

Business

History

Special Issue:

“The Brand and its History: Economic, Business, and Social Value”

Guest Editors

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On 30 August of 2014 the prestigious magazine *The Economist* wondered “What are brands for?” and stated that brands are the most valuable assets many companies possess although no one agrees on how much they are worth or why. Certainly, nowadays brands play a significant role in developed societies and although brand value has been mainly analysed from marketing, accounting, and management, there are key and significant issues still not addressed or poorly studied. We argue that a thorough analysis of the impact of trademarks and branding on citizens, firms, and economies requires taking into account an historical approach.

Thus, this ***Business History Special Issue*** has been designed based on the hypothesis that the brand is an intangible asset with long-term and complex network effects, which require multidimensional approaches including an unavoidable historical perspective. Among others, several possible topics to be addressed in this special issue would be: What are the key factors for the understanding of brand equity development in the long-run? How did corporations manage trademark assets and related legal

struggles throughout centuries? Were they able to adapt their branding strategies to new market conditions? What was the role of branding in the internationalization process of the firm? How have other agents beyond the firm taken advantage of branding? Answers to these kinds of questions would contribute to bridge the gap between brand theory and historical research.

Although business historians have also begun to turn their attention to trademarks and branding there is still much to be done. At the beginning of the 1990s M. Wilkins (1992) underlined the role of brands in the evolution of modern corporations and how trademarks had become “neglected intangible assets.” G. Jones and N. Morgan (1994) published an edited volume on food and beverage industries which helped to set basic paths for future research. In that compilation M. Casson (1994) warned about how theoretical analysis should be complemented with empirical, historical, cultural, and even ideological studies on trademarks and branding in order to correctly assess their actual role in economic growth and the problems of their management over time.

Only few works have come up since then and very few have focused on international comparisons. P. Duguid (2003) and T. S. Lopes (2003) were the next scholars in shedding light on the topic. Both of them paid attention to the alcoholic beverage sector: while Duguid pointed out the importance of supply chains in the creation of modern brands, Lopes linked the role of brands and marketing knowledge to multinationals’ growth and survival. T. S. Lopes and M. Casson (2007) deepened on the entrepreneurship’s role in the creation of global successful brands. In this field, history – the age of the brand– and a benign institutional environment –provided, above all, in developed countries– seem to be crucial.

Those first works revealed the need for widening the research beyond successful case-studies (Lopes and Duguid 2012). Indeed, the study of trademarks and of related legal, economic, and business arrangements remained essential for the understanding of brands’ historical development. L. Bently, J. Davis, and J. C. Ginsburg (2008) addressed a comprehensive and interdisciplinary critique of trademarking and branding, opening the topic to disciplines such as sociology, linguistics, and philosophy. Since then, Lopes and Duguid (2010 and 2012) had also promoted multidisciplinary research (Routledge International Studies in Business History and *Business History Review* Special Issue) that tried to provide sectorial, legal, and international comparisons (see, among others,

Duguid, Lopes, and Mercer, 2010; Higgings 2010;) or deep domestic analysis (Sáiz and Fernández, 2012; Lopes and Guimaraes, 2014).

All this research work notwithstanding, we feel that there is plenty of room for new contributions that would allow, on the one hand, completing and delving into previous topics, and on the other, opening and widening trademark research scope. We expect contributions to clarify how firms conceived branding strategies, whether they adapt or not (and how) to new market conditions, how international legal issues affect branding activity, how other agents beyond the firm (communities, consumers, regions) faced trademarking, and how studies on collective marks, certification and quality marks, and appellations of origin may complete our current knowledge. Contributions are also invited to develop new studies on domestic trademark tendencies, international comparisons, or case studies based on significant trademark-related sectors such as food, beverages, and tobacco; consumer chemical products; and luxury goods.

Therefore, we are interested in submissions focused on historical research and longitudinal analysis related to the following themes:

- Long-term brand management.
- Trademarks and international trade.
- Legal and institutional issues on trademarking
- Appellations of origin, geographical indications, certification marks, and collective trademarks.
- Private-label products vs. manufacture brands
- Historical development of brand communities.
- Trademark and brand struggles.

Cross-country comparisons involving the EU, the US, and emerging markets will be particularly welcomed. Articles should be based on original research and/or innovative analysis and should not be under consideration by another journal. All articles should be submitted via ScholarOne using the URL link listed below, clearly indicating that they are for the Special Issue on The Brand and Its History: Economic, Business, and Social Value. All the articles will be peer reviewed and, therefore, some

may be rejected. Authors should ensure that their manuscripts fully comply with the formatting regulations of *Business History*.

http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=fbsh20&page=instructions#.VcCILfn_af5

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Business History is an international journal concerned with the long-run evolution and contemporary operation of business systems and enterprises. Its primary purpose is to make available the findings of advanced research, empirical and conceptual, into matters of global significance, such as corporate organization and growth, multinational enterprise, business efficiency, entrepreneurship, technological change, finance, marketing, human resource management, professionalization, and business culture.

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