besides the attractiveness of their knowledge claims, dissemination through publishing is critical in academic value creation. Publishing forms the key means of creating exposure for new research knowledge and ideas, and is an important mechanism for the advancement of science. In addition, groups of knowledge users disseminate studies and perspectives and determine their impact on research and practice. For instance, researchers perform not only the functions of knowledge producers but also of knowledge evaluators and consumers. Ultimately, researchers, their communities, and publication outlets are the key actors in creating academic value.

2.2. IMM and IMP in brief—a view from the early 1990s

Before examining the interaction between IMM and the IMP community in the creation of business marketing knowledge, it is useful to have a baseline view of these institutions before they embarked on closer cooperation.

2.2.1. Industrial Marketing Management

In the early 1990s, IMM was the leading journal specializing in industrial and business marketing. For years after its establishment in 1971, IMM was the only academic journal for business marketing

research. Up to the mid-1980s, under the editorship of James D. Hlavacek, the journal reflected the dominant North American research approach, which emphasized buying behavior, market segmentation, sales management, product development, marketing research, and international marketing (Backhaus et al., 2011; LaPlaca, 1997). Its managerial relevance was underlined by a significant number of top managers on its editorial board (11 out of 26 in 1981, LaPlaca, 2017).

Beginning in the late 1980s, relationship marketing became prominent in B2B research (e.g. channel relationships and logistics, the interaction approach pioneered by the IMP Group, and more generic treatments of relationship marketing; see Backhaus et al., 2011). Competition for top-level submissions intensified, beginning when the *Journal of Product and Innovation Management* was introduced in 1984 to address subfield. In 1986, the IMP Group established *Industrial Marketing & Purchasing*, with Peter Turnbull as editor, as a home journal for the growing IMP community. The same year saw the birth of the *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, led by Peter LaPlaca and aiming to advance and capitalize on the rapid growth of business marketing research (LaPlaca and Johnston, 2006). In 1993, the *Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing* joined the field with David T. Wilson, the “grand old man” of American B2B research and early member of the IMP Group, as Editor-in-Chief. Compared to IMM and the JBIM, this new journal emphasized the B2B theory advancement in its statement of goals.

To summarize, in 1990 IMM was by far the leading journal for business marketing research. During its long history as the sole specialized B2B outlet, it had built a solid subscriber base and strong brand recognition (see Fig. 1). However, this leading position was challenged by a host of new B2B journals targeting to capture their share of the growing market. During the forthcoming decade still two new business marketing journals – the *IMP Journal* (in 2005) and the *Journal of Business Market Management* (in 2006 by Springer) entered the game. As this expansion was especially pronounced in Europe and IMM was dominated by North American research, a key question for the new editor appointed in 1993, Peter LaPlaca, was: would IMM be able to maintain its position in, or even extend its share of, the broadening B2B market.

2.2.2. Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Group

The IMP Group began in the mid-1970s with a handful of primarily young scholars representing five universities in four European countries (the universities of Uppsala, Sweden; Bath, and UMIST, UK; ESC Lyon, France; and the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, West Germany), around a research project on “Industrial Marketing and Purchasing” (IMP Group, 2017). Based on an extensive investigation of about 900 business relationships, the Group developed a dynamic model of buyer-supplier dyads, the so-called interaction framework (see Håkansson, 1982; Turnbull and Valla, 1986a). This perspective revealed that business exchange could not be understood as a series of independent transactions, but rather consisted in complex and usually lasting relationships between buying and selling organizations, involving interaction and adaptations (Håkansson, 1982).

The interaction perspective gained increasing interest as a significant part of the rapid expansion of research into channel relationships (Frazier, 1983; Stern and Reve, 1980) and marketing and inter-organizational relationships in general (Anderson and Narus, 1990; Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh, 1987; Heide and John, 1992). The IMP annual conference, which began as an informal research workshop in 1984 but was attracting well over 100 participants each year by the end of the 1980s, was an important accelerator of the community's growth and the diffusion of the interaction approach. Conference papers represented an important resource for IMP business relationships studies at the time (see IMP Group, 2017, Electronic Archive).

An important aspect in early IMP research was that key results were predominantly published as monographs or compilation volumes based on annual conference papers (e.g., Ford, 1990; Turnbull and Valla,

Table 1
 Most influential monographs, compilations and chapters in books published by the IMP group.
 Source: Harzing, A.W. (2007) Publish or Perish, available from <http://www.harzing.com/pop.htm>, retrieved February 22–25, 2017.

Rank	Year	Title	Author(s)/editor(s)	Publisher	Nature	Citations
1	1995	Developing relationships in business networks	Snehota, I. & Håkansson, H. (Eds.)	London: Routledge	R	4291
2	1982	International marketing and purchasing of industrial goods: An interaction approach	Håkansson, H. (Ed.)	Chichester: John Wiley & Sons	C	3765
3	1988	Internationalization in industrial systems - A network approach	Johansson, J. & Mattsson, L.-G.	Croom Helm	Ch	2394
4	1998	Managing business relationships	Ford, D., Gadde, L.-E., Håkansson, H., Lundgren, A., Snehota, I., Turnbull, P., & Wilson, D.	Chichester: John Wiley & Sons	T	2086
5	1990	Understanding business markets: Interaction, relationships and networks	Ford, D. (Ed.)	London: Academic Press	C	1421
6	1992	Industrial networks: A new view of reality	Axelsson, B. & Easton, G. (Eds.)	London: Routledge	C	1291
7	2010	Supply network strategies	Gadde, L.-E., Håkansson, H. & Persson, G.	Chichester: John Wiley & Sons	T	829
8	1992	Network positions and strategic action – An analytical framework	Mattsson, L.-G. & Johanson, J.	London: Routledge	Ch	631
9	2009	Business in networks	Håkansson, H., Ford, D., Gadde, L.-E., & Snehota, I.	Chichester: John Wiley & Sons	T	628
10	1993	The network as a governance structure: Interfirm cooperation beyond markets and hierarchies	Håkansson, H. & Johanson, J.	London: Routledge	Ch	617
11	1988	Formal and informal cooperation strategies in international industrial networks	Håkansson, H. & Johanson, J.	Lexington, MA: Lexington Books	Ch	501
12	1986b	Strategies for international industrial marketing	Turnbull, P. W. & Valla, J. P. (Eds.)	London: Croom Helm	C	486
13	2002	The business marketing course - Managing in complex networks	Ford, D., Berthon, P., Brown, S., Gadde, L.-E., & Håkansson, H.	Chichester: John Wiley & Sons	T	422
14	2002	Managing technological development. IKEA, the environment and technology	Håkansson, H. & Waluszewski, A.	London: Routledge	R	410
15	1992	Foreign market entry - The textbook vs. the network view	Axelsson, B.	London: Routledge	Ch	395
16	1995	Business marketing: An interaction and network perspective	Möller, K. & Wilson, D. T. (Eds.)	Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers	C	384
17	2002	Buying business services	Axelsson, B. & Wynstra, F.	Chichester: John Wiley & Sons	T	355
18	1997	Relationship marketing in professional services: A study of agency-client dynamics in the advertising sector	Halinen, A.	London: Routledge	R	337
19	2002	Understanding business marketing and purchasing: An interaction approach	Ford, D. (Ed.)	London: Thomson Learning	C	328
20	1993	Professional purchasing	Gadde, L.-E. & Håkansson, H.	London: Routledge	T	274

T = textbook, C = compilation of published work or articles, R = research monograph, Ch = chapter in a book.

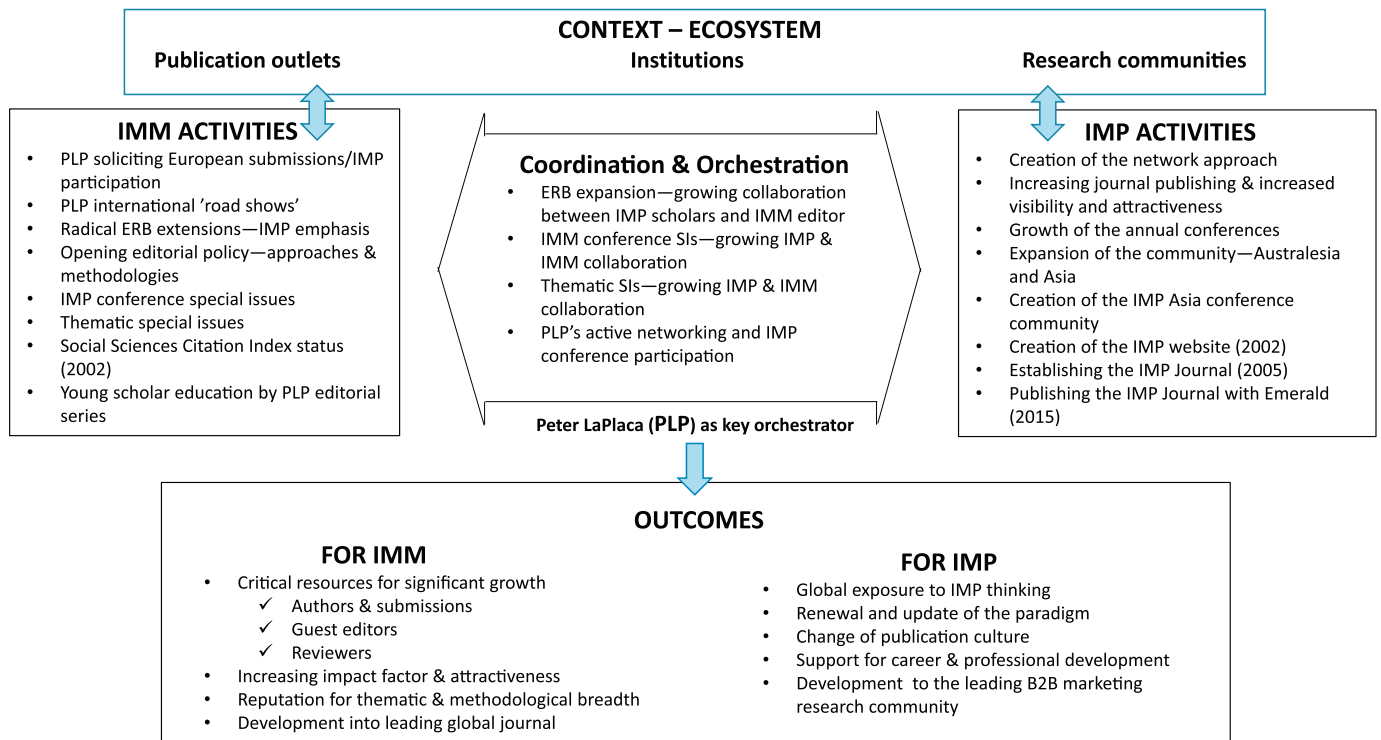


Fig. 2. IMM-IMP relationship development within the B2B academic ecosystem in 1993–2016.

1986a) or as chapters in books (Håkansson and Johanson, 1988; Johanson and Mattsson, 1988) (see Table 1). Another characteristic was the wide disciplinary spread of interest toward the interaction approach pioneered by the IMP Group; this interest was not limited to business markets but included international business, channel relationships, and logistics as well. A third aspect was an emphasis on qualitative case research. While this increased the empirical relevance of the IMP research program, the emphasis on cases made it difficult to publish in major marketing journals that preferred quantitative studies. Recognizing this problem, as previously mentioned the Group established its own journal in 1986, *Industrial Marketing & Purchasing*, in collaboration with MCB Publications. However, this merged with the *International Marketing Review* after publishing for only two years.

To conclude, by the beginning of the 1990s the initially tiny IMP Group had become a hot new research community with a growing annual conference, due to widespread interest in the interaction approach. Although predominantly European and highly informal in its governance, the Group was increasingly attracting also Australasian researchers (see Fig. 1). The potential growth of the community, and especially the diffusion of the new interaction paradigm, was curbed by the Group's limited access to publication in major marketing journals. Although the books authored by the Group members were recognized by the cognoscenti, their citation rates were meagre compared to popular articles in major journals. For example, the breakthrough volume of the IMP Group, *International marketing and purchasing of industrial goods: An interaction approach*, (1982), edited by Håkan Håkansson, had gathered only 97 citations by 1990 (Harzing, 2007), the current figure is close to 3800 (see Table 1). Research culture was shifting toward journal publishing which was valued by research communities and by universities in their career decisions more highly than books. Consequently, in the early 1990s the IMP Group was a highly attractive community but still a new player in the academic field, looking for effective publishing outlets.

3. IMM and IMP as collaborative value-creators for the field of business marketing

This section examines the activities through which IMM and the IMP research community adjusted and coordinated their actions, since 1993, to better utilize each other's resources in academic value creation and in developing their competitive position in the academic ecosystem. We examine the interaction between IMM and IMP and its outcomes, i.e. the accrued value, for both parties over the past 23 years. To simplify things, we treat the two actors as “units” and do not explore their possible inner complexities. In the case of IMM this is plausible, since Editor-in-Chief Peter LaPlaca, has been in charge of the development of the journal for the studied period. However, a social institution such as the IMP Group, with no formal organization or association representing it, nor any specified criteria for membership, is another matter. As an evolving community, the Group renews and enacts itself in annual conferences, seminars and various autonomous research projects. However, the IMP movement has a small inner circle, which initiates and carries out major development activities in a non-transparent manner. Without access to this inner circle, we interpret the behavior of the IMP Group through its manifested actions.

3.1. Strategic actions of IMM—value for IMP

3.1.1. Strategic actions of IMM

When he accepted the editorship of IMM in 1993, Peter LaPlaca knew that the journal would be facing increased competition from the JBIM and the JBBM (launched in 1993), both led by editors who were familiar with the European business marketing research scene (Wesley Johnson at the JBIM and David Wilson at the JBBM). Attending the IMP annual conferences since 1993, Peter LaPlaca became convinced of the potential for IMM to collaborate with the IMP Group (LaPlaca and Lindgreen, 2016). The annual conference papers, while varying in quality, contained many seeds for journal articles. This was especially true for the best papers applying the interaction approach and the slowly emerging business networks research program. Although

published in several books (see Table 1) the potential application of the interaction approach to business relationships was still a relatively new insight to most business marketing scholars.

LaPlaca made several decisions that would eventually lead IMM to remarkable growth; these actions and the development of the IMM-IMP relationship are described in Fig. 2.

One of LaPlaca's first initiatives was to encourage more submissions from outside of North America, especially from Europe and Asia. By attending conferences and making presentations, LaPlaca was able to turn a primarily U.S.-based journal into the most internationalized journal in the field of scientific marketing. While in 1994 about 70% of IMM articles came from the U.S., from 2005 onwards less than half of the papers have been authored by Americans. In 2016, 50% of the authors came from Europe, 32% from the U.S. and Canada, and the rest primarily from Asia, Australia, and New Zealand (LaPlaca, 2017).

In deciding where to submit their papers, authors seek out fair treatment by reviewers and a reasonable chance of being accepted at the end of the process. At the same time, to safeguard a journal's reputation, its editors should publish only superior papers. To meet these simultaneous requirements, LaPlaca started to expand the editorial review board (ERB), which in 1996 had only 34 members (including only two IMP scholars, David Ford and Sören Kock). In 2003, the ERB had reached almost 100 members, with about 10% being IMP scholars. In 2015, to meet the growing flow of submissions the ERB included 270 members, and in 2017 it reached an astonishing 350 members (IMM January issues in 1996, 2003, 2015, and 2017), about 25% being associated with the IMP community (LaPlaca and Lindgreen, 2016).

Along with the radical expansion of the ERB, LaPlaca opened up the IMM editorial policy, welcoming not only varied themes under the broad B2B marketing umbrella, but also papers representing different methodological orientations, notably case-based research. The growing ERB was required to offer review expertise across themes and research approaches and to improve the turn-around time of the papers, another significant attraction factor of a scientific journal.

These improvements took a long time, and enabled only moderate growth during the first decade of LaPlaca's leadership, from 202 submissions in 1995 to 295 in 2003 (LaPlaca, 2017). To accommodate this increase, he negotiated with the publisher to increase the number of issues to five per year (1995), then to six (1996), and finally to eight (2001) (LaPlaca, 2017). In 1998, LaPlaca suggested to the IMP that the best papers in each annual conference could, after a proper review process, be published as a special issue in IMM: The first SI was based on the 1998 conference in Turku, Finland (Möller and Halinen, 1999). This idea proved successful, and the IMP special issue policy was made a permanent feature of the journal (for the list of special issues see Table 2). This strategic move included a number of mechanisms that made IMM more attractive for IMP researchers. First, the special issues were managed by guest editors, generally the key academic organizers of the annual conference (under LaPlaca's guidance), bringing about closer collaboration between the IMP and IMM. Second, several IMP community researchers were recruited to serve as reviewers for the special issues to provide needed expertise. Finally, the opportunity of getting short-listed for publication in IMM was a strong incentive for researchers to submit conference papers of increasingly high quality.

The positive experience of the early IMP conference special issues led Peter LaPlaca to include various thematic special issues as a permanent policy of IMM. This enabled the journal to be among the first to cover interesting new topics including for instance cognitive perspectives on network management (Henneberg, Naudé, and Mouzas, 2010), B2B service networks (Henneberg, Gruber, and Naudé, 2013), and innovation networks (Freytag and Young, 2014), with many of these special issues initiated and guest-edited by IMP scholars (see Table 2). The prominence of the journal was further advanced when IMM was included in the Thompson-Reuters Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) in 2002 (LaPlaca and Lindgreen, 2016). Taken together, these improvements have made IMM by far the most successful journal in the

field of B2B marketing. In 2014, it received 981 submissions, and was the fourth in Google Scholar citations among all marketing journals (LaPlaca, 2017).

3.1.2. Value of IMM for IMP

The strategic innovations made by IMM improved the attractiveness of the journal for the entire business marketing community. However, we contend that IMP researchers benefitted the most from the editorial policy changes. Identifying these opportunities and fostering the capabilities required to utilize them took some time, however. By the year 2000 the IMP Group had made a break-through in major marketing journals (see Table 3), but to renew its thinking and to disseminate its ideas to different user groups it also continued publishing monographs and compilations (see Table 1). It was not until the mid-2000s that the IMP community really learned to use IMM as a central platform to publish its most recent findings and to develop its thinking. At that time, the number of IMP Group-edited special issues increased steadily, the range of topics developed in them expanded (see Table 2) and an increasing number of influential IMP studies were published in IMM. Table 3 provides evidence of the timing and role of IMM as a publication outlet for the Group.

Even if all B2B marketing journals had begun to publish IMP-driven research by the mid-2000s, IMM gradually gained an important position vis-à-vis the IMP community, affecting it in various ways. The following list summarizes why and how the IMM editorial changes benefitted the IMP community in particular (see also Fig. 2):

- The availability of IMM as an attractive publishing outlet encouraged IMP scholars to transform their publishing culture from one based on conference papers and monographs to a more typical contemporary culture based on peer-reviewed articles.
- The openness of the IMM editorial policy enabled the IMP movement to publish and gain visibility for its business networks research primarily carried out in the form of case studies. The importance of this opportunity cannot be overestimated, as major marketing journals continue to discriminate against case research and paradigmatic innovations in general.
- The special issue policy with guest editors especially favored the IMP community, offering not only increased publishing potential but editorial experience, visibility and career enhancement. The thematic openings tended also to favor IMP work, since the community was expanding the network approach and was consequently able to submit a flow of new special issue themes for the Editor-in-Chief.
- The thematic special issue opportunity also encouraged and even pressured the IMP community to develop new openings continuously. This reflects the increasingly competitive research culture being adopted in Europe since 2000.
- The radical extension of the Editorial Review Board offered a valuable professional learning experience for a large number of younger IMP members, while also encouraging them to submit their research to IMM.
- The intellectual visibility attained by IMP perspectives through IMM helped in recruiting talented young researchers far beyond its European origins. The collaboration between IMM and the IMP community transformed both into major international actors.

Another way to assess the impact of a journal or a research community is to examine to what extent they have produced real change in the broader scientific community. Using criteria provided by MacIntosh et al. (2017), we contend that the IMM-IMP relationship, by diffusing both the Interaction Framework and the Actors-Resources-Activities Framework far and wide, has changed the way the B2B research community describes and interprets business relationships and how it values qualitative research methodologies in studying these relationships and broader business networks (Cova, Pardo, Salle, and Spencer, 2015).

Table 2

IMM Special Issues edited by IMP researchers.

Source: ScienceDirect database and personal archives from the Editor-in-Chief Peter LaPlaca (2017). Who are IMP scholars, is based on Peter's interpretation.

Year	Vol. & issue	Theme	Authors of the editorial	IMP conference
1999	28 (5)	Business relationships and networks: Managerial challenge of network era	Möller, K. & Halinen, A.	Turku, Finland, 1998
2000	29 (4)	Business marketing: Perspectives from the markets-as-networks approach	McLoughlin, D. & Horan, C.	Dublin, Ireland, 1999
2003	32 (2)	Interactions, relationships and networks in a changing world	Leek, S., Naudé, P., & Turnbull, P. W.	Bath, UK, 2000
2003	32 (5)	Strategizing in industrial networks	Galde, L.-E., Huemer, L. & Håkansson, H.	Oslo, Norway, 2001
2004	33 (3)	Culture and collaboration in distribution networks	Batt, P. J. & Purchase, S.	Perth, Australia, 2002
2005	34 (6)	Rigidity versus flexibility in business marketing	Matthyssens, P., Pauwels, P., & Vandenbempt, K.	Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2005
2005	34 (7)	Interacting, influencing, strategizing – Where are we heading?	Freytag, P. V. & Ritter, T.	Copenhagen, Denmark, 2004
2006	35 (7)	Dealing with dualities	Dittrich, K., Jaspers, F., van der Valk, W., & Wynstra, F.	Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 2005
2006	35 (8)	Creating value for the customer through competence-based marketing	Gibbert, M. & Golfetto, F.	
2007	36 (2)	Project marketing and the marketing of solutions	Cova, P. & Salle, R.	
2007	36 (7)	Opening the network – Bridging the IMP tradition and other research perspectives	Golfetto, F., Salle, R., Borghini, S., & Rinallo, D.	Milan, Italy, 2006
2008	37 (5)	Social capital in networks	Batt, P. J.	
2009	38 (5)	Exploiting the B2B knowledge network	Naudé, P., Henneberg, S., Zolkiewski, J., & Zhu, X.	Manchester, UK, 2007
2009	38 (6)	An interactive perspective on business in practice	Waluszewski, A., Hadjikhani, A., & Baraldi, E.	Uppsala, Sweden, 2008
2009	38 (8)	Organizing and integrating marketing and purchasing in business markets	Ivens, B., Pardo, C., & Tunisini, A.	
2010	39 (1)	Case study method in industrial marketing research	Gibbert, M. & Dubois, A.	
2010	39 (3)	Cognition and management in networks	Henneberg, S., Naude, P., & Mouzas, S.	
2010	39 (6)	Handling plurality of relationship forms in networks	Cova, B., Prevot, F., & Spencer, R.	Marseille, France, 2009
2011	40 (6)	Business networks: Global, regional and local	Mandják, T., Simon, J., & Szalkai, Z.	Budapest, Hungary, 2010
2012	41 (1)	Value in business and industrial marketing	Lindgreen, A.	
2012	41 (2)	Time and process in business network research	Halinen, A., Medlin, C., & Törnroos, J.-Å.	
2012	41 (3)	Measures and measurements: Process and practice	Batt, P. J.	IMP Asia, 2010
2012	41 (5)	The impact of globalization on networks and relationship dynamics	Paliwoda, S.	Glasgow, Scotland, 2011
2013	42 (1)	B2B service networks	Henneberg, S. C., Gruber, T., & Naudé, P.	
2013	42 (1)	Managing creativity in business market relationships	Andersen, P. H. & Kragh, H.	
2013	42 (3)	Theoretical perspectives in industrial marketing management	Peters, L., Pressey, A., Vanharanta, M., & Johnston, W. J.	
2013	42 (7)	A bridge between tradition and innovation	Cantù, C., Corsaro, D., Fiocca, R., & Tunisini, A.	Rome, Italy, 2012
2014	43 (2)	Co-opetition: Cooperation and competition	Bengtsson, M. & Kock, S.	
2014	43 (3)	Innovation in networks	Freytag, P. V. & Young, L.	
2014	43 (4)	Re-assessing value (co)-creation and cooperative advantage in international networks	Batt, P. J. & Butler, B.	IMP Asia, 2012
2014	43 (6)	Building and managing relationships in a global network	Cavusgil, T., Donthu, N., Johnston, W. J., Nickell, D., Rollins, M., & Rutherford, B. N.	Atlanta, Georgia, 2013
2014	43 (8)	Barriers and consequences of radical innovation	Story, V., Daniels, K., Zolkiewski, J., & Dainty, A.	
2015	45 (February)	From strategy frameworks to value-in-use: Implementing strategies and theories of B2B marketing and sales management	Möller, K. & Parvinen, P.	
2015	46 (April)	Accounting and marketing perspectives of value creation in inter-firm collaboration in industrial markets	Kraus, K., Håkansson, H., & Lind, J.	
2015	48 (July)	Interplay between cognition, action and outcomes in business markets	Mattsson, L.-G., Corsaro, D., & Ramos, C.	
2015	49 (August)	Stability and change in business to business research	Cova, B., Pardo, C., Salle, R., & Spencer, R.	Bordeaux, France, 2014
2016	57 (August)	Coopetition in industrial markets	Bengtsson, M., Kock, S., Lundgren-Henriksson, E.-L., & Näsholm, M.	
2016	58 (October)	Organizing sustainable BtoB relationships – Designing in changing networks	Freytag, P. V., Munksgaard, K., Clarke, A. H., & Damgaard, T.M.	Kolding, Denmark, 2015
2017	Forthcoming	IMP annual conference best papers	Ratajczak-Mrozek, M., Fonfara, K., & Leszczyński, G.	Poznan, Poland, 2016
2017	Forthcoming	Process thinking and methods in dynamic business networks	Andersen, P. H., Medlin, C. J., & Törnroos, J.-Å.	
2017	Forthcoming	Managing business and innovation networks	Möller, K. & Halinen, A.	
2017	Forthcoming	Start-ups and business networks – An interactive view on new ventures	Baraldi, E., Öberg, C., Linné, Å., & Ingemansson, M.	
2017	Forthcoming	Business capabilities, relationships and networks	Mitrega, M., Forkmann, S., & Henneberg, S.	

Through the core models and frameworks published in IMM, the IMP Group has achieved that much sought after goal, the construction of a new research paradigm.

To conclude, Peter LaPlaca's editorial innovations ensured not only a leading position for IMM, but also helped the IMP community to attract visibility to its network approach, to enhance its scholarly renewal, to recruit internationally, and consequently to become one of the leading forces in business marketing research.

3.2. The IMP community—its value for IMM

3.2.1. IMP community developments and activities

By the mid-1990s, the IMP Group had become a potential partner for IMM as it sought to develop into a truly international journal in the B2B field. IMP had already been able to develop a strong reputation for its interaction approach to business relationships, through monographs and compilations of conference papers (see Table 1). In addition, papers driven by the IMP Interaction Framework and early network ideas found their way into the top marketing journals and gathered

Table 3
 Most influential articles published by the IMP group^a.
 Source: Harzing, A.W. (2007) Publish or Perish, available from <http://www.harzing.com/pop.htm>. Retrieved February 22–25, 2017.

Rank	Author(s)	Title	Journal	Year	Vol. & Issue	Citations
1	Wilson, D. T.	An integrated model of buyer-seller relationships	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	1995	23(4)	2834
2	Anderson, J. C., Håkansson, H., & Johanson, J.	Dyadic business relationships within a business network context	The Journal of Marketing	1994	58(4)	2765
3	Dubois, A. & Gadde, L.-E.	Systematic combining: An abductive approach to case research	Journal of Business Research	2002a	55(7)	2362
4	Ford, D.	The development of buyer-seller relationships in industrial markets	European Journal of Marketing	1980	14(5/6)	1593
5	Håkansson, H. & Snehota, I.	No business is an island: The network concept of business strategy	Scandinavian Journal of Management	1989	5(3)	1539
6	Johanson, J. & Mattsson, L. G.	Interorganizational relations in industrial systems: A network approach compared with the transaction-cost approach	International Studies of Management & Organization	1987	17(1)	1447
7	Håkansson, H. & Ford, D.	How should companies interact in business networks?	Journal of Business Research	2002	55(2)	1430
8	Hallen, L., Johanson, J., & Seyed-Mohamed, N.	Interfirm adaptation in business relationships	The Journal of Marketing	1991	55(2)	1350
9	Johanson, J. & Vahlne, J. E.	Business relationship learning and commitment in the internationalization process	Journal of International Entrepreneurship	2003	1(1)	1039
10	Ritter, T. & Gemünden, H. G.	Network competence: Its impact on innovation success and its antecedents	Journal of Business Research	2003	56(9)	828
11	Walter, A., Auer, M., & Ritter, T.	The impact of network capabilities and entrepreneurial orientation on university spin-off performance	Journal of Business Venturing	2006	21(4)	785
12	Sharma, D. D. & Blomstermo, A.	The internationalization process of born globals: A network view	International Business Review	2003	21(6)	767
13	Halinen, A. & Törnroos, J.-Å.	Using case methods in the study of contemporary business networks	Journal of Business Research	2005	58(9)	758
14	Möller, K. & Halinen, A.	Business relationships and networks: Managerial challenge of network era	Industrial Marketing Management	1999	28(5)	739
15	Ritter, T., Wilkinson, I. F., & Johnston, W. J.	Managing in complex business networks	Industrial marketing management	2004	33(3)	699
16	Turnbull, P., Ford, D., & Cunningham, M.	Interaction, relationships and networks in business markets: An evolving perspective	Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing	1996	11(3/4)	696
17	Holm, D. B., Eriksson, K., & Johanson, J.	Creating value through mutual commitment to business network relationships	Strategic Management Journal	1999	20(5)	691
18	Dubois, A. & Gadde, L.-E.	The construction industry as a loosely coupled system: Implications for productivity and innovation	Construction Management & Economics	2002b	20(7)	673
19	Gadde, L.-E. & Snehota, I.	Making the most of supplier relationships	Industrial Marketing Management	2000	29(4)	630
20	Wilson, D. T. & Jantrania, S.	Understanding the value of a relationship	Asia-Australia Marketing Journal	1994	2(1)	618
21	Holm, D. B., Eriksson, K. & Johanson, J.	Business networks and cooperation in international business relationships	Journal of International Business Studies	1996	27(5)	617
22	Zolkiewski, J., Turnbull, P., Ulaga, W., & Eggert, A.	Relationship value and relationship quality: Broadening the nomological network of business-to-business relationships	European Journal of Marketing	2006	40(3/4)	615
23	Möller, K. & Törnroos, P.	Business suppliers' value creation potential: A capability-based analysis	Industrial Marketing Management	2003	32(2)	602
24	Blois, K. J.	Trust in business to business relationships: An evaluation of its status	Journal of Management Studies	1999	36(2)	559
25	Wilkinson, I. F. & Young, L. C.	On cooperating: Firms, relations and networks	Journal of Business Research	2002	55(2)	558

^a Note. In searching the most cited IMP papers in any journals, we used the extant bibliometric and social network analyses to decide who can be considered as IMP members. The 15 IMP scholars who had the biggest egonet measured by 1999 by papers co-authored and presented in IMP conferences and the highest centrality in the IMP core network were chosen to the analysis (see Morlacchi, Wilkinson, and Young, 2005). This set was complemented by 12 researchers identified as key scholars of the network approach in the co-citation analysis provided by Backhaus et al. (2011) covering time up until 2009. With the resulting set of 22 names, added by a systematic search of their co-authors publications, we ended up with this list. It has to be noted that the Table represents a strongly past-oriented view on the IMP community and its key publications.

considerable citations (Anderson et al., 1994; Hallen, Johanson, and Seyed-Mohamed, 1991; Wilson, 1995; see further Table 3). These breakthroughs created international visibility and academic credibility for the IMP community. The novelty of the presented ideas and the way they challenged the dominant perspective in marketing scholarship were seen to be inspiring and attractive.

Building on this momentum, the Group engaged in several activities that advanced research in B2B marketing and increased its international academic visibility and attractiveness. The development of the network approach was the most prominent innovation continuing the paradigmatic transformation initiated by the interaction approach. The worldview of network studies emphasizes contextuality and time. Singular events or actor relationships cannot be understood without knowledge of the connected relationships and how these relationships have evolved (Håkansson and Ford, 2002). The early foundation of the network approach was introduced in book format by the mid-1990s (Axelsson and Easton, 1992; Håkansson and Snehota, 1995). The innovativeness and transformational power of the network perspective took soon hold and has been inspiring the IMP research community since then (for an evaluation of IMP frameworks see Axelsson, 2010). Most recent IMP research has been developing and expanding this network theory and its applications.

The introduction of the network approach had several positive consequences for the IMP community. The increased attractiveness of IMP research transformed the annual conferences from seminar-like events into major meeting points of 300–400 people during the 2000s, with 130–200 papers presented (see Wuehrer and Smejkal, 2013). Their informal and friendly culture enabled the conferences to become major intellectual hotspots gathering participants from Asia and Australasia as well as Europe, establishing the IMP annual conference as the most important B2B marketing conference in the world. Encouraged by this development IMP organized its first Asia conference in 2002 in Perth, Australia (Batt and Purchase, 2004), which became a permanent event offered by the IMP community. Another addition was a regular pre-conference doctoral colloquium serving the increasing number of doctoral students joining the IMP-related faculties. IMP conference was the place for learning about new research ideas and initiatives, meeting people, finding collaborators, and most importantly (from the IMM's point of view), a great place to recruit interested authors, submissions, reviewers, and guest editors.

To expand the community and disseminate its research, the Group established a website in 2002 to provide conference information, list affiliated researchers, offer information about publications, and provide access to the IMP conference papers (see IMP (Industrial Marketing and Purchasing) Group, 2017). Another notable action was the launch of the *IMP Journal* in 2005. The key was “to provide a vehicle for publishing work on the nature and implications of business interaction in all its aspects and in its widest contexts, and to offer space for the larger case study-based work that has characterized much of the output” (Waluszewski and Snehota, 2015, p. 3: note that we have abbreviated the original statement).

Besides regular paper submissions, the IMP community has served in the role of reviewer and guest editor for IMM. Out of the 108 special issues published in IMM over the past two decades, 20 were based on IMP annual conference papers and 24 on IMP-related topics, implying that about 40% of the IMM special issues have been initiated and guest-edited by IMP community researchers (see Table 2). This is a remarkable contribution that has enhanced both the intellectual breadth of the journal and the academic visibility and reach of the IMP community.

Besides sheer volume of submissions, the IMP community has deepened and extended the network approach, introducing new themes for B2B research. These include management (Möller and Halinen, 1999; Möller and Rajala, 2007; Ritter, Wilkinson, and Johnston, 2004), strategizing (Gadde, Huemer, and Håkansson, 2003; Harrison, Holmen, and Pedersen, 2010), and innovation in networks (Aarikka-Stenroos, Sandberg, and Lehtimäki, 2014; Corsaro, Cantú, and Tunisini, 2012).

Contemporary forces prompting disruption in the economy are visible in the most recent special issue topics, such as sustainability and startups (see Table 2). In addition, IMP scholars have critically examined their research methodology by scrutinizing the most commonly used qualitative B2B methods: case methodology (Dubois and Gibbert, 2010) and process research in business networks (Halinen, Medlin, and Törnroos, 2012), and also developed new methods for network research (e.g. network pictures see Abrahamsen, Henneberg, and Naudé, 2012b; Ramos and Ford, 2011).

3.2.2. Value of the IMP for IMM

The activities of the IMP community and its researchers have supported the development of IMM in various ways. The community has provided the journal with critical resources enabling its growth, contributed to the impact factor and ranking of IMM within the marketing discipline, and broadened the scope of themes studied and methodologies used in its articles. The IMP community has thus had an important role in developing the journal from an U.S.-based journal into a truly global outlet (see Fig. 2).

Increasingly, academic journals are competing for high quality submissions to enhance their organizational impact. Various impact measures, including journal rankings, impact factors and numbers of downloads, increasingly determine the position and attractiveness of a journal in its field. The role of IMP in enhancing IMM is manifested in IMM statistics. In 1992–1996 only two papers by regular IMP members reached a position among the 25 most-cited articles in IMM (both were by U.S. nationals), while in 1997–2001 there were already 9 IMP articles among the top 25. Since then, a steady quantity of 5–7 of the most influential papers for each five-year period have come from IMP-related researchers (Harzing, 2007). One-third of the 30 most-cited papers over the history of IMM have been authored by members of the IMP community (see Table 4).

More importantly, this trend seems likely to continue, as evidenced by the IMP emphasis in the most cited articles published in IMM during the most recent years (see Table 5).

The following list summarizes the contributions of the IMP community to IMM:

- From the late 1990s onwards, the IMP community played an essential role in providing IMM with articles addressing business networks and their management. Through the IMP submissions, IMM became the flagship publisher of this research paradigm innovation.
- By continuous elaboration and extension of the network approach, IMP researchers enabled IMM to maintain a steady flow of novel and interesting research themes through its special issue system (see Table 2). By offering a stable flow of innovative articles, a journal increases its attractiveness, its citations, and consequently its influence.
- A growing journal requires a constant flow of key resources: quality submissions, reviewers, guest editors, and readers. As we have shown, the IMP community provided a significant share of all of these: (i) about a third of the recent submissions (from 2008 onwards, the journal received 500–800 submissions per year (LaPlaca and Lindgreen, 2016); (ii) about one-fourth of the journal's current editorial review board members (LaPlaca and Lindgreen, 2016); and (iii) guest editors for about 40% of the special issues (LaPlaca, personal files, 2017).

Taken together, with the steady support of the IMP community, the IMM has developed into a leading global journal in the field of B2B marketing. Today it ranks among the four most cited journals in marketing according to Google Scholar citations (LaPlaca and Lindgreen, 2016). It is clear that this development is only partly due to the IMP Community, but as we have argued in this paper based on both quantitative and qualitative data, the intensive collaboration between IMM

Table 4

The most cited articles published in Industrial Marketing Management.

Source: Harzing, A.W. (2007) Publish or Perish, available from <http://www.harzing.com/pop.htm>. Retrieved 24 February 2017.

Rank	Author(s)	Title	Year	Citations
1	Lambert, D. M. & Cooper, M. C.	Issues in supply chain management	2000	3030
2	Calantone, R. J., Cavusgil, S. T., & Zhao, Y.	Learning orientation, firm innovation capability, and firm performance	2002	2078
3	Christopher, M.	The agile supply chain: Competing in volatile markets	2000	1866
4	Hult, G. T. M., Hurley, R. F., & Knight, G. A.	Innovativeness: Its antecedents and impact on business performance	2004	1515
5	Bengtsson, M. & Kock, S.	<i>“Coopetition” in business networks – To cooperate and compete simultaneously</i>	2000	1493
6	Walter, A., Ritter, T., & Gemünden, H. G.	Value creation in buyer–seller relationships: Theoretical considerations and empirical results from a supplier's perspective	2001	978
7	Handfield, R. B. & Bechtel, C.	The role of trust and relationship structure in improving supply chain responsiveness	2002	834
8	Dowling, G. R.	Managing your corporate images	1986	825
9	Vargo, S. L. & Lusch, R. F.	From goods to service(s): Divergences and convergences of logics	2008	795
10	Olsen, R. F. & Ellram, L. M.	A portfolio approach to supplier relationships	1997	777
11	Möller, K. & Halinen, A.	Business relationships and networks: Managerial challenge of network era	1999	739
12	Evans, J. R. & Laskin, R. L.	The relationship marketing process: A conceptualization and application	1994	703
13	Ritter, T., Wilkinson, I. F., & Johnston, W. J.	Managing in complex business networks	2004	699
14	Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F.	It's all B2B... And beyond: Toward a systems perspective of the market	2011	698
15	Ulaga, W.	Capturing value creation in business relationships: A customer perspective	2003	682
16	Matzler, K., Bailom, F., Hinterhuber, H. H., Renzl, B., & Pichler, J.	The asymmetric relationship between attribute-level performance and overall customer satisfaction: A reconsideration of the importance–performance analysis	2004	667
17	Ulaga, W. & Chacour, S.	Measuring customer-perceived value in business markets: A prerequisite for marketing strategy development and implementation	2001	661
18	Davies, H., Leung, T. K. P., Luk, S. T. K., & Wong, Y.	The benefits of “Guanxi”: The value of relationships in developing the Chinese market	1995	659
19	Bauer, H. H., Grether, M., & Leach, M.	Building customer relations over the Internet	2002	656
20	Cooper, R. G. & Kleinschmidt, E. J.	Success factors in product innovation	1987	652
21	Hertz, S. & Alfredsson, M.	<i>Strategic development of third party logistics providers</i>	2003	638
22	Gadde, L. E. & Snehota, I.	<i>Making the most of supplier relationships</i>	2000	630
23	Zablah, A. R., Bellenger, D. N., & Johnston, W. J.	An evaluation of divergent perspectives on customer relationship management: Toward a common understanding of an emerging phenomenon	2004	622
24	Lindgreen, A. & Wynstra, F.	<i>Value in business markets: What do we know? Where are we going?</i>	2005	609
25	Cretu, A. E. & Brodie, R. J.	The influence of brand image and company reputation where manufacturers market to small firms: A customer value perspective	2007	606
26	Möller, K. & Töröronen, P.	Business suppliers' value creation potential: A capability-based analysis	2003	602
27	Ballou, R. H., Gilbert, S. M., & Mukherjee, A.	New managerial challenges from supply chain opportunities	2000	601
28	Easton, G.	<i>Critical realism in case study research</i>	2010	601
29	Walter, A., Müller, T. A., Helfert, G., & Ritter, T.	<i>Functions of industrial supplier relationships and their impact on relationship quality</i>	2003	572
30	De Ruyter, K., Moorman, L., & Lemmink, J.	Antecedents of commitment and trust in customer–supplier relationships in high technology markets	2001	567

*) Bold marked = article presented in IMP conference. Italics = paper published by a regular IMP conference delegate.

Table 5

Most cited articles authored by IMP researchers and published in IMM in 2012–2016.

Source: Harzing, A.W. (2007) Publish or Perish, available from <http://www.harzing.com/pop.htm>. Retrieved February 10, 2017.

Rank	Author(s)	Title	Year	Citations
1	Aarikka-Stenroos, L., & Jaakkola, E.	Value co-creation in knowledge intensive business services: A dyadic perspective on the joint problem solving process	2012	271
2	Bengtsson, M., & Kock, S.	Coopetition – Quo vadis? Past accomplishments and future challenges	2014	123
3	Lindgreen, A., Hingley, M. K., Grant, D. B., & Morgan, R. E.	Value in business and industrial marketing: Past, present, and future	2012	114
4	Halinen, A., Medlin, C. J., & Törnroos, J.-Å.	Time and process in business network research	2012	108
5	Haas, A., Snehota, I., & Corsaro, D.	Creating value in business relationships: The role of sales	2012	106
6	Corsaro, D., Cantù, C., & Tunisini, A.	Actors' heterogeneity in innovation networks	2012	84
7	Leek, S. & Christodoulides, G.	A framework of brand value in B2B markets: The contributing role of functional and emotional components	2012	81
8	Kohtamäki, M., Partanen, J., & Möller, K.	Making a profit with R&D services – The critical role of relational capital	2013	75
9	Mitrega, M., Forkmann, S., Ramos, C., & Henneberg, S. C.	Networking capability in business relationships – Concept and scale development	2012	73
10	Kowalkowski, C., Witell, L., & Gustafsson, A.	Any way goes: Identifying value constellations for service infusion in SMEs	2013	72
11	Spring, M., & Araujo, L.	Beyond the service factory: Service innovation in manufacturing supply networks	2013	72
12	Storbacka, K., Windahl, C., Nenonen, S., & Salonen, A.	Solution business models: Transformation along four continua	2013	69
13	Kohtamäki, M., Partanen, J., Parida, V., & Wincent, J.	Non-linear relationship between industrial service offering and sales growth: The moderating role of network capabilities	2013	69
14	Raza-Ullah, T., Bengtsson, M., & Kock, S.	The coopetition paradox and tension in coopetition at multiple levels	2014	65
15	Corsaro, D., Ramos, C., Henneberg, S. C., & Naudé, P.	The impact of network configurations on value constellations in business markets – The case of an innovation network	2012	63
16	Möller, K.	Theory map of business marketing: Relationships and networks perspectives	2013	59
17	Hadjikhani, A. & LaPlaca, P. J.	Development of B2B marketing theory	2013	55
18	Abrahamsen, M. H., Henneberg, S. C., & Naudé, P.	Using actors' perceptions of network roles and positions to understand network dynamics	2012a	53
19	Berghman, L., Matthyssens, P., & Vandenbempt, K.	Value innovation, deliberate learning mechanisms and information from supply chain partners	2012	52
20	Tidström, A.	Managing tensions in coopetition	2014	51

and IMP communities has played a key role in this success.

4. Discussion and outlook for the IMM–IMP relationship

In this concluding section, we focus primarily on the question of how the remarkable outcomes of the interaction between IMM and IMP research community were constructed, and share a few thoughts about the future of this relationship.

Given that this paper is being published in a farewell issue dedicated to long-term Editor-in-Chief Peter LaPlaca, it is essential to ask to what extent the history sketched here was managed deliberately, or to what extent the outcome represented happenstance? This question can be addressed with the conceptual tools central to the IMP Interaction Framework: adaptation, coordination, investment, and trust. Based on the available history and especially the actions we have seen, we argue that Peter LaPlaca can be seen as the core orchestrator of the IMM–IMP relationship. He initiated several systematic innovations in IMM, which made the journal into an increasingly attractive outlet for the growing IMP research community.

Transforming the IMM editorial policy to welcome varied approaches and methodologies was a critical adaptation. Without this strategic change, other actions in the overall approach would have been less successful. For many journals an open editorial policy remains only a virtuous principle. LaPlaca, however, was able to “walk the talk”: Through concrete actions, such as socializing with IMP researchers at their conferences, expanding the ERB, initiating the special issue policy, and enhancing methodological and theoretical discussion, he transformed a traditional journal to a vehicle of innovation. For example, the *JJRM*, the journal of the European Marketing Association, had similar broad disciplinary goals in the beginning of the period studied but turned rapidly—because of early editorial appointments—into a hybrid of “a journal of marketing research and marketing science”.

While we emphasize Peter LaPlaca's role as the key orchestrator of the IMM–IMP relationship, the responsiveness of IMP scholars to the opportunities opened by IMM also played a decisive role in constructing these remarkable outcomes. Their positive response was based on the perceived value of IMM editorial innovations, and also on the informal and flexible nature of the IMP community: no board of directors needed to consent for IMP researchers to engage in this collaboration with IMM.

We contend that after the early years of ad hoc collaboration, Peter LaPlaca and the IMP research community learned to coordinate their relationship through flexible and mostly informal mechanisms. These include the IMM's special issue policy for IMP conferences, involving the interaction of the Editor-in-Chief and an increasing number of IMP Group guest editors, and the radical extension of the ERB with a strong role for IMP researchers. Although reciprocal in nature, we believe that the establishing and refining of these coordination mechanisms was primarily the result of Peter LaPlaca's inspired and tireless professional networking. His achievement was made possible by his mastery of multiple interactive and mutually supporting roles, as listed below:

1. *Peter as B2B research visionary*—seeing the opportunities offered by the IMP community;
2. *Peter as editorial innovator and risk taker*—initiating major IMM editorial policy and structural innovation;
3. *Peter as talent spotter and recruiter*—offering invaluable publishing and editorial learning opportunities for several generations of B2B researchers;
4. *Peter as educator and quality manager*—as reflected in his recent “Publish or perish...” editorial series of successful research practices, and around the world seminars about high quality scientific writing and publishing;
5. *Peter as professional networker*—participating relentlessly in IMP conferences, talking equally with doctoral students, post docs, and “old farts”; seeking and suggesting innovative research ideas,

recruiting talent, and having fun!

After all this positive development, an obvious question is: what is going to happen next, for IMM and IMP? Allow us a few reflections.

We have emphasized the strong role of Peter LaPlaca in the orchestration of the IMM–IMP relationship, as well as the social character of this interaction. Such relationships are generally highly dependent on a limited number of key persons, whose withdrawal from their professional role creates uncertainty and puts the continuity of the relationship in question. Yet IMM and IMP have reached a high level of intersecting institutionalization, and the new editors have pledged to maintain the liberal editorial policy of IMM; with several new IMP-related special issues in process (LaPlaca and Lindgreen, 2016). These aspects and the informal institutional arrangements now in place suggest future continuity for this mutually-rewarding relationship.

Another, more serious issue is the ability of IMM and the IMP community to renew themselves. One key success factor in the relationship has been IMP's radical research innovations, the interaction approach and the industrial network approach. Currently, many see IMP as arriving at the phase of Kuhnian normal science, creating only incremental improvements in its knowledge base (see Cova et al., 2015). We share this view, and see a risk that the IMP will lose its innovative tendency. In fact, IMP is currently using two different strategies to preserve its vitality: part of the community has become rather orthodox concerning the basic tenets of the network paradigm, developing and refining the ARA Framework and its key concepts (e.g. Ford, Gadde, Håkansson, Snehota, and Waluszewski, 2010; Håkansson and Snehota, 2017). The other part prefers to “open the network” toward new conceptual ideas, engaging the IMP tradition with the study of new theoretical discourses or phenomena that are currently transforming industries (e.g. Golfetto, Salle, Borghini, and Rinallo, 2007; Thilenius, Pahlberg, and Havila, 2016), even creating new business fields (Kjellberg, Azimont, and Reid, 2015; Möller and Svahn, 2009). It is presently uncertain which of these strategies will help IMP to survive the menace of theoretical dilution posed by the increasing use of its key concepts without a connection to the original frameworks and theories.

The new version of the *IMP Journal*, published by the Emerald since 2015, represents another potential risk for IMM. If the *IMP Journal* attracts a significant amount of scholarly work from its community, this is a direct loss for IMM. However, the attractiveness and viability of the paradigm ultimately determines the future; if there is not enough advocates of the paradigm and high quality submissions to support both outlets, the development may turn detrimental for the IMP Group, too. These risks put new pressures on IMM; it is not sufficient to be open for innovative research; rather, the new editors should be actively scouting for the weak signals of potential new “network paradigms.”

It is important to note that we have focused in this paper on the relationship between IMM and the IMP community. Combined with space limitations, this has meant that we have not been able to acknowledge many influential IMP researchers and their contributions. Luckily, a real “science studies” investigation of the IMP movement with bibliographic analysis is under way by others (Håkansson and Snehota, 2017). Rather, this text is more a reflection on our personal experiences with both the IMP Group and IMM. We are indebted to many colleagues for producing excellent and revealing analyses and reviews of IMP and B2B research on which we have been able to ground this paper, as well as to Peter LaPlaca for sharing his archives of IMM publication information. Most importantly, by writing this article we wish to congratulate and warmly thank Professor Peter LaPlaca for his tremendous work and contribution to the entire business marketing research community. It has been an honor for us to share even a modest portion of the journey with you, Peter.

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