



Elina Oksanen-Ylikoski

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NETWORK MARKETING PRACTITIONER AND MEDIA DISCOURSES

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Espoo, Feb. 14th, 2006 (Valentine's Day)

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ABSTRACT

In this study, my purpose is to explore conflicting representations of selling and especially network marketing (NM). My first objective is to identify the fundamental features of sales discourses within academic and practitioner communities. The second objective is to understand in what ways the combination and contestation of these discourses produce ambiguous images of selling and network marketing, for example, in the media.

The study approach is based on the social constructionist research tradition. Central to this approach is the interest in how different communities create social realities of selling through discourse practices characteristic to each community. This study focuses on the discourses of selling and salespeople created by 1) academic researchers studying sales management and personal selling, 2) NM practitioners – salespeople and other actors, and 3) the media, which in this study is represented by the Finnish press.

The argument of this doctoral dissertation is built on the analyses of three separate textual data sets. The first data set comprises academic journal articles of personal selling and sales management, textbooks of selling, and a survey study report, which is included in the data as an empirical example of a functionalist study approach. The second set of data comprises NM practitioners' booklets, handbooks and industry descriptions. The third data set comprises 50 press writings of network marketing published in Finnish newspapers and weekly magazines in 1993-2001.

In the data analyses, I apply discourse analysis methods and focus on the rhetorical devices – categorization, catchphrases, metaphors, undermining, muting or highlighting – through which the texts construct diverse social facts of selling and network marketing. In addition, I apply frame and intertextual analysis methods in drawing together and comparing the findings from the separate analyses.

This study provides new knowledge on how varying representations of selling and salespeople are constructed on the basis of fundamental epistemological and ideological assumptions and beliefs within diverse communities. The study shows that within the dominant academic literature on personal selling and sales management, the conception of selling and salespeople is based on a functionalist research paradigm. From this perspective, selling is a function, which takes place in a hierarchical public sphere. This function is performed by stereotypically masculine salespeople, who are also represented as subordinates and resources of the organization. In contrast, within the NM practitioner community selling is accompanied by social movement and an alternative lifestyle, sales take place in the private sphere and social networks, and salespeople are

stereotypically feminine. In the media, these representations are confronted and mixed into adventures of dabblers, businesswomen, revivalists and commen.

Based on this study, I argue that the key principles limiting and creating selling in varying contexts are *ethics* and *professionalism*, and the meaning of these principles varies within different communities. I also argue that the driving forces of sales discourses are *gender* and *emotions*, through which it becomes possible to transform from one discursive construct into another. Through unfolding the structure and dynamics that underlie sales discourses of different communities, this study makes the conflicting views on selling and network marketing understandable.

Key words: selling and salespeople, network marketing, representation, discourse

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkimukseni tavoitteena on tunnistaa myyntityöhön ja erityisesti verkostomarkkinointiin liittyviä ristiriitäisia käsityksiä. Alatavoitteina on tunnistaa eri yhteisöjen myyntipuheen keskeiset piirteet sekä tavarat, joilla näiden puheiden yhdistäminen ja vastakkainasettelu tuottavat ristiriitäisia kuvia esimerkiksi mediassa.

Tutkimuksen lähestymistapa perustuu sosiaalisen konstruktionismin tutkimustraditioille. Keskeistä on kiinnostus siihen miten eri yhteisöt rakentavat myyntityön sosiaalista todellisuutta kullekin yhteisölle tyypillisen selontekotavan eli diskurssin kautta. Tarkastelun kohteena ovat myyntityötä ja myyjiä koskevat tekstit, joita tuottavat 1) myyntityön johtamista ja henkilökohtaista myyntityötä tutkiva akateeminen yhteisö 2) verkostomarkkinoijat eli alaa edustavat myyjät ja muut toimijat, sekä 3) media, jota tässä työssä edustaa suomalainen lehdistö. Väittämäni rakentuu siis kolmen erillisen aineiston analyysille. Ensimmäinen aineisto muodostuu myyntityötä käsitlevistä artikkeleista, oppikirjateksteistä ja esimerkkinä käyttämästäni tutkimusraportista. Toinen aineisto muodostuu verkostomarkkinointia käsittelevästä ammattikirjallisuudesta, oppaista ja toimialakuvausksesta. Kolmas aineisto muodostuu 50 suomalaisesta lehtiartikkelista vuosilta 1993–2001.

Analysissä sovellan diskurssianalyysin ja retoriikan tutkimuksen työkaluja. Analysoin siis sitä, millä retorisilla keinoilla – luokittelulla, iskulauseilla, metaforilla, vähättelemällä, vaikenemalla tai korostamalla – tekstit tuottavat totuuksia myynnistä ja verkostomarkkinoinnista. Lisäksi sovellan tutkimuksessa kehysanalyysia ja tekstien välisten suhteiden analysia, joiden avulla vedän yhteen ja vertaan osa-analyysien tuloksia.

Tutkimus tuottaa uutta tietoa siitä, kuinka käsitykset myyntityöstä ja myyjistä muodostuvat eri yhteisöjen tiedontuottamiseen ja ideologioihin liittyvien uskomusten pohjalta. Tutkimus osoittaa, että myyntityön valtavirtatutkimuksessa käsitys myymisestä ja myyjistä perustuu funktionalistisen tutkimusparadigman oletuksille. Tästä näkökulmasta myyntityö on hierarkkisessa ympäristössä tapahtuva suoritus, jota toteuttavat organisaation alisteisiksi resursseiksi mielletyt, stereotyppisen maskuliiniset myyjät. Verkostomarkkinoijien yhteisössä myyntityöhön taas kuuluu sosiaalisen liikkeen ja vaihtoehtoisen elämäntavan piirteitä, myynti tapahtuu yksityisissä tiloissa ja sosiaalisissa verkostoissa ja myyjien ominaisuudet ovat stereotyppisen feminiinisiä. Mediassa nämä käsitykset törmäävät toisiinsa ja sekoittuvat värikäiksi tarinoiksi, joiden päähenkilöinä seikkailevat mm. puuhastelijat, bisnesnaiset, herätyssaarnaajat ja hämärämiehet.

Tutkimuksen perusteella väitän, että keskeiset myyntityötä rajaavat ja rakentavat periaatteet eri yhteyksissä ovat eettisyys ja ammattimaisuus ja että näiden kahden periaatteen sisältö ja merkitys

vaihtelevat eri yhteisöissä. Väitän lisäksi, että sosiaalinen sukupuoli ja emootiot ovat myyntipuheiden liikkeelle panevia voimia eli käsitteitä, joiden varassa puhe voi siirtyä esitetyjen rakenteiden välillä tarinasta toiseen. Tuomalla esin eri yhteisöjen myyntiä käsitlevien puheiden taustalla vallitsevat rakenteet ja dynamiikan teen samalla myös myyntityötä ja verkostomarkkinointia koskevat vastakkaiset näkemykset ymmärrettäviksi.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Polarized views on selling and network marketing	3
1.2	Knowledge-creating communities.....	14
1.3	Research questions.....	19
1.4	Study structure	20
2	METHODOLOGY.....	22
2.1	Constructionist framework.....	22
2.2	General data analysis methods.....	27
2.2.1	Focus on text and discourse.....	31
2.2.2	Frame analysis	33
2.2.3	Intertextuality	36
2.2.4	Analytic foci	38
2.3	Summary	46
3	ACADEMIC ACCOUNT OF RESOURCES AND FUNCTIONS	47
3.1	Introduction.....	47
3.1.1	Data description.....	48
3.2	Fundamentals of selling.....	51
3.2.1	The objective reality.....	53
3.2.2	Rational and cognitive man	55
3.2.3	Masculine machines and resources	56
3.2.4	Clinical observers	61
3.3	Fixed roles of salespeople: An empirical example.....	62
3.3.1	Theoretical background	63
3.3.2	Empirical study procedures	66
3.3.3	Results: Members, promoters, networkers and leaders	77
3.4	Constructionist critique	79
3.5	Summary and discussion	84
4	NM PRACTITIONER ACCOUNT OF AN INDEPENDENT AND FREE LIFESTYLE	88
4.1	Introduction.....	88
4.1.1	Data procedures	90
4.2	Fundamentals of network marketing	92
4.2.1	Social movement and lifestyle	94
4.2.2	Process of trusting and sharing	95
4.2.3	Feminine images	98
4.2.4	Individual freedom	101
4.2.5	Private sphere	105
4.2.6	Social networks	107
4.3	Summary and discussion	109
5	MEDIA ACCOUNT OF BUSINESS, CULTS AND MONEY MACHINES	111
5.1	Introduction.....	111
5.1.1	Data description.....	113
5.2	NM themes and stereotypes.....	116
5.2.1	NM Salespeople: Housewives or tricksters?.....	117
5.2.2	NM organizations: Amoebas or snowballs?.....	121
5.2.3	NM as a commercial activity: Exploding businesses or pyramid schemes?	122
5.2.4	Lifestyle and social relationships: Luxurious mingling or hard work?.....	123
5.2.5	Money and rewards: Big wallets or pin-money?	126
5.2.6	NM & society: Self-employment or grey economy?	127
5.3	Summary and discussion	130
6	ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM OF SELLING AND NETWORK MARKETING	132

6.1	Introduction.....	132
6.2	Frames for polarized network marketing stories.....	132
6.2.1	Social activity for dabblers	135
6.2.2	Serious enterprise for businesswomen and entrepreneurs	136
6.2.3	Suspicious cult for revivalists and converts	138
6.2.4	Money machine for conmen	139
6.3	Gender and emotions as keys for transforming the frames.....	142
6.4	Overlaps and incongruencies in the academic, NM practitioner and media accounts.....	144
6.5	Summary and discussion	147
7	CONCLUDING REMARKS AND REFLECTION	150
7.1	Fundamentals of selling and network marketing	151
7.2	Ethics and professionalism under negotiation	155
7.3	Evaluation of the study	159
7.4	Contribution and implications	164
8	REFERENCES	169
9	APPENDICES.....	175

FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1.	Examples of network marketing studies	6
Figure 2.	Some basic philosophical differences between the experimentalist and social constructionist research approaches and remarks of this study	24
Figure 3.	A summary of the general data and study procedures	31
Figure 4.	Academic articles and textbooks, scrutinized as examples of the dominant academic discourse in the area of personal selling and sales management	49
Figure 5.	Ideological dualisms	60
Figure 6.	Examples of OCB categories and vital NM activities.....	72
Figure 7.	Organizational roles of NM salespeople.....	78
Figure 8.	Critique of modernism and postmodern potentials and remarks of this study	83
Figure 9.	Primary data for the analysis of practitioner discourse	90
Figure 10.	Examples of diverse representations of the major themes of NM in the media	129
Figure 11.	Ethics and professionalism as key principles framing NM stories	134
Figure 12.	Key features of the frames for network marketing in press writings	140
Figure 13.	Central overlaps and incongruencies between academic, media and practitioner accounts of selling and network marketing	146
Figure 14.	Summary of academic, practitioner and media accounts of selling, NM and NM salespeople.....	153
Table 1.	Components of networking behaviour	74
Table 2.	Role categories of NM salespeople	76

APPENDICES

Appendix 1.	Interviewed salespeople (members of the Board of the Association for Direct Selling and Network Marketing Salespeople, elected in autumn/1998).....	175
Appendix 2.	Themes of the interviews.....	176
Appendix 3.	Examples of OCB definitions and categorizations	177
Appendix 4.	Networking behaviour measure	179
Appendix 5.	Press writings by the publication/year of publication	181
Appendix 6.	Categorization of the interviewed people in press writings.....	182
Appendix 7.	Articles by date and publication, quoted people and headings.....	184

To businesswomen and dabblers

1 INTRODUCTION

This is a study of selling and salespeople. Moreover, this is a study of reading, writing and rethinking academic, network marketing (NM) practitioner and media texts of selling and salespeople especially in social settings, such as in the network marketing (NM) context. The focus of this study is to examine two intertwined issues. Firstly, I wish to explore and challenge concurrent representations of selling and salespeople within the academic community. Secondly, I want to create an understanding of controversial representations and conflicting opinions of network marketing within academic and practitioner communities and in the media. Thus, firstly, this study provides new epistemological and methodological insights into mainstream academic sales studies and, secondly, creates new knowledge concerning a neglected marketing area, namely network marketing.

By network marketing, I refer to a specific type of direct selling in which an organization's marketing functions are organized through a network of independent salespeople. NM salespeople sell the products and recruit new members into the organization from their social networks through face-to-face presentations and direct interaction with consumers, mainly in private settings¹.

In this study of selling, I chose to focus on NM basically for two reasons. Firstly, an important reason to start my Ph.D. studies at the Helsinki School of Economics (HSE) resulted from my personal involvement and curiosity on issues related to NM. I have worked for several years within the NM industry, first as a salesperson of a multinational jewellery company, then as a board member and chair of a lobbying association for direct selling and NM salespeople, and later on as a marketing manager of a lobbying association for direct selling and NM organizations. These different roles within the NM practitioner community convinced me of the complex image of the sales profession and NM in particular, and showed the importance of generating a greater understanding of this controversial area.

Secondly, NM businesses inherently involve changes, which have recently been reported in academic marketing literature. Among others, these changes include a shift from transaction-focused selling to relationship-based marketing, a shift from hierachic sales organizations to networks of co-operative actors, and finally, a shift from passive, receiving customers to active co-participants (Wotruba 1991; Anderson 1996; Walter 1999; Weitz & Bradford 1999; Yilmaz &

¹ In academic and practitioner literature as well as in the media, the term network marketing is often used synonymously with the term multi-level marketing, MLM.

Hunt 2001). On a macro-level (and theoretically), these changes are suggested to override – or alter and complement² – the entire marketing field from business-to-business marketing to business-to-consumer marketing (Brodie et al. 1997; Coviello et al. 1997; Iacobucci & Hibbard 1999; Möller & Halinen 2000). On a micro-level (and practically), these changes have explicitly been adopted by NM organizations operating in the direct selling industry, thus indicating a growing interest in consumer-to-consumer marketing applications as well.

Paradoxically, mainstream personal selling and sales management literature seems to persistently maintain an established and static conception of selling although simultaneously arguing for the above-mentioned changes. For example, instead of viewing NM as an example of a novel, contemporary marketing and selling method, the academic community tends to treat NM as a slightly dubious and exceptional case – an anomaly among selling organizations. Although distinguishing features of NM have been noted in some academic studies and industry reviews (see Croft & Woodruffe 1996; Coughlan & Grayson 1998; Brodie 1999; Oksanen 1999; Bhattacharya et al. 2000; Koehn 2001; Brodie et al. 2002; Pratt & Rosa 2003; Oksanen-Ylikoski 2004;), it still seems to be a relatively neglected area within the marketing literature.

On the one hand, in personal selling and sales management text books, NM is typically described using only a few sentences as a minor sub-category of direct selling (see e.g. Ingram et al. 1997; Jobber & Lancaster 1997; Hite & Johnston 1998), and is often questioned about its ethics (e.g. Donaldson 1998). On the other hand, NM practitioners seem reluctant to adopt the established academic view on selling on their behalf. On the contrary, within the practitioner literature, NM is clearly distinguished from the traditional conception of selling and the sales profession and argued to provide alternative ways of working, buying and consuming. As such, the business model is understood more as a lifestyle and consumption channel than as a method of selling. These quite paradoxical views imply a need to explore firstly the established representation of selling among academics and secondly the conflicting constructs of NM in wider settings.

Based on my own experience in exploring NM through mainstream marketing study approaches and methodologies³, I presume that studies using NM merely as a context for empirically testing existing conceptual models reduce and undervalue its multifaceted nature. Instead of

² For example, Brodie et al. (1997) conclude that while relational marketing is indeed relevant, the role of transactional marketing should not be ignored or underestimated; also Möller & Halinen (2000) argue against the propositions suggesting that relationship marketing will replace traditional marketing management or make it obsolete.

³ That is, a functionalist study approach, survey studies and statistical data analysis methods.

automatically accommodating complex socio-cultural phenomena such as NM in the established theoretical models, it could be valuable to rethink and re-evaluate the paradigmatic presumptions entangled in concurrent sales study practices. This suggestion maintains that new insights and approaches are needed to complement customary procedures, and thus should be taken as an opportunity to view and solve sales-related problems *differently* both in theoretical and practical terms.

Why then, is it important to understand controversial representations of selling and NM? For what purposes does this study provide relevant knowledge? Isn't it controversial as such to question the conflicting views on the one hand, and on the other hand simultaneously praise diverse perspectives on the issue?

As a rationale for this study, I argue that the fundamental ideological engagements and cultural differences in creating knowledge on selling and NM complicate and may even prohibit the discussion and dialogue between diverse communities such as academics and practitioners. As far as different communities limit their view on knowledge created through their own established conventions, avenues for further intellectual and practical innovations may be unattainable.

Thus, in order to elaborate - or in some cases, maybe even consolidate - conflicting opinions within academic and practitioner communities and the media, my purpose is to provide insights into diverse constructs of selling and network marketing from a social constructionist perspective. This will be accomplished through unfolding what kind of knowledge-creating presumptions prevalent sales studies are built on and what kind of representations of selling, network marketing and salespeople may be constructed through alternative discursive practices.

1.1 *Polarized views on selling and network marketing*

In this study, phenomena of interest are broadly defined as *selling*, and more specifically *network marketing*, a disputed form of personal selling. More precisely, it is exactly the controversial representations of selling and salespeople among academics and NM practitioners that have served as a driver for this study. To understand the controversy around NM, it is first necessary to scrutinize the academic conception of selling and salespeople in current research literature. Following that, the academic construct of selling will be contrasted with NM practitioner views, and further complemented with the analysis of media discourse on NM. The general foci of this study are thus on the representations of selling and NM in diverse discourses created by academic

and NM practitioner communities as well as the media⁴. In the following, I describe the study foci in more detail.

The term network marketing refers to direct selling companies, which organize their sales through a multilevel sales organization. On a worldwide basis, in 2004, the World Federation of Direct Selling Associations estimated that 47.2 million individuals are involved in direct selling, producing over \$85 billion in retail sales revenue. Avon Cosmetics, Amway, Herbalife, Mary Kay Cosmetics and Tupperware are perhaps the best-known multinational direct selling organizations that use either a single level or multilevel (NM) structure to organize their sales force (Brodie et al. 2004:3).

In the academic literature, network marketing is typically positioned in the field of personal selling – more specifically direct selling - or alternatively, database marketing and home shopping. From this perspective, NM organizations operate within the direct selling industry as retail selling channels.

Brodie et al. (2004: 3) adapt Berry's (1997) definition, and conceptualize direct selling as:

The obtaining of orders and the supply of consumer products (goods and services) to private individuals away from normal retail premises, usually in their homes, or place of work, in transactions initiated and/or concluded by a salesperson.

They continue that by using this definition it is possible to differentiate between direct selling and direct marketing, where:

‘direct marketing’ implies that the initiation, at least, of the transaction is by the use of some form of media, for example, mail order catalogues, direct response, mail shots, advertisements, TV, electronic and telemarketing, rather than by a person. (ibid)

A distinguishing character of NM companies – as compared to traditional direct selling organizations - is that they use independent distributors (i.e. salespeople) not only to buy and resell products at retail level, but also to recruit new distributors into a growing network over time (Coughlan & Grayson 1998). NM salespeople recruit new members informally, e.g. by recommending the memberships among their social networks. In order to receive a member status within a NM organization, candidates then sign a distributor agreement with the company.

⁴ To avoid too much repetition within the text, when referring to the study foci, I may use the term ‘selling’ or ‘selling and network marketing’. The analytical focus (as will be shown in the analyses section) is, however, also on representations of salespeople, whose images are inseparably determined by conceptions of selling and NM. Within disparate communities the distinction between selling and NM may also occasionally seem artificial, and, e.g., selling can be seen as part of network marketing. However, the relevance of the distinction made here will be made clear through the analyses later on.

This agreement typically entitles members to discounts on their own purchases, sales commissions based on personal sales volume, and network bonuses based on the sales volume of member's potential 'down line' (i.e. people that a member has recruited, and that they in turn have recruited and so on).

Within this contractual relationship, members' performance – buying, selling and recruiting – defines their actual status in relation to the principal company. On the one hand, some of the members act like consumers merely buying the products for themselves, while on the other hand, some members act like independent entrepreneurs building their business within the sales organization. In addition, these positions are not mutually exclusive, but may vary across time. In some cases, it has been problematic to distinguish between the members' statuses, e.g. for consumer organizations or for employment authorities. As such, NM salespeople do not seem to fit very well into established categories within the labour markets, which has evidently increased inconsistent and contradictory attitudes towards them⁵.

At the time that I started my Ph.D. studies (1997), there existed only a few articles on NM in academic marketing literature⁶. Obviously, in 2005 when writing this final report, more studies have been published in various academic journals. In the following, I present a selective overview of NM studies reviewed during this study project and examples of prior studies on NM (Figure 1).

⁵ For instance, consumer and employment offices in Finland have had difficulty in drawing the line between consumer and entrepreneur statuses, and between unemployment and self-employed statuses of people operating in NM organizations.

⁶ Direct selling organizations on the other hand have served as empirical contexts more frequently in personal selling and in the sales management research domain.

Figure 1. Examples of network marketing studies

Authors & title	Journal	Descriptors of NM	Study objective	Theoretical assumptions and frameworks, methodology
Bhattacharya & Mehta 2000: Socialization in network marketing organizations: is it cult behaviour?	The Journal of Socio-Economics	Phenomenally growing, untraditional organizations Controversial and criticized business	To construct a model to explain controversies surrounding NM To identify the characteristics of people more likely to join NM	Real man is a single entity <i>Homo economicus</i> & <i>Homo sociologus</i> Economic model of utility maximization
Biggart 1989: Charismatic Capitalism. Direct Selling Organizations in America	The University of Chicago Press	Amazingly successful organizations Unusual combination of organizational practices and management practices Surprising, sometimes even bizarre Direct selling organizations are different, and violate many of the most accepted tenets of management practice today	Organizational analysis that connects formal organizations with other social phenomena Contribution to the new economic sociology	Weberian sociology
Bloch 1996: Multilevel marketing: what's the catch?	Journal of Consumer Marketing	Socially and psychologically unacceptable Fraught with some really nasty human relationship issues	To inform people about the full picture	Polemic description based on personal experience, feelings, and discussions with industry executives
Brodie et al. 2002: Comparisons of Salespeople in Multilevel vs. Single Level Direct Selling Organizations	Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management	Application of direct selling, a business activity of significant importance both in financial and human terms	To explore the differences in demographic, behavioural, and attitudinal characteristics of direct selling salespersons in multilevel versus single-level types of direct selling organizations	Sales management literature rooted in personal construct psychology and role theory Empirical survey study
Coughlan & Grayson 1998: Network marketing organizations: Compensation plans, retail network growth, and profitability	International Journal of Research In Marketing	Increasingly popular form of retail distribution channel Distinguished from other retail selling channels in several important ways	To develop, analyse, and calibrate a dynamic decision model of the growth of a retail NM organization	Income-maximizing distributor Academic sales force compensation literature A model of NMO compensation and network growth (model parameters calibrated with data)

Authors & title	Journal	Descriptors of NM	Study objective	Theoretical assumptions and frameworks, methodology
				from an original survey of NM firms)
Croft & Woodruffe 1996: Network Marketing: The Ultimate in International Distribution	Journal of Marketing Management	Secretive industry Hostility towards NM felt by marketing professionals and academics	To assess NM against six strategic criteria for channel management	Channel management literature Analysis of NM distribution channel against a model of six strategic goals
Grayson 1996: Examining the Embedded Markets of Network Marketing Organizations	From: Networks in Marketing, Dawn Iacobucci (ed.)	Not generally a well-known or well-understood marketing strategy NM as an organization, which is likely to foster highly embedded exchange because it builds its sales and distribution via the social network of its sales agents	To outline some of the industry's basic elements, and address some of the concerns that are sometimes raised about NM To highlight potential research questions about NM, which address the ways in which the industry's social aspects may foster or hinder profitability	Exploratory interviews as part of a study of the NM industry Analysis based on research of interpersonal relationships and domestic social life
Grayson 1998: Commercial Activity at Home. Managing the Private Servicescape.	From: Servicescapes: The Concept of Place In Contemporary Markets, John Sherry Jr. (ed.)	Consumption situation in which the rules for behaviour are not well established	To explore the strategies that marketers employ in situations when the marketer, the consumer, and the broader social reality do not share the same consensus about what rules apply (or should apply) to a particular situation	Sociological theories about consensus on social rules in social interaction Exploratory interviews as part of a study of the NM industry
Herbig & Yelkur 1997: A Review of the Multilevel Marketing Phenomenon	Journal of Marketing Channels	Rapidly growing phenomenon Unexamined phenomenon Treads the thin line between legality and illegality	To examine the Multilevel Marketing Phenomenon, its past and present, and provide scenarios for its future	A review of practitioner literature
Koehn 2001: Ethical Issues Connected with Multi-Level Marketing Schemes	Journal of Business Ethics	One of the fastest growing types of business NM organizations are legal or illegal, and pose some unique ethical issues	To examine the nature of NM organizations and their similarities with and differences from pyramid and endless chain schemes	Normative analysis of industry practices from the business ethics point of view
Pratt 2000: The	Administrative	NM organizations are a	To examine the practices	Based on mainstream

Authors & title	Journal	Descriptors of NM	Study objective	Theoretical assumptions and frameworks, methodology
Good, the Bad, and the Ambivalent: Managing Identification among Amway Distributors	Science Quarterly	rapidly growing organizational form NM organizations differ from traditional organizations in several respects	and processes involved in managing members' organizational identification	theories of organizational behaviour (organizational identification) Qualitative research methods, analysed from a factual perspective Semi-overt participant observation, open-ended interviews, and archival data gathering
Pratt & Rosa 2003: Transforming Work-Family Conflict into Commitment in Network Marketing Organizations	Academy of Management Journal	Network marketing organizations serve as 'extreme cases' for the purposes of theory building because they are recognized for engendering strong attachments and emotions.	To examine how a NM organization is able to engender strong commitment in its members against the grain of complicating trends	Qualitative case study Modified grounded theory approach Realist approach

Firstly, a majority of empirical studies have approached NM from a broadly defined 'empirical-analytic'⁷ perspective and have used quantitative analyses methods (e.g. Coughlan & Grayson 1998; Bhattacharya & Mehta 2000; Brodie et al. 2002). These studies have built on existing theoretical models and contributed to the mainstream literature on organizations and sales management. Secondly, a diverse set of discussion papers has been published in academic journals, e.g. purporting to 'inform people about the full picture' (Bloch 1996). Thirdly, a set of industry reviews on direct selling (including insights into NM as well) has been published e.g. in order to provide statistical facts and perceptions on direct selling in general (e.g. Brodie et al. 2004).

Although NM seems to evoke conflicting opinions among academics, this has not yet led to considerable efforts to approach the phenomenon from new epistemological or methodological

⁷ Habermas (1972 ref. Alvesson and Willmott 1996:50) characterizes 'empirical-analytic' science as '...guided by a cognitive interest in gaining greater prediction and control over unruly natural and social forces', and as "...attempts to calculate and master the behaviour of humans as well as the elements of the natural world". This type of science is manifest e.g. in the studies that have sought to identify the contingencies that are deemed to render employee productivity and consumer behaviour more predictable and controllable (*ibid*).

perspectives – at least within the sales research domain. As exceptions in terms of methodological choices, Biggart (1989), Grayson (1996, 1998), Pratt (2000) and Pratt & Rosa (2003) have used qualitative methods, which are seldom used in mainstream selling and sales management literature.

For example, Biggart (1989) uses popular books and commercial press writings as well as interviews as data in her typological analysis of direct selling organization. Through an approach adopted from Weber, she creates a comprehensive organizational analysis of what she names 'amazingly successful organizations'.

Grayson (1998, 1996) too uses qualitative methods and focuses specifically on distinguishing characteristics of NM organizations. In his view, network marketing represents a not generally well-known or well-understood marketing strategy, which

breaks with the generalized consensus that business and personal sphere are distinct (*ibid* 1996).

Finally, Pratt (2000) uses semi-overt participant observation, open-ended interviews and archival data to examine the practices and processes involved in managing NM members' organizational identification. Despite the distinguishing features of NM, he aims at creating a consensus between the NM and conventional organizations and existing theoretical models. In his words, he

...attempted to link Amway's practices with that of other organizations. Moreover, by linking Amway's tactics to existing theory in a model of identification management, I have tried to show how other organizations achieve similar ends...through different means...
(Pratt 2000)

Notably, in almost all of these studies NM organizations are described as unique, interesting, controversial, marginal or extreme cases among sales organizations. On the one hand, descriptions of NM as a deviant case of contemporary organization represent typical rhetorical techniques within the academy, through which certain research topics and areas are justified. On the other hand, though, these descriptions seem to capture some important distinctions and themes of NM, which might contrast with conventional theories and applications of selling.

From the NM industry perspective – i.e. direct selling organizations, salespeople and lobbying associations – direct selling in general is often defined and described as a unique job opportunity as the following extract shows:

Direct selling provides important benefits to individuals who desire an opportunity to earn an income and build a business of their own; to consumers who enjoy an alternative to

shopping centres, department stores or the like; and to the consumer products market. It offers an alternative to traditional employment for those who desire a flexible income earning opportunity to supplement their household income, or whose responsibilities or circumstances do not allow for regular part-time or full time employment. In many cases, direct selling opportunities develop into a fulfilling career for those who achieve success and choose to pursue their independent direct selling business on a full time basis.

The cost for an individual to start an independent direct selling business is typically very low. Usually, a modestly priced sales kit is all that is required for one to get started, and there is little or no required inventory or other cash commitments to begin. This stands in sharp contrast to franchise and other business investment opportunities, which may require substantial expenditures and expose the investor to a significant risk of loss.

Consumers benefit from direct selling because of the convenience and service it provides, including personal demonstration and explanation of products, home delivery, and generous satisfaction guarantees. Moreover, direct selling provides a channel of distribution for companies with innovative or distinctive products not readily available in traditional retail stores, or who cannot afford to compete with the enormous advertising and promotion costs associated with gaining space on retail shelves. Direct selling enhances the retail distribution infrastructure of the economy, and serves consumers with a convenient source of quality products.

An important component of the Direct Selling industry is multilevel marketing. It is also referred to as network marketing, structure marketing or multilevel direct selling, and has proven over many years to be a highly successful and effective method of compensating direct sellers for the marketing and distribution of products and services directly to consumers. (http://www.wfdsa.org/consumers_direct/direct_sub2.asp 22.6.2004)

However, industry descriptions like the above extract from The World Federation of Direct Selling Associations' website are often challenged by strongly conflicting views especially when it comes to NM. NM organizations' distinguishable features raise both positive and negative opinions and emotions. For example, Pratt (2000) in his study on NM organizations states:

...people seemed either to love or hate it [Amway, one of the largest NM organizations]: it seemed both wildly successful and unsuccessful in managing the minds and hearts of its dispersed workforce.

Conflicting opinions on NM are suggested to relate to the direct selling method on the one hand, and to networking activities (recruiting and managing other salespeople) on the other hand (Oksanen 1999).

For example, NM advocates suggest that the benefits of NM relate to a growing trend in Western societies, which encourages people to make their purchases at home (see e.g. Dewandre & Mathieu 1995). Firstly, NM is suggested to provide benefits to customers through personal service and a convenient way of purchasing products at home. In addition, customers benefit from knowing the salesperson in terms of more reliable information and trusted opinion about the products as well as a better understanding of the customer's real needs:

What are we most sensitive to? To the power of 'word of mouth', to what our friend tried out for us and what they liked. We feel comfortable buying in an atmosphere of trust, and whom would we have more trust in than someone we have known for a long time?

(Dewandre & Mathieu 1995: 64)

Secondly, proponents of NM maintain that the NM concept incorporates several opportunities to combine fast developing information and communication technologies with direct selling techniques, which makes it an appealing future business opportunity. The increasing costs of traditional distribution and marketing channels are argued to force manufacturers to evaluate new complementary and supplementary ways of distributing products and product information as directly as possible to the end customer. 'The distribution revolution' is one of the slogans used to describe the benefits of NM in terms of cost savings, effective market penetration and segmentation offered to manufacturers.

Thirdly, advocates' suggested benefits of NM to salespeople relate to a freer lifestyle in terms of work and income. Evidently, there are an increasing number of people working independently, part-time and preferably at home, whose income may be fragmented anyway. For those people, NM is argued to offer a flexible method for extra earnings and a low-cost opportunity for self-employment. In addition, NM organizations combine some entrepreneurial features from franchising businesses with a low-cost opportunity for self-employment. Therefore, NM is suggested to appeal to people with a desire to run their own business where no significant capital or investment is required.

Opponents on the other hand, argue that NM can also generate disappointments and dissatisfaction. For example, press writings and on-line discussion forums document experiences from former salespeople, who feel angry and ashamed after having failed in their businesses. Some may have joined a fraudulent organization, some may have joined the organization through a person who was promising them a huge income for nothing, some may have had unrealistic expectations of their own skills, and so on. Whatever the reason, these failures are argued to characterize the NM concept and the industry as a whole.

Much of the criticism points out the negative effects of personal selling on social relationships between friends and relatives. It is suggested that friends and relatives most often feel pressured to buy products that they do not need or want, only because the salesperson is close to them. At worst, the critics maintain, this uncomfortable atmosphere results in the foundation of artificial markets, which are characterized by exploited social contacts. For example, Bloch (1996) states:

The problem, in general, is that the activity of recruiting people into network marketing schemes is socially and psychologically unacceptable to most people in our society. In other words, the process of network marketing brings with it some situations, attitudes and types of behaviour that are highly problematic in many ways. The situation may well be different in other cultures, such as some countries in Asia, where business options are more limited and entrepreneurial zeal is seen in different ways. But here in New Zealand, MLM is fraught with some nasty human relations issues.

It is also argued that no real cost savings relate to direct selling marketing and distribution channels. Instead of benefiting their customers in terms of cheaper prices, retail prices are usually higher than in stores in order to cover the commissions of the distributors.

These polarized opinions are acknowledged in most academic studies of direct selling and NM. For example, according to Croft et al. (1996):

One difficulty when considering the suitability of Network Marketing as a channel strategy in international markets can be the polarization of opinions on the subject. The hostility felt by many marketing professional and academics towards Network Marketing is well articulated by Bonoma (1991): Multilevel marketing schemes, like chain letters, sometimes are at the borderline of what is legal – and over the border of what is ethical.

Altogether, it seems that not only the opinions, but also the definitions and implementations of network marketing are polarized. On some occasions, conflicts seem to result from mixed terminology (for example equating network marketing with pyramid schemes and chain letters), whereas on other occasions they seem to result from diverse practices. Either way, polarization is not limited to daily encounters of NM salespeople, but is maintained in the media and academic writings as well.

For example, a brief overview of headings of Finnish press writings depicts the multiple ways of conceiving network marketing in the media:

Network Marketing ‘confounds the experts and threatens human relationships’, or its ‘new applications revolutionize the ways of conducting business,’ as ‘trade will be entirely transferred to networks.’ Network Marketing is either defined as ‘a legitimate business based on referrals’ and ‘a salesman’s dream’, or as ‘a threat of retail trade’, ‘an illegal chain

letter' and as 'a bizarre hierarchy.' Although Network Marketing is 'recommended only for smooth operators', there seem to be 'entrepreneurs of all kinds involved': For example, 'a strange bud who unashamedly talks about money and success', 'Mrs. X who wanted to change her life'; 'celebrities'; 'friends and villagers'; 'relatives and acquaintances'. However, 'an active sport would not have time' and 'an economist a will to join.' There are 'no short cuts to happiness' in this business either but instead, 'it is all about hard work'. There are some exceptions, though, as 'Ms. Y dreamed herself a millionaire', and 'a daughter of a baker became a top businesswoman'.

(Quotation marks indicate headings from the press writings data; see also Oksanen-Ylikoski 2004:169)

A review of the above-mentioned academic studies, numerous practitioner books as well as press writings on NM clearly shows that to understand what NM is, it is necessary to first understand what selling is. This appears relevant as both academics and practitioners position selling and NM typically opposite each other. While in academic writings, NM is considered as a deviant and suspicious sub-area of personal and direct selling, in NM practitioner books traditional selling is characterized by hierarchic sales organizations and hard-selling tactics, from which NM is strongly dissociated.

Furthermore, even in academic textbooks, selling seems to be divided into 'traditional' and 'novel' conceptions. For instance, many textbooks on personal selling and sales management begin with regretting the persistent view of selling as 'immoral', 'dishonest', 'unsavoury', 'degrading', 'wasteful' (Jobber & Lancaster 1997: 8); 'cynical', 'callous' and 'indiscriminate' (Donaldson 1998: 4); saddled with 'negative images that were formed in ancient times and have carried forward in some form to the present day' (Ingram et al. 1997: 25); and 'filled with pushy, unscrupulous salespeople' (Hite & Johnston 1998: 5). Other parts of the books then construct an alternative view on selling as an acceptable process, 'a mechanism for exchange, through which customers' needs and wants are satisfied' (Jobber & Lancaster 1997: 9).

Like the above-described efforts to alter traditional marketing and selling constructs within mainstream marketing literature, studies at the crossroads of organizational behaviour and sales management – e.g. studies on organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) – also have raised issues on changes in sales organizations and consequent changes in salespeople and customer roles (Organ 1988; Morrison 1994; Podsakoff & MacKenzie 1994; VanDyne et al. 1994; Netemeyer et al. 1997; MacKenzie et al. 1998; VanDyne & LePine 1998;). These changes are in line with recently reported changes in the marketing field in general, which emphasize relationships instead of transactions, networks instead of hierarchies, and co-operation with

customers instead of one-sided, targeted actions towards customers. Paradoxically though, this new academic conception of selling contains similar themes and terminology which is also used in NM practitioner texts, thus implying more consistent and overlapping views than perhaps previously thought.

Overall, both academics and NM practitioners acknowledge the persistent image of selling as an immoral and dishonest activity and profession, and use a variety of rhetorical and fact-construction devices - reification and irony - to construct an opposing view. Despite this shared interest in developing alternative representations of selling, NM handbooks continuously contrast NM with selling in general, and mainstream academic texts are typically silent or use NM as an example of a highly dubious case of personal selling (e.g. Bloch 1996).

The above-described polarization has obviously led both practitioners and academics to strictly define 'The Network Marketing' they operate with, and to exclude 'other' definitions and phenomena from their scope. In this study, however, an alternative strategy is applied. Instead of focusing on the realm of the predefined and uncontested NM, the aim is to explore a variety of competing NM realities from the perspectives of diverse knowledge-creating communities.

1.2 *Knowledge-creating communities*

In this study, I bring together a constructionist approach and apply discourse and rhetorical analyses tools to diverse texts to provide insights into varying conceptions of selling and network marketing. Importantly, I have chosen the texts under the analyses as representatives of the dominant discourse on selling created by particular discourse communities, namely academic researchers and NM practitioners. In addition, I consider the media to be a loose but significant community, which to a considerable extent contributes to creating contesting views on selling and NM through multiple contested discourses.

The term community in this study is adopted in its broad meaning - as *a body of people having common interests* (Oxford Minidictionary 1991) – and as such, is understood to cover heterogenous groups of researchers, salespeople, managers and journalists as forming more or less solid discourse communities. Firstly, I view marketing and organization researchers studying personal selling and sales management issues as an academic discourse community creating knowledge on selling, e.g. through journal articles and textbooks. Secondly, a NM practitioner community is formed by direct selling and NM salespeople, managers, and advocates in various institutions engaged in practitioner discourse through company manuals, marketing materials, and

professional literature among others. Finally, the Finnish press – weekly magazines, newspapers and special publications – is considered as a representative of a broader media community, which produces secondary texts from primary ones (Lehtonen 2000: 123), and thus provides new insights into alternative representations of selling and network marketing.

The decision to focus on academic, practitioner and media communities and their discourses was both theoretically founded as well as pragmatic. As a Ph.D. student I am a member of the Finnish academic community and, as a former salesperson and marketing manager of the Finnish Direct Marketing Association (a lobbying association for NM companies), a member of the practitioner community as well. The membership of these communities assisted my access to the analysed texts, as I was already familiar with these particular discourses.

In the above-mentioned roles, I had also been engaged in a dialogue with representatives of the media, and had therefore some insights into the media representation of NM. However, from the analytical perspective, the analysis of the media texts most importantly provided me a relatively distant position, from which to compare and contrast the findings of the other analyses. This distance was needed, as it facilitated the acceptance of surprising and unexpected aspects, which I as a member of a particular community could have easily overlooked or ignored.

There would have been alternative communities to focus on, too. For example, employment authorities, consumer offices, and other governmental bodies form an official community producing particular type of knowledge on selling and NM, while yet another interesting community comprises customers of NM salespeople.

Altogether, the decision to focus on the selected three communities resulted from their indisputably significant role in forming images of commercial phenomena, such as NM, in our society, and my easy access and prior engagement with these particular discourses. Therefore these three selected discourse communities (Kemmis & McTaggart 2000:574; Tedlock 2000: 459) are the ones that are not only focused on but also addressed in this study.

In a common use of the language and in line with the above-mentioned dictionary definition of a community as ‘a body of people having common interests’, academic interest can be defined as ‘theoretical interest only’ (Oxford Minidictionary 1991). As a consequence, the academic community is commonly understood as primarily interested in advancing theories and on the basis of these theories, providing objective knowledge to practitioners. In a similar vein, practice is often defined as ‘action as opposed to theory’ and the media as ‘conveying information to the public’ (Oxford Minidictionary 1991), i.e. transmitting academic knowledge and information of practical events to the public.

However, the above-described conventional view presumes that the sciences in particular constitute a pure, value-free method of obtaining knowledge about the natural world and practitioner's lives. This view also entails strong presuppositions of the nature and mutual relationships of diverse communities and knowledge. Above all, it presumes communities and the knowledge that they create as unequal and hierarchic. As Longino (2002: 124) notes: 'It is tempting to think that scientific knowledge is like ordinary knowledge except better'.

In this perspective, scientific - and thus better - truth is created through acquiring and cultivating practitioner's knowledge and then transmitting these truths to a wider audience through the media. This perspective, however, easily detaches knowledge from the context in which it is created, and from the conventions and beliefs of communities that participate in its creation.

In this study, I adopt a contrasting, alternative view on knowledge. I understand knowledge to be inseparably entangled in, constituted and limited by established communal procedures and underlying epistemologies and ideologies. In order to make sense of diverse knowledge constructs, the inquirer is required to contextualize the knowledge into wider discourse practices through which socio-cultural issues take their specific forms within given communities.

The concept of a 'knowledge-creating community' in this study is informed by Longino's (1991) idea of scientific knowledge and Nelson's (1993) conception of epistemological communities. For example, Longino (ibid) maintains that knowledge is constructed not by individuals but by an interactive dialogic community, in which individuals and groups holding different points of view engage with each other. In a similar vein, Nelson (ibid: 151) argues that communities should be recognized as the primary agents of epistemology, i.e. the primary generators and repositories of knowledge. She suggests that epistemological communities can be identified in terms of shared knowledge, standards, and practices. For example, scientific communities serve as obvious epistemological communities, with

...bodies of theory, accepted procedures, questions, and projects defining such communities; and membership being a function of education in and allegiance to community-specific knowledge, standards and practices (Nelson 1993: 148).

Also Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996) note that, from a postmodern standpoint, rational agency is replaced with communal agency. Following that, making sense is a communal achievement, and

...if being rational is fundamentally an achievement in language – or actions consistent with a given language – then rationality is inherently a form of communal participation. To speak rationally is to speak according to the conventions of a culture (ibid).

Importantly, I adopt a view that scientific communities are not the only epistemological communities. Instead, as Searle (1995:151) states:

Knowledge can be naturally classified by subject matter, but there is no special subject matter called 'science' or 'scientific knowledge'. There is just knowledge, and 'science' is a name we apply to areas where knowledge has become systematic, as in physics or chemistry.

In addition to the academy, there are many communities, such as professional associations, that develop and share knowledge and standards. As epistemological communities are dynamic, there is no simple criterion for determining their boundaries. According to Nelson (1993: 149), the recognition of these communities is a function of the nature of our projects and purposes, of the definitions communities give to themselves and the projects they undertake, and of the importance such communities attribute to the standards and knowledge that they share with larger groups and those that they do not. In this sense, also the interests of academics, practitioners as well as the media are multifaceted and dynamic. For example, the media not only transmits knowledge, but also reconstructs and alters the issues on which it takes a stand.

Importantly, Nelson (1993: 150) points out that we can each contribute to the knowledge generated by various communities by virtue of our membership and by virtue of our experiences as individuals. Yet, however singular our experience is, what we know on the basis of that experience has been made possible and is compatible with the standards and knowledge of one or more communities of which we are members. Therefore, it is appropriate to see scientific communities as only special cases of a much broader category and to recognize a multiplicity of communities as primary knowers (*ibid*).

Noteworthy, there are conflicting, marginal and muted voices and sub-discourses within any of these communities too. Any given community is likely to supply a whole range of ways of talking about or constructing an object or event, and community members are therefore bound to make choices (Edley 2001). However, as Edley (*ibid*) points out: 'The options aren't always equal'. Some discursive constructs or formulations will be more 'available' than others: they are easier to say and more likely to be understood, supported and accepted. In this study, these privileged formulations are referred to as dominant discourses within communities.

From this perspective, an individual community member or text does not necessarily endorse or confirm the prevalent communal discourse, but nevertheless is likely to be bound to argue against or for that dominant discourse within and outside the community in question. A membership of a given community thus implies possession of and engagement in a particular type of

'knowledge', and members are expected to support the dominant discourse within the community in question. It is therefore important to make explicit the dominant discourses as well as the beliefs and ideologies underlying these discourses.

The following view on practice is also emphasized:

[...different aspects of practice emphasized in different investigations of practice:] The language, discourses, and traditions that constitute practice as it is viewed from the 'subjective', internal social perspective of members of the participants' own discourse community who must represent (describe, interpret, evaluate) practices in order to talk about and develop them, as happens, for example in the discourse communities of professions (the way the language of practice appears to communities of practitioners as they represent their practices to themselves and others) (Kemmis and McTaggart 2000:574).

Consequently, the version of a discourse analysis adopted in this study insists upon seeing texts and discourses as embedded within other types of texts, and furthermore, within some kind of historical and social contexts of the communities producing and reproducing them (see Edley 2001). In this view, it is maintained that the analysis of textual materials created by diverse communities both presumes and enables understanding of socio-cultural practices, i.e. the link between the selling and NM texts – what is written on the paper – and selling and NM practices – in its above-mentioned meaning - can be created through a combination of interpretative and intertextual discourse and rhetorical analysis methods. This understanding is facilitated by the inquirer's membership of and involvement in these particular communities.

To summarize, I adopt a view here that knowledge creation not only allows but also requires representatives of alternative points of view and effective criticism of prevailing background assumptions within a given community (Longino 1991) – and also between diverse communities. In line with taking knowledge-creating communities seriously, I suggest that to understand selling and network marketing *differently* requires also creating knowledge differently. Academic researchers interested in recent changes and challenges in organizational contexts for selling as well as NM practitioners are suggested to benefit from reflective evaluation of customary knowledge creation procedures and their underlying assumptions, as well as a creative use of alternative study approaches.

1.3 Research questions

On the face of it, the conception of selling in the personal selling and sales management literature in general appears rather uniform and uncontested. Within that literature, research specifically on NM is still relatively rare, and NM is most typically considered as a deviant, marginal case. The composition of NM practitioner literature is quite the opposite. Within that literature, the conception of traditional selling is quite negative, and NM is strongly disassociated from it. Finally, within the media, the academic and practitioner views are combined and reconstructed, and thus images of selling and NM are extremely polarized.

In this study, I presume that understanding of a complex socio-cultural, economic phenomenon such as NM is best gained through exposing and comparing the insights and perspectives of diverse discourse communities - including but not limited to academics. Besides the academic view on selling, this study involves the exploration of other prominent communities, e.g. NM practitioners and the media. More precisely, I presume that multifaceted knowledge of selling and NM can be created firstly through assessing the epistemological and methodological commitments of prior sales studies and the ideological engagements of practitioners, and secondly through evaluating the implications of these commitments for established views on selling, NM and salespeople.

The objectives and research questions of this study are the following:

The first objective is to identify the characteristics of the dominant academic discourse on selling. This identification results from answering the following questions: What are the fundamental epistemological and methodological engagements of the academic community of sales researchers? How are selling and salespeople represented on the basis of these fundamentals? What kinds of images result from accommodation of NM into the mainstream academic discourse on selling?

The second objective is to identify the ideological presumptions of the dominant practitioner discourse on NM. This objective is met through answering the following questions: What are the fundamental ideological engagements of the NM practitioner discourse? What kinds of images of NM, NM salespeople, contexts and customers of NM are built on these engagements?

The third objective is to identify the representations of NM and salespeople within the media discourse. This will be done through answering the questions: What is it that makes NM a story in the media? What aspects of NM are depicted in press writings? Through what kinds of

interpretive frames are the established images of NM constituted, held together and given coherence?

Finally, the fourth objective is to identify the overlaps and incongruence of academic, practitioner and media discourses. This goal will be achieved through answering the questions: What are the similarities and differences between the identified discourses? Within which interpretative frames do diverse discourses agree or disagree on competing images?

Altogether, answers to the above questions provide insights into contemporary representations of selling and salespeople within the academic and NM practitioner communities and shed light on clashes between NM and entrenched assumptions of selling in social settings.

1.4 Study structure

Throughout this report, I explore the ways in which academics, NM practitioners and the media construct conflicting images of selling and network marketing through diverse texts. In the first section I provided an introduction to the study, discussed the problem area, and presented the general study objectives.

In Section 2, my purpose is to expound how this study was brought together through a social constructionist framework. Firstly, I describe the general theoretical framework and consequent epistemological engagements of this study. Following that, I explain how my study approach developed from a functionalist to a constructionist framework. Finally, I present the methods and tools used in the data analyses.

Subsequently, the report involves four separate accounts of selling and NM created by diverse knowledge-creating communities. The objective in Sections 3 to 6 is to consider the dominant discourses of selling and NM among academics, practitioners and the media. In the beginning of each section, I present a detailed description of the data procedures conducted in that particular study phase, thus deepening the understanding of the analytical tools used in the study. Then, each section discusses the fundamental features of the discourse in question.

In Section 3, I provide an academic account of selling, which is based on the analysis of selected academic articles and textbooks. This account considers the dominant discourse of selling and salespeople within the academic community – i.e. academic researchers focusing on personal

selling and sales management - and is built on the functionalist research paradigm⁸ governing most contemporary sales studies. My presumption is that the academic discourse provides an established, taken-for-granted view of selling – a ‘standard view’, which at present is contrasted and contested not only by NM practitioners but also by contemporary academics.

In Section 4, I present an account of the established practitioner discourse on NM based on the analysis of NM practitioner booklets and handbooks. On the one hand, this analysis exposes the NM practitioner ideology of independent individuals and free lifestyle. This discourse can be understood as a counter-discourse of conventional corporate life and work hierarchies, through which NM is represented as a counterpoint to traditional selling. On the other hand, the analysis shows similarities and overlaps with most recent academic marketing terminology and themes such as relationship selling and consumer-to-consumer marketing.

In Section 5, I provide an account of the media discourse on NM through the analysis of Finnish press writings. Whereas both academic and practitioner representations of selling and NM seem relatively uniform - although remarkably different compared to each other - the media constructs fragmented and strongly conflicting images. As a result of the analysis, I identify the major themes and a variety of stereotypical representations of the themes, which form four extreme frames for NM stories in the media.

In Section 6, I draw together all the analyses through the application of frame and intertextual analysis methods. The first aim of this section is to identify the central framing principles for diverse stories of selling and NM. The second aim is to evaluate the overlaps and incongruence between academic, NM practitioner and media discourses. It appears that where NM is concerned, the media allows multiple voices and discourses – including academics and practitioners - to compete with each other, and thus provokes new insights in the issue.

Sections 3 to 6 form the ground for my argument, which maintains that the polarized representations of selling and NM within diverse communities are constructed around the same principles, but the meaning of these principles is contextually negotiated on the basis of the ideological and political engagements of each knowledge-creating community in question.

In Section 7, I conclude the report with the summary and critical reflection of the study, and finally discuss the contribution and implications of this study for knowledge-creating communities.

⁸ Chronologically, the social constructionist analysis of these fundamentally functionalist texts served as a starting point for broadening the study scope into practitioner and media texts.

2 METHODOLOGY

Kaleidoscope *n* 1. A toy consisting of a sealed tube containing small loose pieces of coloured glass and mirrors, which reflect these to form changing patterns when the tube is turned: *The bazaar was a kaleidoscope of strange sights and sound* (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, 1995)

Analogous to the definition of a kaleidoscope, this study develops tools – mirrors – to reflect seemingly loose, colourful pieces of knowledge in order to form a stream of consistent images of selling and network marketing. The images change – the tube is turned – and loose pieces re-appear as logical parts of new images, depending on the frames from which the kaleidoscope is viewed. This analogy thus implies epistemological ideas of multiple social realities and contextually meaningful knowledge production and, in effect, positions this study in the social constructionist research tradition.

2.1 ***Constructionist framework***

In general terms, I adopt a view on the world in which we live as not just being there, but as constructed by a whole range of different social arrangements and practices (Potter 1996: 12) – the view which was first introduced to the sociology of knowledge in Berger and Luckmann's classic, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967 ref. Potter 1996:12).

More specifically, this study is informed by Berger and Luckmann (1967 ref. Potter 1996:12), who introduced the establishing processes of social construction as a central topic of social studies. For this study, this means that I am not only concerned with the diverse representations of selling in different contexts, but also focus on the knowledge creation principles, which lead to particular kinds of representations. I also take 'a symmetrical stance to knowledge that is treated as true or false (Potter 1996:12)⁹'. This feature is especially important when dealing with fact-construction because it frees the researcher from taking sides with particular groups, whose beliefs are better established than others, and from deciding what should be counted as true or not (*ibid*). This stance does not, however, exclude critical reflection of potential implications and likely effects of various accounts. In contrast, the analyses of textual representations of selling in this study provide a basis for reflecting on which wider socio-cultural processes the accounts are

⁹ This study takes no stand on philosophical questions of what sort of things exist or what factuality is, but instead focuses on the ways texts construct descriptions as factual, and how other texts undermine those constructions (see Potter 1996:6).

a part of and what can be done with them. Thus, the emphasis in this study is on *how* and *what kinds of* representations of selling and NM different communities construct and hold as true. A consequent choice is to apply a selection of discourse and rhetorical analysis methods in the data analysis.

To some extent, the constructionist approach in this study could also be labelled as 'a postmodern position'. Although Hatch (1977: 44) states that it is impossible to choose a core theory, or a typical set of ideas, to exemplify postmodernism, the interpretation here is that the general meaning of postmodernism refers to a critical evaluation of naturalized truths in diverse contexts. For example, Gergen & Thatchenkery (1996) use the label postmodern to describe a kind of critical social constructionist view, which emphasizes

...the replacement of individual rationality by communal negotiation, the importance of social processes in the observational enterprise, the socio-practical function of language, and the significance of pluralistic cultural investments in the conception of the true and the good.

The chosen study approach here aims at questioning the modernist assumptions of rational agency, empirical knowledge and language as representation (Gergen and Thatchenkery 1996) and maintains that there is a

...*doubt* that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the 'right' or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge
(Richardson 2000: 928)

Hence, this study is influenced by the widening stream of constructionist critique towards taken-for-granted commitments of mainstream marketing thought (see e.g. Moisander 2001). For example, Moisander (2001:138) in her critical study of discourses of green consumerism contrasted basic philosophical differences between experimentalist and Foucauldian constructionist approaches to consumer research. In the following, I apply her summary to the extent that it characterizes relevant issues in this study¹⁰ (Figure 2).

¹⁰ Notably, a functionalist study approach was both applied and critically evaluated during this Ph.D. study process, although the final study report is based on the social constructionist approach.

Figure 2. Some basic philosophical differences between the experimentalist and social constructionist research approaches and remarks of this study

Basic assumptions and standards	Experimentalist approach (mainstream)	Social constructionist approach	Remarks of this study
Language and representation	Language mirrors social reality 'Reflective' or 'intentional' approach to representation	Language constructs social reality 'Constructionist' approach to representation (meaning is produced in social interaction)	Focus on multiple textual representations
Subjectivity and view of mankind	Humanist, individual approach to subjectivity: self, personality Single, pre-discursive core self (centred self) Transcendentally singular, independent, self-contained and self-generative individual agents (choosing according to their individual interests)	Postmodern approach to subjectivity: subject Multiple discursively produced selves or subject positions Distributed, emergent and contextual 'self'	Focus on salespeople representations in different contexts; contrast between functionalist, fixed roles and socially constructed images
Social reality	External tangible structure with discrete elements A set of social facts, including overt acts, beliefs, values and affective states that describe the motivations for social behaviour	A collection of social texts, discursively produced in a field of power/knowledge, through language and in language A collection of culturally standardized discourses, (re)produced, contested and transformed in systems of representation through text, talk, and signifying practices	From the social constructionist perspective, selling is discursively constructed in social texts, and many of the established stereotypes and dichotomies of, e.g., organization and salespeople (Firat and Venkatesh 1995, 245 in Moisander 2001, 39) are questioned.
Nature of scientific knowledge	Objective, based on objective scientific methods, approaching the 'truth' Independent of ideological concerns and interests	Contextual, historical, constituted by power in different games of truth. Influenced by the beliefs, values and standards of the practitioners of science; inherently social and value-laden	Academic community produces a culturally standardized discourse entangled in, e.g., practitioner and media discourses. Conflicts arise from and reflect a contestation of the ideologies and beliefs of knowledge-creating communities.
Established cognitive goals	The goal of knowledge production is to provide a literal account of social reality	The goal of knowledge production is to provide an account of how versions of social reality are produced discursively	The goal is to provide diverse accounts of selling and NM.
Established cognitive values	Empirical accuracy, simplicity, consistency, explanatory power, etc.	Also applicability to human needs, decentralization of power	Introducing multiple, perhaps previously muted voices.
Methodological prescriptions	Testing theoretically or empirically pre-defined empirical hypotheses by laboratory experiments or statistical analyses of survey data	Analysis of the content, structure and effects of culturally standardized discourses and systems of representation	Discursively oriented analyses of texts produced by diverse knowledge-creating communities.

Source: Adopted from Moisander, 2001.

In this study, I use the above classification as a very concrete guiding tool: firstly to identify the basic assumptions underlying sales studies, secondly to apply the social constructionist approach in a variety of sales texts, and finally to highlight the overlaps and differences between different discourses¹¹.

Throughout this study report, I mainly use the terms functionalist and empirical-analytic as opposites of the theoretical and methodological engagements of the social constructionist approach adopted in this study.

More precisely, I define the above terms broadly as follows. Functionalism is the oldest, and still the dominant, theoretical perspective in sociology and many other social sciences. Within the functionalist paradigm, sociological concerns have traditionally been approached from a realist, positivist, determinist and nomothetic standpoint (Burrell & Morgan 1979: 25-26)¹². This perspective is built on two emphases: application of the scientific method to the objective social world and use of an analogy between the individual organism and society. The emphasis on scientific method leads to the assertion that one can study the social world in the same ways as one studies the physical world. ([Http://web.grinnell.edu](http://web.grinnell.edu)).

Empirical-analytic science refers to science as '...guided by a cognitive interest in gaining greater prediction and control over unruly natural and social forces', and as '...attempts to calculate and master the behaviour of humans as well as the elements of the natural world'. This type of science is manifest e.g. in the studies that have sought to identify the contingencies that are deemed to render employee productivity and consumer behaviour more predictable and controllable (Habermas 1972 ref. Alvesson and Willmott 1996:50).

The above terms are not used synonymously, but instead they are used to highlight the epistemological or methodological differences between the philosophical or epistemological stance in question, and the approach of this study. However, both terms can be argued to some extent reflect (implicitly or explicitly) the ontological, epistemological and methodological presumptions of scientific realists, who maintain

...that the characteristic product of successful scientific research is knowledge of largely theory-independent phenomena and that such knowledge is possible (indeed actual) even

¹¹ A continuous dialogue between the two different approaches (Figure 2) facilitated the re-analysis and re-evaluation of the data through alternative lenses after they had been viewed from a positivist perspective.

¹² Noteworthy, within the academic community, the conceptions of e.g. realism are varied, and naive realism and positivism represent only one extreme of the present day philosophical and ontological stances.

in those cases in which the relevant phenomena are not, in any non-question-begging sense, observable (Boyd 2002).

As a contrast, I refer to social constructionism here as an epistemological stance, from which one has no interest in nor access to questions of the factuality of the world, but instead from which one can focus on the processes through which diverse social realities are discursively created.

Noteworthy, in the personal selling and sales management research area a social constructionist approach has rarely been applied so far. Therefore, the contrast between the functionalist and constructionist approaches is important not only to evaluate prevalent research practices but also to generate a constructionist view on selling and salespeople representations.

In applying a constructionist approach, the term *construct* reflects the view that knowledge, standards of evidence and methodologies are 'of our own making' (Nelson 1993: 141) rather than passively discovered pieces adding to a unique, true theory, and that knowledge is constructed in the contexts of our various projects and practices. Furthermore, the knowledge we build both shapes our experience as individuals into coherent accounts and determines what we count as evidence. In Nelson's (1993:141) words: the social construction of knowledge runs deep on this view.

Importantly, there are also constraints on knowledge. The standards of evidence, ontology, and methodologies we adopt and the knowledge we build is communal, interconnected, interdependent, and relative to larger blocks of known things and undertaken projects, which constrain beliefs and knowledge claims (Nelson *ibid*). This view becomes important in this study approach, as in addition to focusing on textual representations of NM, it emphasizes the idea of knowledge-creating communities and introduces the idea of the inextricable nature of knowledge and the context in which it is created. A serious concern in communal knowledge results in adopting the following view on the study of discourse: to say something about texts both presumes and enables us to say something about social communities and the interaction creating these texts (see for example Fairclough 1995:62 on analysis of the socio-cultural practice dimension of a communicative event).

Notably, in identifying the dominant academic, practitioner and media discourses I apply a meta-analysis of the prior literature, discourse and rhetorical analyses of selected texts, and more interpretative intertextual analysis of relations between the texts, discourses and socio-cultural practices. In the analysis of academic texts, the emphasis is clearly on the meta-analysis of prior literature; and the analysis is backed up by the literature review on social constructionist critics towards mainstream marketing studies. In the analysis of the NM practitioner texts, the emphasis

is on discourse and rhetorical analyses methods, and finally, in the analysis of press writings I use all the above-mentioned methods and, additionally, applications of the frame and intertextual analyses. As a consequence, this study falls somewhere in between the strict textual and more interpretative cultural analysis of socially produced writings and the communities within which they are created.

In the following section I explain how this study proceeded chronologically from a functionalist to a constructionist study. Following that, I detail the analytical methods applied in the study.

2.2 General data analysis methods

In retrospect, this study process involved two seemingly separate phases and several data analyses. During the first study phase, I collected and analysed interview, survey and press writings data from a broadly defined functionalist perspective. This view was adopted from the mainstream marketing studies, and as such, represented 'a received view' within the academic community. During the second phase, I adopted a social constructionist study approach and applied discourse and rhetorical analysis methods to the selected sets of written materials¹³.

Although it was finally decided to apply the constructionist approach in the study, the preliminary study phase was important for two reasons. Firstly, during that period I studied mainstream marketing, personal selling and sales management literature and, as a consequence, became familiar with the established view on selling. Secondly, I was 'hands-on' involved in data collection and analyses procedures from a functionalist perspective, and thus participated in typical knowledge-creating processes characterizing mainstream sales studies. In this report, I briefly describe some aspects of the first study phase, as it has had a significant influence on the second study phase as well. In Section 3, I also include a survey study report, which I conducted during the first study phase as an example of the dominant academic discourse. In Figure 3 I summarize the general data collection and analysis procedures of this study in chronological order.

During the first study phase, I collected and analysed NM practitioner literature – how-to-do-it booklets, industry reviews and company manuals as well as press writings – to gain a contextual understanding of NM. The best knowledge that could be garnered in the factist approach to

¹³ The findings of the first study phase will be presented in this study report as an example of mainstream academic discourse on the roles of salespeople, but the emphasis is on constructionist analyses of academic, practitioner and media discourses.

these materials was the understanding of how polarized the descriptions and statements of every aspect of NM were, and how representations of salespeople within different communities – although uniform as such – were criticized and contested in the media. First of all, there was no nearly unanimous definition of NM, nor was there an agreement on the moral, legal, or economic status of the phenomenon. Secondly, the writings appeared to deal with many diverse phenomena instead of focusing on one clearly distinguished and predefined phenomenon. For me, it appeared impossible to make sense of this controversy through traditional study approaches.

To understand the foundations for differing views, it became necessary to bring together an alternative approach. To do so, I made a broad distinction between ‘functionalist’ and ‘constructionist’ approaches, which to a large extent corresponds with the distinction between experimentalist and constructionist approaches (Moisander 2001: 138). At that time I also got involved in texts and discussions with colleagues interested in social constructionist, feminist, and postmodern/post-structural theories and methods¹⁴, which provided new insights into how to study social matters as and in texts. This exposure to new ideas worked as an impetus to apply a constructionist approach to the analysis of sales texts.

From a constructionist perspective, I viewed textual materials as reflecting and constructing the social realities of the academic and NM practitioner communities and the media, and representations of salespeople within these communities. This approach understood written materials as ‘social facts’ in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways. Instead of being transparent representations of organizational routines or processes they construct particular kinds of representations with their own conventions (Atkinson & Coffey 1997: 47).

From that perspective, I scrutinized selected academic reports, articles and textbooks on selling as socially produced texts based on ideologies, ontology and epistemologies of a particular scientific community. During the second study phase, I firstly assessed the academic representation of selling and salespeople grounded on the functionalist paradigm. This assessment was based on a prior constructionist and critical theory studies as well as discourse analysis of selected academic texts. Following that, I brought a selection of the NM practitioner literature and press writings into the analysis in order to broaden the received view of selling

¹⁴ These terms are of course an ambiguous selection of labels and markers for diverse ontological, epistemological and methodological views, but for me they served as key words for further inquiries on alternative study approaches.

within the academic community. The analytical focus here was on discursive practices and rhetorical devices across diverse texts, and the ‘facts’ which they were purported to construct.

Thus, on the basis of the second study phase, I generated constructionist accounts of selling and identified conflicts and overlaps within diverse representations. This meant iterating between reviewed literature, data analyses and my own intuition in order to expose divergent views of themes that span diverse accounts. This process guided and sharpened the construction and comparison of the accounts.

A shift from a functionalist to a constructionist approach had analogical phases with what Lewis and Grimes (1999) have termed ‘multiparadigm coding’ and ‘writing paradigm accounts’. In their view, multiparadigm coding is typically a two-part process: theorists become intimate with and then impose alternative spins on the data. During the first study phase, I applied and became intimate with the functionalist research stream on selling, and during the second study phase, I imposed alternative ‘lenses’ on the data. Although the general paradigmatic position of this study is social constructionist, the process thus involved exposure to and application of the functionalist epistemology and methodology (e.g. the conduct of a survey study).

According to Morgan (1983 ref. Lewis & Grimes 1999), taking detailed notes helps theorists develop their first impressions of nuances and patterns in the data in the initial analysis. Theorists then follow their itinerary, ‘reading’ the data through each lens. Following this process, their interpretations become a combination of what they already know, what they read, and which lens they bring to the analysis (*ibid*). While Lewis and Grimes (*ibid*) in their study concentrated on identifying separate scientific paradigms within the academic community, the key issue in this study was the lack of multiparadigm studies – not the variety of them¹⁵. Therefore I chose to focus also on communities outside the academic field, which all contributed to the creation of competing discourses on selling.

Throughout the study process, I used multiple research methods and triangulation¹⁶ to create an enlightened understanding. Triangulation in this context means ‘the display of multiple, refracted realities simultaneously’ and ‘Readers are invited to explore competing visions of the context, to become immersed in and merge with new realities to comprehend’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 6). In this study, this was achieved through displaying simultaneously academic, NM practitioner and

¹⁵ The term multiparadigm here refers to ontologically, epistemologically or methodologically varying studies.

¹⁶ Of the different types of triangulation (Denzin 1978), I have applied 1) the use of a variety of data sources, 2) the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data, and 3) the use of multiple methods to study a single problem.

media realities of selling, and exposing the readers to competing truths of selling and NM. Instead of reflecting an attempt to capture an ‘objective truth’ of the reality (Moisander 2001: 218), the use of triangulation in this study thus reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 5).

Importantly, Silverman (2001: 234-235) argues that triangulation should not be mistakenly used as a test of validity by counterposing different contexts or adjudicating between different accounts. Through this kind of mistake, the role of the researcher would be reduced to a mere ‘ironist’, who ignores ‘the context-bound and skilful character of social interaction and assumes that members are ‘cultural dopes’, who need a social scientist to dispel their illusions (Garfinkel 1967; Bloor 1978 ref. Silverman 2001: 234-235’).

In this study, each account presented in Sections 3, 4 and 5 aims at exposing dominant discursive features across the data, and thus provides a simplification, a caricature of a colourful and dynamic discourse within the community in question. Although any of the images in these accounts may appear ironic or exaggerated from another perspective, it is not the intention of this study to adjudicate or order the accounts by superiority. In contrast, through situating the images in diverse contexts and communities and putting the accounts into interaction in Section 6, I show how triangulation assists in understanding *how* and *why* images appear to be different or distorted depending on the perspective of the viewer¹⁷.

In the following sections, I describe the analysis methods used in this study.

¹⁷ For instance, deeply devoted and enthusiastic NM salespeople are typically characterized in ironic terms both in academic and media texts. Analysis of practitioner discourse helps us to understand the conventions against which network marketing advocates articulate their profession on the one hand, as well as the conventions that are being protected through irony on the other hand.

Figure 3. A summary of the general data and study procedures

Data description	Initial aim to collect the data	Collection procedure	First study phase: realist perspective	Second study phase: constructionist perspective
Practitioner handbooks	Data were first collected to support my work as a salesperson and to keep up with industry developments in Finland.	No systematic collection procedure.	The data were utilized as secondary data to provide a contextual and historical background of NM for study purposes.	A selection of practitioner booklets was analysed in order to identify the fundamentals of NM practitioner discourse.
Interviews	The aim was to investigate and define the organizational roles of the NM salespeople through a survey, and the interviews were conducted as a pilot study	Selected NM salespeople were all members of the board of a salespeople association, and as board members, they 'were committed to advocate legal, professional and ethical business practices in Finland'. I knew each source personally beforehand, which served as an additional selection criterion for me.	The interviews were analysed from a factist perspective to provide practitioner/expert views on NM and to increase pre-understanding of NM salespeople roles.	Excerpts from interviews were selectively used in this report to illustrate the practitioner discourse and to reflect how different types of discourses on selling were intertwined in diverse texts.
Survey data	The aim was to create an understanding of the roles of NM salespeople through a survey study and statistical analysis of the self-report data.	The questionnaire was sent to 1100 active salespeople of a NM company called LR-Cosmetics and Marketing Ltd.	The collected data were analysed through principal component analysis and cluster analysis to identify the components of networking behaviour and to categorize salespeople on the basis of their self-reported role definitions.	An extract of this survey study report was used as an example of academic discourse on selling, NM ad NM salespeople.
Press writings	Press writings were collected to keep up with the industry events and developments.	No systematic sampling procedure. In addition to collecting all possible articles on NM topics, internet searches were occasionally performed to find more articles.	Interpretive analysis of popular themes, interviewed people and controversial statements.	An application of rhetorical and discourse analysis was used to identify the frames constituting diverse NM images in the media.

2.2.1 Focus on text and discourse

In this study, the concepts of 'a text' and 'a discourse' are complementary, and lend support to each other. As people produce meanings in discourses, the results may be texts – speech, writing, sound and/or visual images – similar to each other in the way that they share the central assumptions of the discourse. In accordance with this view, when I focus on a particular case of writing in the analysis, I talk about 'texts' and when the focus is on more universal patterns and

matters that link the texts to other texts and human practices, I talk about ‘discourses’ (see Lehtonen 2000: 42).

Lehtonen (2000: 41) states that the concept of ‘discourse’ has been used in the attempt to get a grip on the polysemy and mutability of language. According to Stuart Hall (1992: 291 ref. Lehtonen 2000), discourse is defined as

...a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits other ways in which the topic can be constructed.

Thus, discursive frameworks provide people with coherent interpretive frameworks and discursive practices for representing or constructing knowledge about a particular topic or practice (Moisander 2001: 114).

Davies and Harre (1990) point out the contesting potential of diverse discourses and state that a discourse is

...an institutionalised use of language and language-like sign systems. Institutionalisation can occur at the disciplinary, the political, the cultural and the small group level. There can be discourses that develop around specific topic, such as gender or race. Discourses can compete with each other or they can create distinct and incompatible versions of reality. To know anything is to know in terms of one or more discourses.

In this study, focus on discourse means that the concern is with texts as parts of social practices (see Potter 1996: 107). Importantly, although the analytical emphasis is on texts, the analysis is not treated in isolation from the analysis of discourse practices and socio-cultural practices (see Fairclough 1995:19¹⁸).

A link between the term discourse and knowledge creating or discourse community can be found, e.g., in Fairclough’s (1995: 56) definition of discourse. He defines discourse as

...the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view.

In this study, it is the perspective of a knowledge-creating community that provides this particular point of view.

¹⁸ Noteworthy, Wetherell (2001:395) categorizes Fairclough as ‘a realist critical discourse analyst’. In contrast, e.g. Potter investigates ‘how things that look like truth and get taken as truth are produced discursively and rhetorically’ (Potter 1996 ref. Wetherell 2001:395) – and thus avoids taking sides in the on-going debate about the relationship between discourse and other than socially produced real ‘reality’.

The notion of dominant discourses within given communities does not exclude interaction and mixture of discourses within each domain. On the contrary, I view academic and practitioner communities as well as the media as communicative systems of constructing meaning. In this view, a dominant discourse of a community on a given subject is constantly modified and contrasted with contesting discourses within and outside of the community.

2.2.2 Frame analysis

One of the central methods of analysis in this study is the application of frame analysis to the textual data. Frame analysis was used in the analysis of press writings, and finally in combining and concluding the insights from diverse accounts. In this study, I used the concept of frame primarily as a tool for distinguishing the principles that bound competing stories within the media discourse in particular. In this kind of use, identification of frames explicitly presumes contrasting views within a particular discourse and thus assists in identifying boundaries between diverse views.

Notably, both dominant academic and practitioner discourses were so consistent and uniform that contrasting discourses were difficult to identify within the selected data. Only after the press writings analysis (and the focus on the intertextuality of diverse discourses), did it become possible to outline the framing principles for academic and practitioner discourses as well. In a very concrete way, the analytic use of the concept of frame thus presumed not only an issue to be framed, but also something to be left outside of the frames.

In the press writings analysis, I applied the concept of frame in a very pragmatic way as *a central organizing principle that holds together and gives coherence and meaning to a diverse array of symbols in texts* (see Gamson et al. 1992). In this approach, a frame is conceived like a storyline or unfolding narrative about an issue (*ibid*), NM in this case. On the other hand, I used the concept of discourse at a higher abstraction level to refer to universal patterns and matters that link the texts to other texts and human practices (Lehtonen 200:42).

For example, the press writings data consist of several writings focusing on NM. At a general level, these articles reflect the media discourse of selling in social settings. In the analysis, I identified several repetitive stereotypes of NM themes, which were used in descriptions of NM – for example descriptions of NM salespeople and NM business logics. Within these two categories, the texts constructed diverse conflicting representations, e.g. salespeople as *businesswomen, conmen or housewives* and NM businesses as *dabbling, money machines or effective direct marketing channels*. In the course of the analysis, I noted that while there are opposing views *within*

the categories, it appeared possible to identify consistent stories *between* the categories. Through identifying the central organizing principles distinguishing NM stories, a frame or a storyline underlying conflicting descriptions could also be unfolded.

Within one of the frames, NM is constructed as an effective direct marketing method, and consequently, salespeople as businesswomen. On the other hand, another frame constructs salespeople as housewives, and NM consequently as dabbling. Altogether, it could be concluded that the media creates and reflects contradictory discourses on selling in social settings in general, and that the identification of the central organizing principles – frames – makes competing representations of NM visible and understandable in the context of that discourse. In this kind of use, discourse is thus a broader and more abstract concept than frame, and frames can be understood as boundaries between competing sub-discourses.

The concept of frame originates from Goffman's (1974) work on organization of the experience. The frame in his work refers to the inevitably relational character of meaning. In the foreword of Goffman's *Frame Analysis*, Berger (1985: xiii in Goffman 1974) states that in this sense, a frame is

...a tangible metaphor for what other sociologists have tried to invoke by words like 'background', 'setting', 'context', or a phrase like 'in terms of'.

Goffman (1974: 8) put the mundane question 'what is it that's going on here?', and questioned the possibility of one unanimous, 'official and real' explanation for any social situation. His argument was that definitions of a situation are built on in accordance with principles of organization, which govern social events and our subjective involvement in them.

According to Alasuutari (1995: 111):

Goffman looks at the self as a social construct flowing from the structure of interaction. This line of analysis highlights the fact that identities vary across different situations. Individuals are always constituted in different situations as different kinds of identities, and even in the same situation the determinants of self may rapidly change. This line of argumentation critically distances itself from the view that the individual's personality is a quality or characteristic which changes very slowly, if at all. This approach is most clearly seen in Goffman's (1974) concept of frame. By frame, Goffman refers to sets of rules that constitute activities so that they are defined as activities of certain type. When in everyday life we form some picture of 'what is going on', we have located a frame that makes a situation (at least partially) understandable.

Thus, the frame determines the characteristics, obligations and rights which participants tacitly address to each other as being taken for granted (Peräkylä 1990:160).

Alasuutari (1995: 111) continues that the concept of frame can be approached from interactionism, structuralism and discourse analysis perspectives. From a cognitive/symbolic interaction perspective, a frame is a framework for interpretation, and different frames can be applied to a certain situation to make them appear in a different light. From the structuralism perspective, the interpretation of meanings is regulated by the frames existing within the cultural context and within which expressions take on a meaning, and the interpretation takes place by combining those frames. Finally, the discourse-analytical and ethno-methodological approach assumes that situations are always framed in one way or another, and emphasizes the view that it is the framework that constitutes the situation (*ibid*).

For example, already Schutz (1964 ref. Holstein and Gubrium 1994: 263) stressed the constitutive nature of consciousness and interaction, and argued that

...the social sciences should focus on the ways that the life world – that is, the experiential world every person takes for granted – is produced and experienced by members. [...] an individual approaches the life world with a stock of knowledge composed of commonsense constructs and categories that are social in origin. These images, theories, ideas, values and attitudes are applied to aspects of experience, making them meaningful. Stocks of knowledge are resources with which persons interpret experience, grasp the intentions and motivations of others, achieve inter-subjective understandings, and coordinate actions. Stocks of knowledge produce a familiar world, one with which members already seems to be acquainted.

In this sense, the concept of frame has been used synonymously with the stocks of knowledge in some ethno-methodological approaches.

The concept of frame in this study is also informed by prior analyses of the media discourse, in which the concept of frame has played the same role as the concept of schema in cognitive psychology. In this view, the frame is a central organizing principle that holds together and gives coherence and meaning to a diverse array of symbols (Gamson et al. 1992). Also, Davies and Harre (1990) linked ‘conceptual scheme’ in contemporary philosophy of science with the concept of ‘discourse’ in their social theory – the important distinction between the two terms being that conceptual schemes are static repertoires located primarily in the mind of each thinker or researcher almost as a personal possession, whereas discourse is a multifaceted public process through which meanings are progressively and dynamically achieved.

As shown above, the concepts of frame and discourse in diverse contexts are elusive, ambiguous, and partly overlapping. For example, one key point of departure from Goffman’s use of the frame analysis in this study is the focus on textual realities instead of face-to-face interaction. This

approach stresses particularly that linguistic interaction comprises not only the exchange of information but also the production of different states of affairs, positions and identities (Alasuutari 1995:114).

A reading of Goffman's extensive book 'An Essay on the Organization of Experience – Frame analysis' (1974) through a constructionist and discourse analytical lens provides a background for the analyses in this study. To summarize, I view academics, practitioners and the media as communities engaged in culturally and socially embedded and constructed discourses of selling in social settings, each making up and framing textual representations of selling and NM on the basis of their epistemological and ideological presuppositions and consequent political objectives.

2.2.3 Intertextuality

The notion of intertextuality became highly relevant and concrete when I tried to make sense of the media discourse of NM. Intertextual analysis assisted in seeing how academics, NM practitioners and the media all refer to, contest or confirm various discourses on selling in social settings. On the basis of their specific purposes, each community adopts suitable discursive elements and promotes chosen representations through established communal knowledge-creating procedures¹⁹.

Atkinson and Coffey (1997: 55) state that documents do not construct systems or domains of documentary reality as individual separate activities, i.e. there is no 'text in itself' (Lehtonen 2000: 120). Documents always refer to other realities and domains, and to other documents. Therefore, the analysis of documentary reality must look beyond separate texts and ask how they are interrelated (Atkinson and Coffey 1997: 55). In this study, this task was consciously facilitated through selecting several different data types for the analysis.

For example, within one of the identified frames media texts construct a coherent story of NM in which salespeople images – whether businesswomen or -men – are stereotypically masculine constructs. Through intertextual analysis, the story within this frame was shown to connect to the established academic discourse of selling, in which professional salespeople are traditionally constructed as masculine characters. Simultaneously, media texts create images of conmen acting professionally, legally but unethically – images that resonate with descriptions of traditional selling depicted and opposed within academic texts as well.

¹⁹ Among these procedures are also the genres of created texts.

Atkinson and Coffey (ibid: 57) derive the notion of intertextuality from the contemporary literary criticism, in which context it is used to refer to the fact that literary texts are not isolated and that they do not refer just to one fictional world. Instead, they include other texts of the same genre, or other kinds of textual products, e.g. journalism.

According to Lehtonen (2000: 129) in literature genres are ‘the largely wordless knowledge of expectations and techniques that direct reading and are utilized in reading. There is no situation where a pure text first exists and then settles within different contexts’. On the contrary, Lehtonen (ibid) continues: ‘Contexts – in this case, generic conventions – are always already within texts’.

Genres can be described in terms of their organizational properties (Fairclough 1995: 56). For example, an interview in a newspaper is structured differently to an advertisement (ibid), or an article in an academic journal differently to an article in a weekly magazine. Noteworthy, classification of functionally different discursive practices may be at various levels on generality. In this study, genres were considered at a very general level, e.g. highlighting differences between academic articles and practitioner handbooks, not *within* these general genres. As an exception, in press writings, differences, e.g. between hard news and commentary articles, were noted, but again, only at a general level. Instead, the choice was to focus on mixed intertextuality, where, e.g., the above-mentioned genres were merged in a more complex manner (see Fairclough 1995: 88-89).

Thus, it is possible to analyse texts in terms of these intertextual relationships, tracing their similarities and differences (Atkinson and Coffey 2000: 129). According to Fairclough (1995: 61), when linguistic analysis is descriptive in nature, intertextual analysis is interpretative and the analyst is more dependent upon social and cultural understanding:

The question one is asking is what genres and discourses were drawn upon in producing the text, and what traces of them are there in the text? [...]Linguistic features of texts provide evidence – an interpretation which locates the text in relation to social repertoires of discourse practices, i.e. orders of discourse. It is a cultural interpretation in that it locates the particular text within that facet of the culture that is constituted by orders of discourse (ibid).

Thus, through the intertextual analysis – and social and cultural understanding - it became possible to abstract from the ‘text on paper’ into the language on the one hand and further into society and culture on the other hand (Fairclough 1995: 61-62). My experience is that the application of frame analysis with the purpose of identifying interconnected and overlapping

frames simultaneously revealed important intertextual relationships between different social realities.

2.2.4 Analytic foci

To a certain extent, each of Sections 3-5 provides a separate account based on particular data analyses, and Section 6 draws these accounts together. However, in the spirit of the chosen methodological stand, Sections 3 to 5 are also written in a more reflective manner, thus referring to and pointing out intertextual relations, overlaps and conflicts between previous analyses. In this sense, each subsequent section builds on prior analyses, and is purported to add to the overall understanding of conflicting views. With regard to a more quantitatively oriented reader, it should also be noted that the intention is not to keep the analyses, findings and conclusions in artificial isolation of each other. In contrast, the aim is to discuss and reflect the unfolding issues throughout the study report.

Notably, the above stated does not exclude the importance of clearly depicting the path from the text analysis to the identification of discursive characteristics, and to discussion of potential implications of the discourses on wider social contexts. To expose the logic of the analyses to the reader, I have included a comprehensive selection of visibly marked extracts from the data in Sections 3-6, which will be expanded upon in a more or less detailed manner following the actual analysis process. The data extracts highlight the analysis process, which resulted in the conclusions, reflections and discussions comprising this report.

In the following data analyses, the foci are on rhetorical constructs of selling, NM and salespeople, although the nature – rules and conventions of textual representation - of these particular textual materials will also be touched. Through focusing on selected framing devices and rhetorical and fact-constructing techniques, my objective is to *understand what kinds of representations of selling, NM and salespeople are created through different texts and discourses.*

According to Moisander (2001:139), the analytic focus in discursively oriented qualitative research revolves around the ways in which representations are produced in social texts, i.e. on the rules and conventions according to which they are structured, and on the image of reality that the texts project. As language is viewed as a medium for interaction, analysis of discourses also becomes an analysis of what people do (Potter 1997: 145).

In the following, I will explain and give examples of the discursive techniques and rhetorical and framing devices that I focused on in the analyses. Within the diverse data sets, some techniques

were used more often than others. Although the following list is not theoretically comprehensive, it proved both extensive and pragmatic enough for the purposes of this study.

Framing devices

Metaphors, examples, catchphrases, descriptions and categorizations are typical devices used for framing purposes (Väliverronen 1996:110)²⁰. In this study, I focus on the following devices in identifying fundamental discursive characteristics of academic and practitioner discourses, and diverse frames within media discourse:

Metaphors, examples, catchphrases Metaphors are figures of speech, which produce meanings through analogies by explaining or interpreting some matter with the aid of another (Lehtonen 2000: 90). According to Jokinen (1999b: 148), the use of a metaphor makes a new issue understandable through associating it with meanings of previously known issues. At the same time, a metaphor makes a known issue appear to be unknown through revealing new features about a previously known issue (Kakkuri-Knuutila 1998: 258-260; Aro 1999: 45 ref. Jokinen 1999b: 148).

Importantly, Fairclough (1995: 114) states that a choice of metaphor may be a key factor in differentiating representations in any domain, literary or non-literary, including even scientific and technological. In a similar way, examples and catchphrases (often metaphors as such) condense meanings of an issue and direct respective associations to another issue.

For example, in an article published in a church's newspaper, NM was explicitly associated with exploitative capitalism:²¹

Ammattioikeusliikkeeltä meni vuosikymmeniä saavuttaakseen tilanteen, jossa pääomanomistajat eivät voi törkeästi riistää omia työntekijöitään. Niissä maissa, joissa tällaista systeemiä ei ole, riistoa esiintyy. Naiset ja lapset saavat parin markan palkkion paikkimistaan töistä, kun sikariporras kerää voitot kotiin. Samanlainen on asetelma verkostomarkkinoinnissa.

It took decades for the trade-union movement to achieve a situation in which the capitalists can not brutally exploit their own workers. In countries where there is no such movement, exploitation still exists. Women and children earn a pittance for their hard work, while the

²⁰ This categorization of framing devices is pragmatic and analytical, as, e.g., catchphrases and descriptions are often also metaphors and some of the framing devices also overlap with rhetorical and fact-construction devices used in the later stages of the analysis (for a similar choice, see, e.g., Väliverronen 1996:218).

²¹ I use a different typeface to distinguish data extracts from citations.

wealthy collect the money. The same kind of situation applies in NM. (Espoon seurakuntasanomat 15.10.1998/press writings data²²).

The exploitative capitalism metaphor puts NM salespeople into a category of 'victims of a superior system' together with exploited women and children. This association is further strengthened in the article with visual imagery, i.e. through contrasting small photographs of women's pantyhose, underpants, lipsticks and shampoos with a huge photo of paper money. In the text, the undervalued nature of the above-mentioned products – and their sellers and user as well - is brought up through the ironic use of language:

Huuhaatuotteiden myynnillä on koulutettu lapsia ja hankittu välttämätöntä toimeentuloa... Idea on se, että pikkuhousuja, pilleripurkkeja, pesuaineita ja hilavittumia myydään lähipiirissä.

Through selling these trivial products, people have put their children through school and earned their living ...The idea is to sell panties, pills, detergents and widgets among a circle of acquaintances. (Espoon seurakuntasanomat 15.10.1998/PWD).

The above extract shows clearly how a purported frame constitutes identities, objects and events. In this case, the choice of 'the exploitative capitalism' metaphor spells out and confirms an unethical, non-professional frame for network marketing, which consequently holds products such as underwear and shampoos in low esteem²³. The chosen metaphor thus exposes dichotomies of a patriarchal discourse, which values masculine and technology (capitalism and money bills) over feminine and household products (pantyhose and shampoos). Network marketing practices –or more specifically, NM practitioner discourse – contest these fundamental dichotomies through incorporating traditionally feminine characteristics into the selling construct. From this perspective, the choice of a rather strong metaphor and the ironic use of culturally feminine products in the extract reflect an interest in preserving the traditional selling discourse on the one hand and the discourse of the superior masculine on the other hand.

Descriptions and categorizations Categorization is a fundamental rhetorical strategy and a central feature in any description (see Fairclough 1995: 113; Potter 1996: 177; Jokinen 1999b: 130; Moisander 2001: 150). A description formulates an object, person or event into something with specific characteristics: good/bad, taken seriously/deemed negligible, violent/non-violent,

²² In this report, I mark the extracts drawn from the press writings data (Appendix 7) with the notation 'press writings data' or PWD as the references cannot be found in the list of references.

²³ An analyst can at this point go further and ask questions such as: what would happen if we changed the products in the extract into hammers, hooks and drilling machines? Or the visual images into neckties and shavers? Would these products enforce the ironic image of network marketing as an unethical and exploitative project, or would they conflict with this view?

and so on. Another role of descriptions is to present some action as routine or conversely, exceptional (Potter 1996:111; Jokinen 1999b:129-130). Importantly, category entitlement (Potter 1996: 132) refers to the idea that certain categories of people, in certain contexts, are treated as more knowledgeable than in other contexts or categories²⁴.

For example, I have been occasionally interviewed or been asked to provide background information to the media about NM during the past ten years. In these media stories, I was positioned into several diverse categories, for example *unemployed mother of a two-month-old baby, researcher and Ph.D., student* and so on. These categories clearly constructed not only my position as an interviewed person, but also images of NM salespeople and the NM business concept as a whole. For instance, *a woman on maternity leave* appears as more knowledgeable than *a PhD student of marketing* and, as such, is more suitable to give her testimonial of the NM profession, if the purpose is to imply that NM is suitable for almost anyone, requires no previous education, and is a low-risk, low-cost opportunity for women with no background in the business area. On the other hand, when NM is promoted as an attractive, serious business – and defended against the alternative construction of mere dabbling and social activity – it is more appropriate to interview *a researcher* than a mother or, let's say, *a part-time salesperson in a jewellery company*. The former category would construct my statements as objective and neutral, whereas the latter would apparently expose my personal stake behind the statements²⁵.

Rhetorical and fact-constructing techniques

I also paid attention to the following rhetorical and fact-constructing features of the texts. Potter (1996:106) states that rhetoric should be seen as a pervasive feature of how people interact and arrive at an understanding. Thus, rhetoric is, fundamentally, about how texts (spoken and written) persuade their readers. We all use rhetorical devices in order to get a particular point of view across to others, and draw on conventions that are widely shared within our culture (Atkinson and Coffey 1997: 61).

²⁴ For instance, analysis of the primary categorization of the quoted people in 50 articles (Appendix 6) indicated that almost half of those interviewed came from the NM salespeople and company representative categories. To some extent, this finding contrasts the common view among salespeople suggesting that the media contributes to the negative image of NM through muting and undermining salespeople's experiences.

According to Potter (1996: 106-107), the description and construction of facts is usually carried out using various forms of offensive rhetoric, to undermine alternative descriptions, or defensive rhetoric, to resist discounting or undermining. This distinction also stresses the importance of looking at both the procedures through which factual versions are built up – reifying discourse – and the ones by which they are undermined – ironizing discourse (ibid). Furthermore, following Potter (ibid) rhetoric is

...as a feature of the antagonistic relationship between versions: how a description counters an alternative description and how it is organized, in turn, to resist being countered.

In the following, I will describe and give some examples of selected rhetorical and symbolic devices, which I focused on in the analyses.

Stake inoculation is the way in which potential criticism about having a stake is headed off (Moisander 2001: 157). It works to build up the credibility or factuality of the description by preventing the discounting work of stake attribution. In situations where descriptions might be undermined as interested, stake inoculation presents a counter-interest. For example, in Potter's examples (1996: 128) credulity is encountered with scepticism, blind imitation by prior negative views with careful evaluation, and hostility is countered by friendship.

Stake confession is the way in which criticism is disarmed by a confession of having a stake, as if the speaker had already taken into account his or her personal interests. According to Potter (1996:130), confessing stakes indicates that the speaker takes its relevance seriously and is not trying to dupe the readership. If stake considerations are unavoidable, perhaps the best thing to do is to confess them. Confessing may also serve as a display of honesty and objectivity: The author is someone who can stand outside his interests and is well aware of their distorting potential. It puts potential objectors in the interactional position of making a point that has already been conceded and the objection that this critic praises too much would simply prove the critic's point (ibid)!

For example, stake inoculation and confession are used by the NM practitioners across different texts to eliminate presupposed doubts about irrationality, overenthusiasm or social pressure as

²⁵ An interesting feature concerning media reports was brought up when a journalist contacted me as a researcher. After having heard that my view on Finnish NM practices was generally positive, and that I worked at the national lobbying association which also produces statistics –that is, facts- about NM, she decided not to include my interview in a TV programme. Instead, she interviewed a Swedish theologian and an economist, whose perspective on NM was altogether negative. In my view, in this TV documentary there was a predetermined search for a certain type of a statement coming from an expert in what is perceived to be a right kind of category. When my statement failed to fill these criteria, another person from a general 'researcher' category and having what was deemed to be a proper message was fitted in.

the primary drivers of their decision to join a NM organization. NM salespeople say that they have been initially extremely sceptical about the whole idea, but after careful consideration and judgment have decided to join the organization. Thus, the decision is their own, and is purely rational. The same technique is used by authors of practitioner handbooks in constructing a credible position as a NM expert:

Believe in what you yourself consider as truth. Do not accept other people's opinions before you have the facts in order in your mind. I openly admit that I did not fully accept this industry before I started to investigate it more thoroughly. So I understand your reserveness. It just is a pity, that people, who do not accept the opportunity, denounce it with no real grounds (Ludbrook 1996: 49).

Through stake inoculation and confession it is implied that the facts are so convincing that even the most sceptical people find it impossible to resist the NM opportunity. Thus, these techniques counter the potential criticism that the decision to join NM was based on credulity²⁶.

In another NM handbook (Kalench 1991: 26-28), the author uses stake inoculation and confession skilfully in a chapter entitled: 'What network marketing is not' (The same technique is also used in Fogg 1994: 22-28). In this chapter, the author lists common exaggerating, positive statements of NM. Each statement consists of two parts. First, through discrediting, even warning the readers about overstatements of NM, both the author and the subject of description are constructed as objective, neutral and factual. Second, positive though milder statements are portrayed as facts, seemingly contrasting or overriding the earlier overstatements. Thus, the reader is persuaded to be convinced of his/her capability of rejecting false statements and adopting hard facts. The following extracts illustrate this technique:

Network marketing IS NOT a 'get-rich-quick' business. Although fast money has happened for a few individuals, they are rare exceptions, not the rule. But if you drop the 'quick' and call it a 'get-rich' business, that's another matter [...]

Twenty percent of all millionaires HAVE NOT become rich through Network Marketing. Yes, the industry has produced many millionaires, but compared to the number of real estate millionaires...Again, no way! (Kalench 1991:26-28)

²⁶ As further analysis on press writings shows, this kind of reasoning becomes especially favourable and understandable in frames, where selling is valued as a rational business profession and opportunity, and the professional salespeople constructed as emotionally detached agents. On the other hand, it implies the existence of another frame, where construction of NM involves strong emotional bonds and enthusiasm as the key drivers for becoming a NM salesperson.

Normalization and abnormalization mean the ways in which abnormality is constructed in the text by using contrast structures, and how listing (lists of three) is used to construct and present events and actions as normal, generic and representative (Moisander 2001: 157).

For example, Jobber and Lancaster (1997: 9) use verb nominalization, stake inoculation and confession as well as a list-of-three in constructing their view of selling as normal, generic and representative:

Selling then is not entirely blameless, but salespeople are becoming more professional in their approach to customers. Some of the worst excesses in selling have been curbed, some legally, but increasingly voluntarily. To overcome some of the misconceptions, selling needs to sell itself, and the following facts about selling should be more universally aired.

There is nothing inherently immoral or unscrupulous about selling or about those involved in this activity...

Selling is now a worthwhile career

Good products do not sell themselves...'.

Through stake inoculation and confession the authors admit that there have been unfortunate excesses in the area of selling, which have led to the misconception of selling as an immoral activity. However, these misconceptions can be overcome with the knowledge and hard facts (note the use of nominalization and normalization) that, e.g., the authors possess about selling.

An **externalizing device** means the way in which the account or description is constructed as being independent of the agent producing it by resorting to empiricist discourse (e.g. the passive voice and objectification), and by constructing consensus and corroboration (e.g. presenting the view as being widely shared) (Moisander 2001: 157; Jokinen 1999b: 138). For example, in the following extract, most of the externalizing devices are used to convince the reader of the widely shared adoption of a suspicious attitude towards new ways of commerce:

Ihminen on herkkä tuomitsemaan asioita. Vähänkin oudonpaan asiaan suhtaudutaan varauksella, arvostellen. Tämä ilmenee myös suhtautumisessa ostamiseen. Tavarointa voi huolletta ja hyvällä omallatunnolla ostella tutuista ostopaikoista, kaupoista ja tavarataloista. Mutta muut kauppatavat ovat monen mielestä arveluttavia, epämääräisiä ja jopa rikollisia.

People tend to make judgements. They easily have reservations or are critical towards anything even slightly unfamiliar. This tendency is also shown in relation to buying. It is quite acceptable to shop in familiar places, shops and supermarkets. But many people think that

alternative practices of trade are suspicious, dubious and even criminal. (Kauppalehti OPTIO 17/31.10.1996/Press writings data)

In the above extract, the author appeals to the readers' need to identify with a similar group - 'people' and, furthermore, with the majority of people or at least 'many people'. Firstly, the tendency of 'the people' to judge the unfamiliar is constructed as a naturalized and general truth. Following that, it becomes acceptable and understandable to have doubts about the central issue in the article, namely NM. This view is backed up by contrasting familiar ways of buying with other, 'alternative practices'. The list-of-three - 'suspicious, dubious and even criminal' - in the last sentence provides the taken-for-granted, accepted ways to think of these alternative practices of trade. On the face of it, the reader who wants to identify with 'the many' has options, but in the event, the choice is limited²⁷.

To highlight the effect of externalizing in fact construction, the following extract uses the same devices in constructing a comprehensively opposite view to that in the above extract on the same issue:

Verkostomarkkinointi on nyt päivän sana kaupanteossa. Trendi, joka valtaa maailmaa, Suomeakin. USA:ssa jo kymmenen prosenttia kaikesta kaupankäynnistä tapahtuu verkostojen kautta ja on ennustettu, että vuosituhanne vaihtuessa enää puolet tavaroista ostetaan liikkeistä.

Network marketing is the in topic in commerce. A trend, which is penetrating the world as well as Finland. In the USA, as much as ten percent of all trade takes place through networks, and it has been predicted that at the turn of the century only half of the goods will be bought from stores. (Iltalehti 8.4.1995/Press writings data)

In contrast to the previous extract, the above extract is designed to convince the reader of NM as a widely accepted, novel practice of trade. As can be discerned in this extract too, the use of an externalization device is significantly powerful in convincing the reader of the consistent and shared view of 'the other people' on any particular issue in question.

²⁷ Noteworthy, is the strong argument which maintains that people in general would have a need to identify with the mainstream thinking on social events. In contrast, the dialogue between the author and readers could operate the other way around as well. This point reflects exactly what the social construction of reality means: that 'the truth' of complex social matters is contextual and under constant negotiation. This does not, however, prevent our attempts to communicate our own views as natural and widely accepted truths.

2.3 Summary

The research methodology adopted here is analogous to the definition of a kaleidoscope. Within this view, the images of selling and network marketing change as the kaleidoscope is turned – the perspective of the viewer is changed - and seemingly loose pieces of coloured glass and mirror – pieces of knowledge - appear as logical parts of new representations. This analogy implies the epistemological ideas of multiple social realities and contextually meaningful knowledge creation, which form the theoretical ground for this study.

Chronologically, this study involved two phases. During the first study phase, I collected and analysed diverse types of data from a functionalist perspective. During the second study phase, I adopted a constructionist study approach and focused on selected sets of textual data.

On the basis of the constructionist framework, my starting point is that the academic and practitioner communities as well as the media create disparate knowledge of selling and salespeople in organizational and social settings, and thus contribute to creating polarized and controversial images of NM. I also share the view that theories and descriptions of NM are social texts that articulate the social world, i.e. construct, reproduce, and contest different discourses and versions of social life (see Moisander 2001).

In order to reconstruct these contesting versions of selling, I focus on text and discourse created by academics, NM practitioners and the media. More specifically, I apply frame and intertextual analyses methods to provide multifaceted knowledge on dominant discourses within diverse communities. As a result, the analyses create insights on conflicting views of NM through identification and analysis of textual representations created by several rhetorical and fact-constructing devices.

Thus, to keep in mind the constitutive character of the research activities in relation to the studied phenomenon (Calas and Smircich 1999) and to avoid the risk of blindly reproducing the dominant procedures, my choice is to reconstruct alternative representations of the inquired phenomenon. In so doing, I also attempt to identify muted voices and avoided themes in diverse textual data. In the following sections, I provide academic, NM practitioner and media accounts of selling and salespeople.

3 ACADEMIC ACCOUNT OF RESOURCES AND FUNCTIONS

‘The sales function is a boundary-spanning activity. Indeed, salespeople may be amused to see themselves referred to as interorganizational boundary-spanners but this is exactly what they are. They provide the final link between a company and its customers. The well-worn cliché ‘no man is an island’ is perhaps more true of salespeople than any others despite the fact that much of their time is spent on their own. The sales force must interact with other departments in the firm, with other firms and with the effects of external influences and the firm’s own marketing strategies. Control of the sales force requires careful management of the interfaces both within an organisation and between different organisations.’

(Donaldson 1998: 15)

3.1 Introduction

The above description of salespeople is a typical extract from the discourse on selling and the roles of salespeople within the academic community. The genre of the text and terms like ‘sales function’, ‘boundary-spanning’, and ‘control of the sales force’ clearly position this extract into the dominant marketing literature of personal selling and sales management practices²⁸.

The academic community in this study refers to professors, researchers, and students of business universities, who focus on studying and teaching personal selling and sales management. Personal selling and sales management literature follows the normal conventions of academic publishing. Easterby-Smith et al. (1998) include in these conventions ‘...a predominance of papers in academic journals, seeking either to advance formal theory through rigorous scholarship, or (less often) to test theoretical propositions through careful research’. The importance of written material within this community is self-evident: To a significant extent, as a member of the community, you are what you write and publish.

I majored in marketing at the HSE in 1993 after four years of marketing studies, and started my Ph.D. studies in 1997. During these years, I have read many textbooks, reviewed academic articles, written and commented on working papers and conference papers and participated in various lectures, seminars and courses on personal selling and sales management. As a result, I

²⁸ In this context, I refer to mainstream studies on personal selling and sales management within marketing literature. That is, my focus is on literature that is mainly based on a broadly defined ‘North-American school of thought’ and has an established position in European business schools as well.

consider myself as having become relatively familiar with the prevailing conventions of data creation processes as well as consequent representations of commercial issues within this community.

In this section, my aim is to identify and discuss the fundamental features of the academic discourse on selling. More specifically, I examine how the academic community creates representations of selling and salespeople through writings such as study reports, journal articles and textbooks. The resulting account projects the prevailing paradigmatic view – that is, the dominant discourse - of marketing academics in the field of personal selling and sales management and provides insights into the context in which the majority of empirical studies of NM are positioned.

Firstly, I identify the central ontological, epistemological and methodological engagements of the dominant academic discourse on selling and discuss the status quo of selling and the roles of salespeople in the light of these engagements. Secondly, I present an empirical example of the academic construct of selling and the roles of salespeople in the NM context through describing a survey study of '*Organizational roles of the NM salespeople*', which I conducted during the first study phase. Finally, I provide a critical reflection of the prevailing view on selling. This reflection is based on prior constructionist critique on a modernist (and functionalist) paradigm and is complemented with the discourse and rhetorical analysis of selected academic texts.

As a result, this section provides a rationale for creating alternative study approaches to contemporary selling and the roles of salespeople especially in social settings.

3.1.1 Data description

The assessment of the theoretical fundamentals underlying studies of selling is based on an application of discourse and rhetorical analyses of the following data:

- Five articles in academic journals, scrutinized as examples of the dominant discourse in the area of personal selling and sales management research (Figure 4). The selected articles provide important perspectives on dominant themes and future directions in the sales research field²⁹, and were therefore evaluated as being suitable for the purposes of this study.

²⁹ For example, Möller and Halinen (2000) suggest first looking at existing state-of-the art reviews and then selecting prototypical studies in each area under examination. They note that while the choice of prototypical articles is a matter of judgement, selection should be evaluated on the basis of the author's reading and professional experience in the studied area.

- A selective analysis of four textbooks of personal selling and sales management. The emphasis of the analysis was in the introduction chapters discussing the status quo of selling and the roles of salespeople, and in chapters describing the roles of salespeople in a more detailed manner (Figure 4)

- A summary of a survey study, which I conducted during the preliminary phase of the study. Through this example, I show how salespeople – specifically NM salespeople – may be conceptually and methodologically constructed in the mainstream personal selling and sales management literature³⁰. In effect, the theoretical background of the survey study was based on OCB studies. The function of this example is also to demonstrate my initial engagement and socialization into the dominant academic discourse – ‘the received view’ - on selling and salespeople³¹.

Figure 4. Academic articles and textbooks, scrutinized as examples of the dominant academic discourse in the area of personal selling and sales management

Authors and title	Journal/Publisher	Study/book objective
Dubinsky, 1998: A Research Odyssey in Sales Management	Academy of Marketing Science Review, No 10.	To provide perspectives on the underlying rationale for working in the areas of selling and sales management
Leigh & al., 2001: The Top Ten Sales Articles of the 20th Century	Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, Vol. XXI, Number 3 (Summer), 217-227.	To identify the ‘best of the best’ in academic research concerning sales management and professional selling
Leigh & Marshall, 2001: Research Priorities in Sales Strategy and Performance	Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, Vol. XXI, Number 2, 89-93.	To identify a set of research issues and questions concerning strategic aspects of the sales function
MacKenzie & al., 1998: Some Possible Antecedents and Consequences of In-Role and Extra-Role Sales person Performance	Journal of Marketing, Vol. 62. (July), 87-98.	To integrate the notion of extra-role performance with the current understanding of the relationships among salesperson job attitudes (job satisfaction and commitment), role perceptions (ambiguity and conflict), in- and extra-role behaviour, and turnover.
Weitz & Bradford, 1999:	Journal of the Academy of	To examine how the practice of personal selling and sales

³⁰ It should be noted that this particular survey data analysis would make only a modest and limited contribution to the academic literature as such. A more extensive contribution would have required repeated testing of the new measure, further analysis of the validity and significance of the identified role categories (perhaps through modelling potential antecedents and consequences of the role behaviours in each category), and a thorough assessment of the generalizability of the results. Following that, the resulting report would have been evaluated and re-evaluated by the academic community through normal publishing reviews and procedures.

³¹ Initially, my purpose was to model antecedents and consequences of networking behaviour, and the survey study was designed according to those purposes. Thus, the questionnaire included typically used measures of variables, which are commonly related to OCB measures, such as socio-demographics, personality traits, and goals of the salespeople as well as satisfaction, commitment, personal selling volume and a propensity to leave. Potential implications for the OCB literature and NM managers would have resulted from further analysis of this data.

Authors and title	Journal/Publisher	Study/book objective
Personal Selling and Sales Management: A Relationship Marketing Perspective	Marketing Science, Vol. 277, No. 2, 241-254.	management is changing as a result of the increased attention to long-term, buyer-seller relationships and to identify some implications of these changes.
Donaldson, 1998: Sales Management. Theory and Practice. Second edition.	MacMillan Business: London	The primary aim of this book is to provide undergraduate students with a suitable UK text that enables them to understand the concepts involved in managing the sales force.
Hite & Johnston, 1998: Managing Salespeople. A Relationship Approach.	South-Western College Publishing. An International Thomson Publishing Company.	Has been carefully written to incorporate the latest thinking on sales management from a relationship building perspective.
Ingram et al., 1997: Sales Management. Analysis and Management. Third Edition.	The Dryden Press: Fort Worth.	The objective in writing the third edition of Sales Management: Analysis and Decision Making was to continue to present comprehensive and rigorous coverage of contemporary sales management in a readable, interesting and challenging manner.
Jobber & Lancaster 1997: Selling & Sales Management. Fourth Edition.	Financial Times/Pitman Publishing: London	This text covers what must still be the most important element of the marketing mix for most students and practitioners. With a move away from the selling function towards more esoteric areas of marketing over the past few years, this vital aspect of marketing has been somewhat neglected. However, in the end it has to be face-to-face contact that eventually wins the order, and this text therefore explains and documents the selling and sales management process from both the theoretical and practical viewpoints.

In the analysis of diverse data types, I first reviewed the selected texts following a hermeneutic process suggested by Hirschman (1993.) Thus, I read the textual data closely several times, noted and grouped the paradigmatic themes as well as ideological features against those in Figure 2 (p. 24), and Hirschman's list of ideological dualisms detailed below. In the analysis of the journal articles, this reading was followed by a more detailed focus on rhetorical and fact-construction devices explained in the previous section³². On the one hand, I focused on the fact-constructing techniques in the data, and on the other hand, my focus was on images – representations of selling and salespeople - which were created through these techniques. In practice, I noted and grouped the statements that reflected prevalent themes and emerging images in the data into a separate document, read the document and initial texts over again, and eventually chose relevant extracts as examples for this final report.

It should be recognized that the adopted analysis method here is not purely based on a discourse analysis of a strictly limited and selected sales literature, but in addition relies heavily on reflection

³² For this purpose, I had to concentrate only on selected parts of the articles due to the extensive amount of data. However, after reviewing the articles and examples of studies applying the same analytical tools, I felt confident in focusing pragmatically, e.g., on the introduction, methodology, and conclusion sections in the articles.

of prior constructionist critics on a functionalist research paradigm. As such, the account presented in this section aims to open up the essential features of the overriding paradigmatic thinking which characterizes sales studies. In so doing, it probably omits many details and individual studies that do not match this account, and authors who disagree with it.

3.2 Fundamentals of selling

In their article published in the Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, Leigh et al. (2001) identify the 'top ten' most influential, or 'Best of the Best' sales articles of the 20th century. They define as being influential those

...articles that have made an impact on the selling and sales management academic discipline: those that were seminal in nature, influential in developing and shaping intellectual thought, and subsequently in stimulating meaningful academic research.

Leigh et al. (2001) identify the most influential articles through using the judgement of

...those individuals, who are most concerned with academic thought, professors of selling and sales management.

Furthermore, they employ citation analysis to support these expert opinions (*ibid*). According to Leigh et al. (2001), the top ten articles, as judged by the academic community, are listed below in descending order:

10. Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman, ASQ, 'Role Conflict and Ambiguity in Complex Organizations', 1970.
9. Saxe and Weitz, JMR, 'The SOCO Scale: A Measure of the Customer Orientation of Sales People', 1982.
8. Behrman and Perreault, JM, 'Measuring the Performance of Industrial Salespersons', 1984.
7. Dubinsky, Howell, Ingram, and Bellenger, JM, 'Sales Force Socialization', 1986.
6. (tie) Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan, JM, 'Knowledge, Motivation, and Adaptive Behaviour: A Framework for Improving Selling Effectiveness'
5. (tie) Weitz, JM, 'Effectiveness in Sales Interactions: A Contingency Framework', 1981.
4. Anderson and Oliver, JM, 'Perspectives on Behaviour-Based versus Outcome-Based Control Systems', 1987.

3. Walker, Churchill, and Ford, JMR, 'Motivation and Performance in Industrial Selling: Present Knowledge and Needed Research', 1977.
2. Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh, JM, 'Developing Buyer-Seller Relationships', 1987.
1. Churchill, Walker, Hartley and Ford, JM, 'The Determinates of Salesperson Performance: A Meta-Analysis', 1985.

Five of the articles are sophisticated conceptual articles, two present innovative scales, two are theory-testing works, and one is meta-analysis (Leigh et al. 2001). The following extracts from this article aptly describe and reflect the valued research approach within the sales research area, and is argued to represent 'the consensus among practicing sales professors in the United States' (ibid).

The following description of 'What makes a great sales article?' retells the established values within the mainstream consumer and marketing literature. According to Moisander (2001:52) the traditional approaches in these fields are characterized by '...attempts to test hypotheses about universal processes of the mind' and the focus of the research is on '...tractable variables and testing narrow hypotheses' and '...on explaining behaviour with causal laws or law-like generalizations' (ibid).

What makes a great sales article? Examination of the 'Top Ten' list suggests that such an article is most likely to be an integrative conceptual piece bringing together the known literature into a new, theoretical model rather than being merely presenting empirical results. Often this involves drawing on a broad set of disciplines for theoretical perspective. Five of the ten articles judged to be most influential were of this nature. In a sense, Churchill et al. (1985) is also consistent with this conclusion. While not purely a conceptual piece, the article pointed the way to the future by consolidating the findings of the known empirical research within a quantitative umbrella and developed significant conceptual insights for researchers to emphasize in future research. If the article is empirical in nature, to be truly influential, it must also test a new 'seminal' model. Both of the Top Ten articles that are 'empirical' were actually empirical tests of theoretical models relevant to the sales discipline. Thus, studies that involve well constructed, innovative models and test them empirically are valuable and can have long lasting impact on sales academic thought (Leigh et al. 2001).

Apparently, mainstream literature on selling and salespeople has its roots in what Burrell and Morgan (1979) termed *the functionalist paradigm* in social theory. Even the headings as well as the descriptions of the 'Top Ten' articles explicitly and implicitly signal the functionalist background

and respective ontological, epistemological and methodological engagements of the prevalent sales research. For example, through using the terms 'quantitative umbrella', 'conceptual models', 'validity of the instrument' and 'empirically investigating', the extract positions influential sales studies in the category of quantitative, empirical-analytic or functionalist research paradigm. Moreover, the extract makes an implicit distinction between *the influential or modest functionalist studies* instead of distinguishing between, e.g., *quantitative or qualitative or empirical-analytic and social-constructionist* studies. Thus, the functionalist scientific paradigm underlying influential sales studies is taken-for-granted, and other research paradigms appear to be either irrelevant or absent.

In general, the functionalist paradigm has provided the dominant framework for the conduct of academic sociology and the study of organizations, and is deeply engraved in the management textbooks and teaching of management in business schools (Burrell and Morgan 1979: 25; Alvesson & Willmott 1996: 56; Lewis & Grimes 1999). In general, this applies to the studies of marketing as well (see, e.g., Moisander 2001). According to Burrell and Morgan (1979: 297)

...the functionalist tends to accept the norm of purposive rationality, the logic of science, the positive functions of technology, and the neutrality of language, and uses them as building blocks in the construction of supposedly value-free social theories.

In the following, I will briefly describe the prevailing theoretical engagements of the academic constructs of selling and salespeople. As explained before, this assessment is based on earlier constructionist critics, and complemented with a discourse analysis of the selected academic articles and the selected parts of the personal selling and sales management textbooks.

3.2.1 The objective reality

The functionalist perspective underlying sales studies is based on the sociology of regulation and approaches its subject matter from an objectivist point of view. Within this paradigm, sociological concerns have been traditionally approached from a realist, positivist, determinist and nomothetic standpoint (Burrell & Morgan 1979: 25-26). In the prevalent personal selling and sales management literature, there is little if any discussion contesting certain fundamentals of this paradigm.

Within the functionalist paradigm, post-Hawthorne objectivism, in particular, has dominated research on job satisfaction, group dynamics, leadership and managerial styles (Burrell & Morgan 1979: 125) for decades. Objectivist philosophies assume the existence of a reality 'out there' that can be captured by the application of scientific methods. The reality of the social world is assumed to be similar or precisely the same as the natural world, and it is believed that social

phenomena can be observed and measured using 'objective instruments' such as questionnaires that provide information about the variables – such as the type and variety of roles and functions performed by organizational actors - which make up the social world (Alvesson & Willmott 1996: 53; Moisander 2001: 34).

Moreover, research on personal selling is influenced by the open systems approach well illustrated by the work of Katz and Kahn (1966 ref. Burrell and Morgan 1979: 157). Their study The Social Psychology of Organisations (1966) constitutes one of the most frequently cited structural functionalist models of an organization. Like other open systems models, their model is based upon the analogy of a biological organism, which assumes that organizations like other organisms aim at survival. This view is most apparent in academic discourse through the metaphoric use of language reflecting values of growth and productivity.

In accordance with ontological and epistemological assumptions, most empirical research on sales performance has tended to employ detached, objective methods (Hirschman 1993) such as survey research, with other methodologies being less well represented (Plank and Reid: 1994). In essence, it is only careful testing of scientific propositions that can lead to increments in knowledge (Gergen & Thatchenkery 1996).

Also, the following extract from the Leigh et al. (2001) article constructs quantitative instruments as self-evidently privileged tools for gaining knowledge from the outside reality, and illustrates well the required qualifications of the appropriate methods of scientific inquiry:

Finally, articles that introduce new measurement instruments that can be used by researchers in examining conceptual models may also be influential. Two of the articles in this Top Ten list were of this nature. However, to be truly influential, the scale must be both psychometrically sound and grounded in a strong theoretical framework. Thus, the homological validity of the instrument is of paramount importance. Researchers who wish to leave a legacy to their colleagues should consider developing new valid and reliable instruments that can be used by subsequent researchers in empirically investigating conceptual models (Leigh et al. 2001).

Furthermore, the following extract shows the unproblematic view on acquiring knowledge of complicated cognitive, social and economical issues through empirical testing:

In this context, the purpose of this study is to integrate the notion of extra-role performance with the current understanding of the relationships among salesperson job attitudes (satisfaction and commitment), role perceptions (ambiguity and conflict), and turnover. More specifically, we develop and test a theoretical model that

specifies the relationships between in- and extra-role performance and salesperson satisfaction, commitment, role perceptions and turnover. In the sections that follow, we first discuss the antecedents and consequences of in- and extra-role performance, satisfaction, and turnover. Next, we test the model using cross-sectional data from a large sample (N=672) of commission sales personnel and present the results. Although experimental data would provide a stronger test of the causal flows proposed in our theoretical model, the cross-sectional data used in this research have the advantage of enabling us to test the entire set of hypothesized relationships at once, which thus provides a more comprehensive test of whether the data are consistent with the theoretical rationale underlying the hypotheses. (MacKenzie et al. 1998)

The above extract reflects a view that assumes that complex phenomena can be reduced to simple empirically verifiable statements and that abstract psychological phenomena such as attitudes can be broken down into components and then treated as if they had a concrete or material existence. According to Morgan and Smircich (1980:498 ref. Moisander 2001), ‘...empiricist social scientists are in effect trying to freeze the social world into a structured immobility’ (ibid). The above-described world view has its implications also on the view of human subjects, as will be demonstrated next.

3.2.2 Rational and cognitive man

For decades, the interest of industrial psychologists has been directed towards the identification of the determinants of job satisfaction and their relationships to work performance. The method of analysis adopted in studies of job satisfaction focus upon measurement of the variables involved and a study of inter-correlation coefficients. Likewise, sales researchers use these quantitative statistical methods in the identification of diverse antecedents and consequences of, for example, in- and extra-role performance.

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979: 144), the attempt to identify and test the validity of different models of man through empirical research can be understood as a search for a substitute for Taylor’s ‘economic man’. However, they continue (ibid: 145) that this attempt has paradoxically ended up in substituting in place of rational economic man a rational, calculative and hedonistic man maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. These established models of man have their impact on the epistemology and methodology of sales studies in general. As Gergen & Thatchenkery (1996) state:

...the individual mind of the worker/employee/manager becomes a pre-eminent object of a study, and second, knowledge of the organization is considered as a by-product of the individual rationality of the scientific investigator.

Thus, it is not only the objects of the study but also the subjects, researchers, that are depicted as a group of 'cognitive processors' with the ability to evaluate and study social situations rationally – and objectively. The following two extracts depict salespeople as cognitive and rational processors:

One final theme is that salespeople seemingly are careful cognitive processors. The findings from all three areas of research infer that sales personnel assess many situations they confront and take action accordingly. For instance, they apparently evaluate the ethical milieu in which they work and deduce that they need enhanced managerial direction (even when guidance is already provided). They assess the equity in their organizations and do so by focusing on intra- and extra-organizational factors. And they carefully draw up a 'contract' with their sales manager that will be used in executing assignments, achieving goals, and receiving rewards. Essentially, then, salespeople are chary when examining the situations in which they find themselves (Dubinsky 1998).

Salespeople as relationship managers need to have a sophisticated knowledge of the buying firm – its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and strategies for developing competitive advantage. This knowledge is needed to identify opportunities and approaches for creating value. In addition, relationship managers need a detailed knowledge of their firm's capabilities and resources and the people within their company that can be accessed to address particular issues (Weitz & Bradford 1999).

This view on rational individuals also maintains a view on language as representation; words, in effect, are carriers of 'truth' or 'knowledge' and thus an objective truth and knowledge of the reality can be transferred to us from an observed individual's mind through language (see Gergen & Thatchenkery 1996).

3.2.3 Masculine machines and resources

Hirschman (1993) demonstrates how the use of the machine metaphor to characterize the behaviour of human beings was one of the prominent themes in consumer research both in the 1980s and in the 1990s. Within such conceptual frameworks, persons are typically viewed as instrumental resources or essential parts of the organization to be evaluated on the basis of their

quantifiable 'inputs' to the organization. This metaphoric thinking appears to underlie the sales literature as well.

The following extracts illustrate how academic discourse firstly constructs the organization and the outside world as separate entities, and secondly distinguishes the organization's members from the organization. This view constructs salespeople as mechanical links between the outside world and the organization on the one hand, and as resources of the organizational growth on the other hand. Organizational life in this view can be reduced to quantifiable inputs, outputs and their exchange relationships, as the extracts below show:

Salespeople are an important resource for businesses, providing strong returns on the investment their employers place in them. (Ingram et al. 1997: 25)

The reason for all this attention to personal selling is simple: in most companies sales personnel are the single most important link with the customer. (Jobber & Lancaster 1997: 4)

In a parallel way, sales personnel serve as the major link between extra-organizational (customers) and intraorganizational (e.g., sales management, production, customer service) members and tend to be the primary revenue-generating source in most firms..Performance, then, sales organization members can have a dramatic impact on, and can be influenced dramatically by, the organization. (Dubinsky 1998)

The use of the machine metaphor in effect involves a presumption that the properties of the machine – such as psychological ones – can be calibrated and measured, and that the machine has primary qualities that are essential to its function and any aspects of the machine not quantifiable are viewed as incidental to its function (Moisander 2001:48).

Employees bring to their jobs certain inputs (e.g., education, skills, training) and in return receive certain outcomes (organizational rewards). In such an exchange relationship, participants perceive outcomes to be just or unjust; based on those perceptions, a sense of equity or inequity is understood to exist. (Dubinsky 1998)

Salespeople play a key role in the formation of long-term buyer-seller relationships. As the primary link between the buying and selling firms, they have considerable influence on the buyer's perceptions of the seller's reliability and the value of the seller's services and consequently the buyer's interest in continuing the relationship. (Weitz & Bradford 1999)

Their suggestion is that successful firms need to organize around 'integrators' and functional specialists linked through teams and

processes rather than formal functional structures. ((Leigh & Marshall 2001)

Essentially, the above extracts represent salespeople not only as rational, cognitive processors but also as subordinates of the organization's economic goals. Organization in these extracts thus represents a given structure, in which salespeople participate through their pre-described roles.

The following three extracts further highlight the dualistic categorizations of organization/salespeople or managers/salespeople. The category of salespeople in this case is controlled by the managers who are supposed to be, and are capable of, affecting salespeople's thoughts, feelings and behaviours through diverse control systems. In some studies, the managers also operate as interpreters of salespeople's perceptions and behaviours through scoring their perceptions of their subordinates' behaviours in questionnaires, which will then be transformed into academic knowledge of selling through established statistical procedures. All in all, the academic discourse constructs salespeople as subordinates to superior categories of not only the organization but also the category of managers³³.

Anderson and Oliver (1987) first distinguished the concepts of 'behaviour-based' and 'outcome-based' control systems, concepts of key relevance in the management of various types of sales forces. Their conceptual framework was designed to assist managers in selecting among control systems based on their effects on job-related knowledge, motivation, and sales outcomes at the individual level. The article presented a series of propositions concerning the way control systems affect the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of sales personnel. The authors supported their position with arguments drawing on four major theoretical frameworks for control: agency theory, organization theory, transaction cost theory, and cognitive evaluation theory. (Leigh et al. 2001)

Sales managers should focus on identifying organizational goals and salesperson's current needs, determining salespeople's goals in light of the firm's goals, drawing up a contract with sales personnel that will note the contingencies between performance and rewards, and suggesting a plan of action. (Dubinsky 1998)

In essence, direction must be offered so that salespeople can perform their jobs effectively (Dubinsky 1998).

³³ The term subordinate here does not refer only to the organizations' hierarchies, in which salespeople are naturally positioned as subordinates. Instead, it refers to the subtle ways in which the dominant discourse constructs the predominance of the organizations' structure over individuals, and to some extent, the predominance of the researchers over the objects of the study.

The above descriptions of a salesperson are analogous to the image of a machine as being composed of independent components, which can be taken apart and studied in isolation. Through these procedures, the essence of the machine's function can be determined (Moisander 2001:48). The analysis does not change machine function, 'since the components in isolation are assumed to operate the same as components in unison' (*ibid*).

In its extreme, representations of salespeople are reduced to antecedents of organization's profits:

Sales and marketing directors should frequently ask the question, what would happen if we halved (or doubled) the size of our sales force? Would sales halve (or double) and what is the effect on profits in the short and long term? (Donaldson 1998)

The above explicitly functionalist approach and metaphoric use of language also applies to the OCB literature and the survey study described after this section. For example, the survey study of the roles of NM salespeople exemplifies the view that constructs salespeople as a bundle of behaviours, needs and perceptions, which can be subjected to organizations' control and researchers' objective observation:

More specifically, I defined *networking behaviour* as 'behaviours of a sales person targeted to maintain and manage the sales network, and to develop and support customer and peer relationships within it'. In NM organizations, product usage, direct selling, recruiting and training exemplify these behaviours. Secondly, I assumed that networking behaviours have a generally positive impact on outcomes at individual, group and organization level (an extract from my survey study reported in the following section).

In general, the above paradigmatic features equate with dominant features in consumer and marketing research during the past decades (see Hirschman 1993; Firat & Venkatesh 1995; Moisander 2001). As such, they imply a dominance of masculine ideology in personal selling and sales management literature. Hirschman (1993) summarizes masculine and feminine dualisms identified in prior research as illustrated in Figure 5.

As can be discerned, the masculine set is most commonly viewed as constituting science, and the other, feminine set is typically viewed as not constituting science (*ibid*)³⁴. Likewise, the masculine set best describes the conventional conception of selling, in-role performance (e.g. sales calls, sales volume) and salespeople in general, whereas the feminine set includes similar categories to, e.g., extra-role-performance and organizational citizenship behaviours – e.g. helping peers,

³⁴ Lempäinen (2003) provides an empirical example of science – and society - as a masculine construction in her analysis of textbooks of sociology.

participating in the meetings, co-operating with the team, etc. Evidently, in-role-performance as a masculine construct is privileged in contrast to a feminine category of extra-role-performance within academic texts.

Figure 5. Ideological dualisms

IDEOLOGICAL DUALISMS	
Masculine	Feminine
Rationality	Emotionality
Objectivity	Subjectivity
Quantitative	Qualitative
Hard	Soft
Manipulative	Nurturing
Personal detachment	Personal involvement
Universalistic	Particularistic
Technology	Nature
Instrumentalism	Expressiveness
Independent	Dependent
Public	Private
Dominance	Submission
Active	Passive
Agency	Communion
Self-interest	Altruism

Source: Hirschman 1993.

Noteworthy, although I maintain that the above-stated features represent well the mainstream academic thinking on selling, this does not preclude conflicting views within the academic discourse. For example, the following extract proposes traditionally feminine aspects in relationship managers' roles, and again opposes this construct explicitly with the stereotypical view on salespeople:

Some of the skills and ability used by relationship managers are creative problem solving, innovativeness, interacting with people in different functional areas and levels in the buying and selling organizations, conflict management, building trust (being reliable, empathetic, and ethical) with people in both organizations, planning and project management, and working on and leading teams. Many of these skills and abilities differ from those needed by traditional sales people and are certainly antithetical to the stereotypical view of sales people as 'loners'. (Weitz & Bradford 1999).

Indeed, the above-constructed qualifications would not fit the stereotypical requirements of a 'traditional salesperson'. It should be noted, however, that, for example, Weitz and Bradford (1999) do not continue considering to what extent the 'stereotypical view of salespeople as loners' is determined and bounded by the entrenched academic procedures creating representations of selling and salespeople.

3.2.4 Clinical observers

As stated before, the metaphoric use of language in the sales literature and the emphasis on instrumental, quantitative methods create not only images of selling and salespeople, but also of the researchers. This image is based on the construct of scientific research practices as clearly defined projects, in which the detached - though knowledgeable - researcher acquires information on the researched object through objective instruments, and then uses language as a neutral means for transmitting the knowledge to the audience. In this kind of construction, the subject and object of scientific knowledge are strictly separated, and consequently, the research process is categorized as knowledge inquiry, not as knowledge creation (Jokinen 1993:148).

Within the traditional, masculine ideology of science, it is considered highly desirable for the researcher to distance him/herself from the phenomenon of interest to avoid the negative impact of the investigator and the investigated getting involved with each other (Hirschman 1993). Although it is considered valuable to have *a priori* knowledge of the examined issue, the objective – and thus privileged – knowledge requires that the researcher is distanced from the issue under study.

The following extract summarizes aptly the above-described images of a researcher as a detached scientific observer, salespeople as passive and reluctant objects of inquiries and thus, the creation of academic knowledge on selling in general:

Capturing and leveraging the professional intellect of leading sales executives is a major research issue in knowledge management. The argument is that professional intellect can be elicited and encoded into the firm's organizational systems, databases, operating technologies, and business processes. Once this knowledge is captured it can be leveraged by embedding it in knowledge systems and software, sharing these knowledge tools with other members of the network, and facilitating its use by enabling sales personnel to be the 'star' in providing personalized customer value and service. Academic research should emphasize methods for capturing and encoding professional sales knowledge, as well as the 'softer' issues involved in overcoming the

natural reluctance of professionals to share their expertise. (Leigh & Marshall 2001)

The extract illustrates the goals of the researchers within the functionalist paradigm not only in terms of the sales studies but also at a more general level. The general objective of the business economics research in this view is to capture, programme and control the knowledge for organizations' economic goals through scientific methods and organizations' control mechanisms.

Altogether, this view is problematic if knowledge is viewed as communal, contextual and social creation in which the inquirer with his/her historical, political and social background is inseparably entangled.

3.3 Fixed roles of salespeople: An empirical example

In this section, I provide an empirical example of a survey study of the roles of salespeople in the NM context. The study in question was conducted during the first study phase of this Ph.D. study project, and reflects the above-discussed functionalist world view and study approach in terms of the chosen epistemology and methodology. In the first study phase, I focused on prior research on the role performance of salespeople and especially on OCB. My initial aim was to contribute to the discussion on the changing roles of salespeople through linking a novel selling context, network marketing (in which the roles of salespeople showed emerging changes in general), with the existing models of in- and extra-role behaviour.

Through the review of academic articles on personal selling and sales performance, my aim was to build a conceptual framework of antecedents and consequences of networking role behaviour, and to justify the research topic, design and methodology, following mainstream conventions in the sales study field. The starting point for the literature search was a conception of NM as an atypical, deviant case of personal selling in terms of the roles of salespeople - a view which resulted from my personal experiences and prior research on NM. Following the literature review, I conducted interviews of salespeople (Appendices 1 and 2) and a survey study in order to identify the various types of organizational roles of NM salespeople.

Thus, the role of the following survey study description in this study report is to show how the complex phenomenon of NM can be accommodated within the dominant academic discourse on selling and the roles of salespeople. As such, it highlights the power of the chosen study approach in constructing the studied phenomena into particular kinds of representations, and consequently,

the power of the researcher in determining the formulation of any specific piece of social, cultural and organizational knowledge.

3.3.1 Theoretical background

In this section, I present the theoretical background of the survey study and focus especially on the OCB literature. At the beginning of the literature search, I reviewed a body of literature focusing on changes in the roles of salespeople as well as articles on traditional ways of viewing salespeople and their role performance. Positioning existing literature and a priori knowledge into a continuous dialogue (see Silverman 2000: 226), I decided to concentrate on the OCB literature. One of the emerging themes in this domain was a need to broaden the conceptualization and knowledge of sales performance and the roles of salespeople. Practical applications in NM organizations corresponded with this need, which provided a rationale for conceptualizing the roles of salespeople in terms of organizational citizenship behaviour. Another important body of literature consisted of articles, in which direct selling or NM served as a context or object of the study. I used these articles first of all to justify my argument on unique and interesting features of NM, and secondly to triangulate the results from the interview and the survey analyses.

OCB researchers have proposed interesting questions of the changing roles of salespeople, and many of their studies have been positioned at the crossroads of organizational behaviour and personal selling and sales management literature. OCB studies thus appeared to combine multiple views of the organizational lives of salespeople, which could also create a better understanding of the disputed roles of NM salespeople.

Focus on role behaviours

In the search for behavioural consistencies, psychologists and sociologists have had two theoretical constructs as guiding principles: personality and roles. The construct of personality seeks to understand regularities and consistencies in social behaviour in terms of relatively stable traits, enduring dispositions and other propensities (e.g. needs, motives, and attitudes) that are thought to reside within individuals. By contrast, the theoretical construct of roles seeks to understand regularities and consistencies in social behaviour in terms of the directive influence of coherent sets of rules and prescriptions that are provided by the interpersonal, occupational, and societal categories of which individuals are continuing members (Snyder 1982 ref. Ickes & Knowles 1982).

Within personal selling and sales management studies, attempts to understand and improve salesperson performance have generated a considerable amount of research. Much of this

research has focused on the relationships and impacts of various personal, organizational, and environmental variables on sales performance (Plank & Reid 1994). One of the key constructs in personal selling studies, namely the concept of role, has been used to link the individual characteristics (such as personality traits) of persons occupying a selling job to the functioning of the larger social system, usually to the performance and effectiveness of a sales organization.

Although 'even the strongest champions of roles as fundamental to organization structure, Katz and Kahn (1966, 1978) failed to penetrate mainstream organization theorizing' (Bassett & Carr 1996) salespeople's role perceptions form a fundamental and frequently studied category of antecedents or consequences of job satisfaction and other performance measures in personal selling and sales management literature (Brown & Peterson 1993).

Traditionally, the positioning of salesmanship in a battlefield or adversarial role has been a well-established phenomenon (Jolson 1997) and many individuals in a given sales force have best been characterized as 'order getters' whose primary focus is transactional, or closing, oriented (Keillor et al. 1999). Accordingly, prior to Brown and Peterson's 1993 (ref. MacKenzie et al. 1998) meta-analysis of sales performance studies, the majority of sales behaviour studies had adopted a fairly narrow view of the roles of salespeople, merely focusing on in-role aspects of the performance - e.g. sales volume, sales calls and dollar sales of individual salespeople - and assessed the effectiveness of the sales on the basis of managerial evaluations (*ibid*).

However, the traditional view of a salesperson as 'a single, individualistic, persistent person who works independently on a commission basis and who competes fiercely against even fellow salespersons' has been suggested to give way to a significantly different conceptualization (Yilmaz & Hunt, 2001). There is a growing trend in sales and sales research based on the recognition that the long-term key to success may lie in a relational aspect to the buyer-seller interaction (Wotruba 1991; Weitz & Bradford 1999).

Consequently, sales managers are more and more often faced with the challenge of implementing a relational selling effort among their sales force (Keillor et al. 1999). Instead of viewing selling as a series of struggles that the salesperson must win from a steady stream of prospects and customers of all sizes and shapes, the idea of relationship selling or partnering has focused on the building of mutual trust within the buyer/seller dyad with a delivery of anticipated, long-term, value-added benefits to buyers (Jolson 1997).

Simultaneously, the definition of performance has been extended to acknowledge the extra-role aspects of performance (MacKenzie et al. 1998). The concept of extra-role performance broadly

covers behaviours, which are not explicitly included in role description of a salesperson, which are voluntarily executed, and which indirectly promote the effectiveness of the organization.

Of the several different types of extra-role performance, the one that has received most attention in marketing literature has been 'organizational citizenship behaviour', i.e. OCB (Netemeyer et al. 1997). OCB is defined in several ways and the conceptual domain of this construct is still evolving. (Appendix 3, p. 177, provides examples of established OCB definitions and categorizations).

According to Organ's (1988) definition, OCB represents individual behaviour that is 1) discretionary, 2) not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and 3) that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization.

By discretionary Organ (1988: 4) means behaviour

...that is not an enforceable requirement of the role or the job description, that is, the clearly specifiable terms of the person's employment contract with the organization; the behaviour is rather a matter of personal choice, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable.

In a personal selling context, OCBs are viewed as discretionary behaviours on the part of the salesperson that directly promote the effective functioning of an organization, without necessarily influencing a salesperson's sales productivity (Netemeyer et al. 1997).

Noteworthy, some OCB researchers (see Morrison 1994) have stressed the importance of examining roles from the perspective of the employee instead of the supervisor. For example, Morrison (*ibid*) indicates that the boundary between in-role and extra-role behaviour is not clear. Employees in her study saw many of the behaviours studied as in-role rather than extra-role, despite the fact that prior research had assumed them to be extra-role. She concludes that as the very importance of OCB has been somewhat tied to its being extra-role behaviour, and thus conceptually and motivationally distinct from in-role behaviour, a re-conceptualization of extra-role behaviour as something that varies across persons may be needed (*ibid*).

Furthermore, Morrison (1994) demonstrates that OCB is a function of how employees define in-role and extra-role job behaviour. She argues that this finding is important for the understanding of OCB because it implies that employees, typically seen as good citizens, may simply be doing what they consider to be components of their jobs. Such behaviour is very different from employees' deciding to exceed what they perceive to be their jobs' requirements. Only the latter reflects the citizenship behaviour as discussed in the literature.

Based on the above-discussed view, it can be argued that roles in organizations are rarely fixed and that role perceptions evolve as employees and supervisors negotiate the scope of work activities. In line with this view, it has been suggested that the boundary between in-role and extra-role work behaviour is ill-defined, and that OCB should be conceptualized as a global concept that includes all positive organizationally relevant behaviours of individual citizens (Graham 1991 ref. Van Dyne et al. 1994).

All in all, recent marketing literature suggests that contemporary boundary spanners and citizens of sales organizations are expected to successfully handle several relationships inside and outside their organization. Co-operation among co-workers (Yilmaz & Hunt 2001) as well as changing roles in relation to customers (Wotruba 1991; Weitz & Bradford 1999) has become a critical issue in sales management. These expectations are suggested to occur among managers, co-workers and customers as well as among salespeople themselves. In the emerging 'era of the co-operative salesperson' (Yilmaz & Hunt 2001), definitions of the roles of salespeople should in most organizations include behaviours, which have traditionally been excluded (or treated as extra-role behaviours) from their roles. Furthermore, recent studies emphasize the importance of exploring work role definitions from the employee – salespeople in this case – perspective. Finally, evaluation, compensation and training of the sales force should be based on a thorough understanding of these new roles.

3.3.2 Empirical study procedures

Simultaneously with the literature review, I conducted eight theme interviews among Finnish NM salespeople as a pre-study. My aim was to gain practitioners' insights into NM practices and the behaviours of salespeople. Based on my personal work experiences and the literature review on sales performance studies, I planned a framework for the interview themes consisting of open questions on several aspects of NM. Following that, I chose eight NM salespeople as interviewees for the interviews (Appendix 1, p. 175).

Selected NM salespeople were members of the board of the Association of Direct Selling and Network Marketing Sales People, of which I was a member too. According to the association's rules, board members were 'committed to advocate legal, professional and ethical direct selling and NM business practices in Finland'. Based on earlier discussions with them, I knew that these salespeople represented a variety of NM organizations in Finland, and each had been operating for several years within the industry. Thus, in my view the selected sources possessed extensive practical experience, a professional approach and expert views on the Finnish NM industry. As I

knew each interviewee personally beforehand, it was easy to request her or him to participate in the study. Each was willing to share her/his thoughts about NM with me.

I conducted the interviews during a four-week period in November 1999. The background and the purpose of the interviews were briefly explained to the interviewees beforehand on the telephone, when requesting their consent to the interview. The interviews took place in meeting rooms at the HSE. At the start, I explained the purpose and confidentiality of the study to the sources, and answered any questions that they might have. I also asked for each interviewee's permission to record the interview; all agreed.

All interviews followed the themes/structure presented in Appendix 2, p. 176. After the first interview, some themes and questions were included in the interviews. I led and controlled the discussion to a certain extent, to ensure that all the themes (not necessarily all the questions) were properly covered in every interview. After each interview, I gave the interviewee the opportunity to read through the list of questions, and he/she was also offered the opportunity to add information or to ask questions if necessary. The approximate time for the interview was 1.5 hours. All the interviewees expressed their willingness to help and give more information in the future if needed. All interviews were taped, and transcribed into Word documents.

At this stage, the interviews were analysed from a factist (Alasutari 1995: 47) or realist (Silverman 2000: 122) perspective. From this perspective, I assumed that the interview data would give access to facts about the world of NM including biographical information and statements about beliefs (Silverman 2001: 87). In this context, 'realism' is used in the sense of the literary genre whose aim is to describe the 'gritty' reality of people's lives (Silverman 2000: 122). As Silverman notes (*ibid*), this approach resembles the literary genre of tabloid journalism, in which 'confessional' stories are gathered and presented to the reader as 'facts' about personalities. Hence, I treated respondents' answers as descriptions of external reality (facts, events) and internal reality (feelings and meanings).

To check the accuracy of what the respondents told and my conclusions regarding their stories, and to secure a fit between my interpretations and facts about external reality, I triangulated their descriptions with other types of observations (see Silverman 2000: 122) such as personal experience, group discussion, press writings, company materials, literature review, etc. At this point, the analytical focus was on NM salespeople self-reports and descriptions of NM behaviours.

Organizational citizenship behaviours in the NM context

To summarize the results of an interpretative analysis³⁵ of the interviews, NM organizations have seemingly adopted an exceptional view on the roles of salespeople. This view is in line with the above-suggested changes in the sales profession in general. Firstly, NM salespeople are self-employed, independent contractors, whose performance or activity level in the sales organization results from their own choice. As a consequence, they are not obliged to perform according to specific role descriptions, but instead, are provided with a variety of role opportunities within the organization.

As individuals join a NM sales organization, they all enter at an equal position (that of a member) in relation to the NM company. The distributor contract and other written material detail the company policy related to direct selling, recruiting, training and compensation criteria. All members are given equal rights to buy the products at discount, to sell them directly, and to recruit new members to their down line. As a result, the opportunity to perform within the sales organization is equal for all salespeople.

Hence, the NM business model incorporates the idea of self-employed salespeople voluntarily engaging in role behaviours, which contribute to diverse organizational outcomes. NM organizations typically encourage salespeople to adapt diverse roles through the following procedures:

- (1) Join the company through a 'sponsor', i.e. an experienced salesperson
- (2) Get acquainted with the products and company policies
- (3) Use the products and attend meetings and training
- (4) Create a customer base through direct selling methods (i.e. home parties, face-to-face presentations, catalogues, etc.)
- (5) Create a sales network by recruiting and training new members in your down-line organization³⁶
- (6) Develop and lead the network through motivating and training your down-line organization

A distinguishing feature of NM organizations is that they assign the recruitment and training activities to independent (i.e. self-employed) salespeople. Salespeople are encouraged to recruit

³⁵ Firstly, I transcribed the interviews, read the texts closely, and categorized and grouped the common themes, and compared the results with the OCB categories identified in the literature. As I focused on role behaviours, much of the data concerned issues, which were out of my scope at that point.

³⁶ A *down-line organization* consists of a focal salesperson's recruits, their recruits and so on. Accordingly, *up-line* consists of a sponsor (i.e. recruiting salesperson), his/her sponsors and so on.

new members into the organization and to familiarize them with company practices in addition to selling the products. Typically, voluntary salespeople organize local training and meetings at their own expense. Peer relationships within a network are informal. For example, no written agreements are used between a sponsor and a new member in an organization. (For more detailed academic and practitioner descriptions of NM see Kalench 1990, 1991; Babener 1992; Hedges 1992; Failla 1994; Dewandre and Mahieu 1995; Leppälä 1995; Sipilä & Helenius 1997; Johansson et al. 1998; Brodie 1999; Helenius and Sipilä 1999; Oksanen 1999; Brodie et al. 2002)

However, only a minority of members of NM organizations proceed in the above-suggested path from a member to a sponsoring salesperson. Discount on products, low-cost entry and freedom of choice attract many people to join, but a vast amount of salespeople never occupy any role other than that of an occasional product user or a passive member. Consequently, salespeople turnover rates in NM organizations tend to be relatively high and the amount of active distributors (either purchasing and selling products or recruiting new members) relatively low.

NM salespeople are typically compensated only on the basis of their performance (actualized sales volume) instead of behaviour (product presentations, sales calls, etc.). Noteworthy, commissions are based not only on a salesperson's personal selling volume, but also on the aggregate sales volume of her/his down-line organization. This feature distinguishes NM organizations from traditional sales organizations, where compensation depends only on individual effort and personal selling volume.

Based on the interview data, NM salespeople share a common assumption of behaviours that affect organizational outcomes favourably; i.e. increase an individual salesperson's commissions as well as the NM company's profits. Most NM companies encourage their sales force to engage, e.g., in helping, training, and supporting behaviours in respect of their down line, as these behaviours are assumed to have a positive impact on a group-level sales volume. Although obligatory non-selling behaviours are not included in NM contracts or compensation plans, salespeople are expected to engage in various non-selling behaviours in order to succeed as sponsors of other salespeople.

To summarize, NM business models involve novel role opportunities for salespeople. These roles comprise direct selling and NM activities, including product presentations, recruitment of new members and management of a down line. Independent salespeople define their desired role, and engage in various activities discretionally. NM organizations compensate salespeople through discounts on purchases, sales commissions, bonuses, gifts and other forms of acknowledgments.

Inherent in NM business models is the norm of organizational citizenship behaviour within the sales network as a key determinant of individual-, group- and organizational-level success.

Overall, the interviews provided descriptions of everyday practices and 'doings' of NM salespeople, which was then utilized in developing a research design and measure for networking behaviour.

In the following, I present a summary of the survey study report, which was based on the above-described preliminary study procedures, and focused on the organizational roles of NM salespeople.

Organizational roles of the network marketing salespeople

The purpose of this study is to identify NM salespeople role categories in terms of networking behaviours. This study is built on an idea that the selling profession is undergoing major changes due to a shift from transactional selling to relationship selling (Weitz & Bradford 1999; Beverland 2001). Recent changes in selling jobs imply changes in conceptualization and operationalization of the roles of salespeople, and emphasize the importance of co-operative behaviour (e.g. organizational citizenship behaviours, OCBs) in role definitions. The network marketing business model provides an example of relationship selling in practice: Inherent in NM is the norm of OCBs inside and outside the sales network as a key determinant of individual, group-, and organizational-level success. Based on this study, the roles of NM salespeople can be categorized as members, promoters, networkers and leaders on the basis of their self-reported role definitions. In each category, OCBs are manifest in a variety of ways.

Defining networking behaviour

Based on the literature review and the interviews, successful management of multiple informal, interdependent customer and citizen relationships requires a specific combination of selling and non-selling behaviours from the salespeople. Especially in a context where salespeople have the opportunity to define their roles freely and where results are based more on group than on individual performance, traditional role definitions may become inadequate. For example, MacKenzie et al. (1998) suggests that extra-role performance might be particularly important in team sales settings. Furthermore, the greater the flexibility in available role opportunities, the more important it is to understand the individual antecedents of particular role behaviours, and the consequent outcomes at individual, group and organizational levels.

In this study, I apply the approach suggested by Graham (1991 ref. Van Dyne et al. 1994). Graham (ibid) argued that, viewing OCBs and traditional conceptualizations of job performance as *separate* constructs, the researcher is

...put in the awkward position of determining what in-role is and what is extra-role, an inconsistent distinction that varies across persons, jobs and organizations and over time and with circumstances for individual job incumbents.

Instead, Graham (ibid) suggests that organizational citizenship could be conceptualized as a global component that includes all positive organizationally relevant behaviours of individual organization members. This broader conceptualization includes traditional in-role job performance behaviours, organizationally functional extra-role behaviours, and political behaviours, such as full and responsible organizational participation. From this perspective, the construct of the roles of salespeople becomes more flexible and varying conceptions of roles may occur at the individual level.

Following that, I propose the term *networking behaviour* to describe 'all positive organizationally relevant behaviours of salespeople in a NM organization' (see Graham 1991 ref. Van Dyne et al. 1994). More specifically, I define *networking behaviour* as 'behaviours of a salesperson targeted to maintain and manage the sales network, and to develop and support customer and peer relationships within it'. In NM organizations, product usage, direct selling, recruiting and training exemplify these behaviours, which have a generally positive impact on outcomes at individual, group and organization level. In order to create a measure for *networking behaviour* and to identify essential role categories for salespeople in a NM organization, I conducted the scale development and test procedures reported below.

Scale development

In order to assess the role definitions of NM salespeople, I developed a self-report measurement instrument for *networking behaviour* (Appendix 4, p. 179). Thus, my aim was to create an understanding of the roles of NM salespeople through the application of well-established research methods. Firstly, I utilized and compared results from interviews of salespeople and a review of practitioner literature on NM. In so doing, I identified vital activities in a NM organization. A simultaneous review of prior studies of NM as well as OCB literature led to an identification of role behaviours, which appeared to overlap and capture NM practices. These were found under the domain of extra-role and organizational citizenship behaviour (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Examples of OCB categories and vital NM activities

Organ (1988)	Morrison (1994)	Van Dyne et al. (1994)	Van Dyne and Le Pine (1988)	Vital NM activities
Altruism	Altruism	Loyalty	Helping	Tutoring and helping other salespeople
Conscientiousness	Conscientiousness	Obedience		Adherence to distributor contract
Civic virtue	Involvement	Functional participation		Internalization of company policies, rules and procedures
	Keeping up	Social Participation		Recruiting new members
		Advocacy participation	Voice	Keeping informed about direct selling/NM issues
Sportsmanship	Sportsmanship			Advocating NM business concept
Courtesy				Learning NM procedures Participating in social events Organizing social events Sharing ideas Informing about issues related to organizational activities Prospecting customers Promoting products and membership

Following the qualitative data analysis and a synthesis of a substantial body of literature, potential indicators of networking behaviour were developed. Items were partly adopted from prior studies and adjusted to the context, and partly derived from empirical observations and adjusted to fit the OCB categories (Appendix 4, p. 179). Developed items were then evaluated through a pre-test process consisting of five NM expert interviews, discussions with six peer researchers, a videotaped focus group discussion among 11 NM salespeople from several organizations, and an analysis of 17 completed pre-test questionnaires.

As a result, 30 items were judged to have high face validity, and were included in the initial measurement instrument. Four of the items are associated with social participation and keeping up behaviours, eight with functional participation and involvement, five with advocacy participation, voice and keeping up behaviours (all of which fall under civic virtue category according to Organ 1988), one with courtesy, two with sportsmanship, eight with altruism, loyalty, and helping behaviours, and the remaining two with obedience and conscientiousness.

After the scale development, a mail survey was addressed to 1117 Finnish direct selling people of an international network marketing company, LR International Cosmetics and Marketing Ltd.

The survey yielded 195 returned questionnaires, giving a response rate of 17.5%. Of this convenience sample, 188 adequately completed questionnaires were subjected to a quantitative analysis at this stage.

Components of networking behaviour

The first objective was to identify the components of networking behaviour. Salespeople indicated on a seven-point Likert scale how well each of the 30 items described their activities as a LR distributor. A principal components analysis, with a varimax rotation, was then performed on the items. A five-component solution explaining 73.109 of the total variance emerged. The components were highly interpretable.

However, there were items that did not load indisputably on a single component. There were some items with loadings greater than 0.40 on two or more components, which were omitted. Also, while some of the items did load moderately (0.6 or less) on the primary component, they also loaded on a secondary component with a moderate loading. Items with a difference of less than 0.20 between loadings on two components were cut off.

The remaining 16 items had a high loading (>0.65 with the exception of one obedience item with a loading of 0.586) on their primary factor and a difference of at least 0.20 between this loading and the next highest loading. Cronbach's alpha for the initial scale was 0.9686, and for the remaining 16 items 0.9365.

Table 1 presents the results of principal components analysis. Items in boldface were retained for further analysis, and the table also presents Cronbach's alpha for items best representing the components.

Table 1. Components of networking behaviour

Item	Component	1	2	3	4	5
1. I orient my down-line distributors into recruiting and sponsoring activities	.86	.25	.22	.17	.22	
2. I orient my down line into product-selling activities	.84	.28	.23	.15	.22	
3. I orient my down line into LR practices and procedures	.83	.25	.26	.19	.21	
4. I recruit new members into the LR organization	.80	.33	.27	.18	.15	
5. I keep in touch with my down line	.77	.19	.22	.25	.28	
6. I share ideas and experiences with my down line	.74	.24	.28	.27	.32	
7. I organize company presentations	.59	.11	.50	.32		
8. I keep informed about current issues that affect the LR distributor network, and inform about them to others	.54	.27	.34	.50	.13	
9. I speak up about issues that affect the LR distributor network (e.g. in training)	.50	.21	.48	.48	*	
10. I orient other LR members into LR practices and procedures	.46	.32	.39	.22	.22	
11. I recommend LR products to acquaintances		.80		.29	.12	
12. I recommend LR products to other people besides acquaintances	.33	.73	.17	.13	.13	
13. I keep in touch with my customers regularly		.71	.23	.24	.19	
14. I recommend LR membership to acquaintances	.47	.69	.14		.17	
15. I recommend LR membership to other people beside acquaintances	.58	.65	.22		.15	
16. I gather product information related to LR products and keep it up-to-date	.24	.57		.46	.34	
17. I organize product presentations	.37	.52	.18	.41	.19	
18. I keep in touch with my hostesses regularly	.25	.50	.38	.32	.27	
19. I aim at contributing to issues concerning direct selling and network outside the LR organization	.30	.17	.77	.10		
20. I keep in touch with distributors in other direct selling and NM organizations		.22	.75	-.11	.15	
21. I aim at contributing to the development of direct selling and networking activity, e.g. through associations	.26		.73	.24		
22. I make recommendations to LR concerning issues that affect the	.46		.60	.39		

Item	Component				
distributor network					
23. I organize training	.54	.11	.59	.33	
24. I use LR products regularly	.11	.30	-.14	.66	-.11
25. I participate in training and meetings organized by LR or my up line	.30	.25	.29	.63	.38
26. I keep in touch with my up line	.33	.24	.17	.55	.46
27. I keep in touch with the personnel in the LR office	.34	.30	.29	.54	.34
28. I share ideas and experiences with other LR distributors	.39	.31	.29	.49	.42
29. In my activities, I follow the model given by my sponsor (or up line) with extreme care	.26	.14			.79
30. I follow the distributor contract with extreme care	.14	.34			.59
Eigenvalue	7.16	4.67	4.15	3.48	2.46
Percentage of variance explained	23.87	15.58	13.83	11.60	8.21
Cronbach's alpha for bolded subscales	.97	.84	.80		.62

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. A Rotation converged in seven iterations. * Values under 0.1 suppressed.

The first component reflects co-operative, *network management and support* behaviours and is defined by three civic virtue, and three altruism/helping items. These behaviours relate to recruitment, helping and socialization activities. From a NM organization's perspective, this component of networking behaviour is essential in developing and maintaining relationships with an organization's citizens.

The second component is represented by three loyalty and one involvement item, and reflects product and membership *promotion* behaviours. Most importantly, this component is characterized by recommending the products to acquaintances, and is thus essential in terms of product sales and member acquisition.

The third component is represented by three voice/keeping-up behaviours reflecting *advocacy* behaviours. The component is characterized by activities targeted outside the organization to advocate not only one's own business or organization but also direct selling and NM in general.

The fourth component is best represented by only one item, *product usage*. As the component however was clearly interpretable, and the item was expected to have important correlates in future analyses (not included in this study report), it was included in further analysis.

The fifth component is represented by two *obedience* items, and thus clearly reflects obedience behaviours. Especially in the NM context where salespeople operate independently, this aspect is considered important.

Role categories of NM salespeople

The second objective was to identify essential role categories for NM salespeople. This analysis was based on self-reported role definitions in terms of networking behaviour. Sixteen representative items of networking behaviour were used as a basis for the k-means cluster analysis. The advantage of this approach instead of using factor scores relates to the interpretability of the final cluster solution; interpretation of a cluster solution tends to be less complex when representative items are used.

Table 2 presents the resulting four clusters, the F statistic of ANOVA (for descriptive purposes), the final cluster centres, and the number of cases in each cluster.

Table 2. Role categories of NM salespeople

	Clusters	C1	C2	C3	C4	F
I initiate my down line into product selling	2	6	1	5		294.252
I initiate my down line into recruiting and sponsoring activities	2	6	1	5		262.413
I initiate new members in my down line into LR activities	2	6	1	5		211.119
I share ideas and experiences with my down line	2	7	1	6		185.852
I recruit new members into the LR organization	2	6	1	4		176.131
I keep in touch with my down line	2	7	2	5		141.841
I recommend LR products to other people besides acquaintances	5	7	3	6		70.871
I aim at contributing to the development of direct selling and networking activity, e.g. through associations	1	5	1	2		59.187
I recommend LR membership to acquaintances	4	6	3	6		58.193
I recommend LR products to acquaintances	6	7	5	7		44.584
I aim at contributing to issues concerning direct selling and network marketing outside the LR organization	2	5	1	3		40.679

I keep in touch with my customers regularly	5	6	3	5	39.718
In my activities, I follow the model given by my sponsor (or up line)	5	6	3	5	28.506
I keep in touch with direct selling and networking distributors in other DS or NM organizations	2	4	1	2	22.797
I follow the distributor contract with extreme care	6	7	5	7	19.414
I use LR products regularly	6	7	6	6	6.904
Number of cases in each cluster (Total 188)	60	22	58	48	

Note: The F tests of ANOVA should be used only for descriptive purposes because the clusters have been chosen to maximize the differences among cases in different clusters.

C1 = promoting agents; C2 = network leaders; C3 = members; C4 = networkers

After various trials, the above four-cluster solution was judged to reflect most suitably the general role categories in a NM organization.

The first role category is characterized by high engagement in product usage, promotion, and obedience. Salespeople in this category were termed *Promoting agents*.

Network management and support behaviours most extensively characterize role category 2. Salespeople in this category were termed *Network leaders*.

Salespeople in cluster 3 are characterized by low engagement in any of the networking behaviours except obedience and product usage, and were termed *Members*.

Finally, high involvement in obedience, network development and support, product usage and promotion behaviours characterizes roles in cluster 4. Salespeople in this category were termed *Networkers*.

3.3.3 Results: Members, promoters, networkers and leaders

Figure 7 summarizes the key findings of the survey. Networking behaviour was conceptualized and operationalized in terms of OCBs and other vital behaviours in a NM context. Five components of networking behaviour were identified. Based on the role definitions of salespeople, four potential role categories were identified, in which networking behaviours are manifest in a variety of ways. The categories are in good accordance with NM salespeople typologies identified in previous studies and professional literature, and they represent a well-established, although general, industry view on the roles of salespeople. This categorization provides a basis for further research on antecedents and consequences of networking behaviour.

Figure 7. Organizational roles of NM salespeople

Components of NM behaviour	Organizational citizenship behaviours				
	Obedience	Participation	Loyalty, involvement	Civic virtue, altruism, helping	Voice, keeping up, advocacy
Obedience: Following the contract and company policies	MEMBERS				
Product usage: Purchases for own and household use					
Promotion: Direct selling, recruiting of new members	PROMOTERS				
Network management and support	NETWORKERS				
Advocacy (keeping up with industry information)	LEADERS				

This study introduced NM as an example of a present-day business model, in which salespeople apply relationship selling in their daily work. NM salespeople are entitled to define their desired roles independently and are explicitly encouraged to include OCBs in their role definitions. Thus, in the NM organizations, OCBs are viewed as the norm for individual-, group- and organizational-level success in addition to traditional in-role behaviours in a personal selling context.

From the managerial perspective, empirical results emphasize the importance of assessing role definitions from the salesperson's perspective. It should be noted that the role descriptions of salespeople may best reflect their *anticipated future roles* and thus provide insights into *how salespeople expect to achieve their goals*. Following that, role descriptions may depart from the 'objective roles' determined by actualized sales, the size of the down line, etc. In other words, self-defined role descriptions could be analysed against other measures as well in order to gain important information on how these roles match actualized performance and managerial evaluations on achieved roles.

Further studies within this paradigm could, e.g., focus on individual antecedents of diverse role definitions. Following that, identification of an individual's potential/desired role would, e.g., assist in supporting salespeople to achieve their goals, independently of their current status and

performance. In other words, NM organizations and up-line salespeople might benefit from allocating their support in accordance with specific needs in each role category.

Limitations of the study

The sample in this study is composed of salespeople operating in a NM organization. The characteristics of NM organizations are as follows:

- Salespeople are independent, self-employed agents
- Compensation is performance based, and depends both on personal selling and group sales volume
- NM organizations apply member-get-member programmes in their recruitment procedures; thus salespeople are entitled to attract new members into the organization
- The nature of selling varies from face-to-face selling to home parties and product presentations at work places, etc.

Thus, specific caution should be exercised when generalizing these results to other types of selling contexts.

3.4 Constructionist critique

The above-described study serves as a rather typical example of an empirical exploration based on the established literature, theoretical conceptualization, and operationalization of the measures and a statistical analysis of the collected data. 'Network marketing practices' are easily adjusted with the prevailing academic conceptualization of OCBs and sales performance, and potentially conflicting views between the 'theory' and 'practice' of selling are dismissed³⁷.

Within the functionalist paradigmatic view, personal experience, practitioner views and perhaps qualitatively analysed pilot studies are most often taken as 'a priori' knowledge with a lower – or more precisely, less factual – status than statistically proven knowledge. Academic researchers and Ph.D. students interested in personal selling and sales management issues are likely to adopt a quantitatively oriented, realist approach in their studies, as it provides them with the necessary guidance, tools and likely avenues for publishing and thus participating in the established academic discourse.

From a constructionist perspective, this kind of blind imitation of any methodology is not unproblematic. Problems arise especially if epistemological and methodological assumptions and consequent research methods are taken for granted and adopted without justification. As Hirschman (1993) points out, all discourses are ideologically bounded and grounded. There is no getting *beyond* ideology, there is only the possibility of becoming aware of its presence and *consciously choosing* the values we wish to affirm (ibid).

Overall, the basic philosophical assumptions and standards of the empirical-analytic/functionalist approach dominate the way in which selling and salespeople are represented within personal selling and sales management literature³⁸. The functional characteristics of this approach correspond to the masculine ideology of science underlying, e.g., consumer research over the past decades (Hirschman 1993). Furthermore, the functional world view signifies the same philosophical and socio-cultural conditions as modernism in general: 1) the rule of reason and rational order, 2) the dominance of the cognitive subject, 3) emphasis on material progress through the application of scientific technologies, 4) the ideal of realism and representation, and 5) the separation of the sphere of production, which is institutionally controlled and public, from the sphere of consumption, which is domestic and private (adopted from Firat & Venkatesh 1995).

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979: 218), social system theory and objectivism form the dominant perspective within the functionalist paradigm, and have already decades ago been criticized both from within and outside the paradigm. These criticisms and their sources can be summarized as follows (ibid: 218-220):

- The perspective is characterized by an undue and extreme commitment to positivism and naïve empiricism as well as a complete disregard for the nature of the phenomena under investigation (interpretative theorists and radical humanists, action frame of reference theorists).
- Too strong a commitment to the models and methods of the natural scientists as a basis for social analysis (action frame of reference theorists).

³⁷ In a very concrete way, e.g. the definition of networking behaviours as 'all the positive...' dismisses all the negative behaviours from the construct and reflects an important and predetermined choice to focus only on the limited aspect of social practices. It also presumes a view of a researcher who is able to make the distinction between the negative and positive behaviours.

- Social system theorists and objectivists are overdeterministic in their view of human nature (action frame of reference theorists)
- Ideological bias in favour of a managerial view of organization: meanings which managers attribute to organizations are given undue prominence and orientations of other actors are ignored, and consequently the role of power as an organizational variable is ignored (all directions).

Burrell and Morgan (1979: 220) summarize that social system theory and objectivist approaches to the study of organizations are built around the common-sense, taken-for-granted assumptions that organizations are relatively stable, purposive, and goal-seeking enterprises. Typically functionalist metaphors of engineering and organics portray organizations as robust, stable, unitary, apolitical and conflict-free phenomena, and suppress awareness of the role of organizations as media of social power and of the involvement of all organizational members in their maintenance and transformation (Alvesson & Willmott 1996: 95).

As mechanical and organic models have proved popular analytical tools for the study of organizations, many theorists are left unaware of ideological and managerial biases built into these models (Burrell & Morgan 1979: 220; Hirschman 2003). Furthermore, Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996) point out that the belief in a rational agency underlies the self-conception of the organization scientist and the view of his or her role in relation to the organization. At the foundation level, this assumption justifies the argument that organization theory is the quintessential outcome of rational thought, and grants a degree of superiority to the professional theorist. Related to the stories of individual rationality and empirical knowledge, a taken-for-granted belief in the capacity of language to represent the 'real', sets the stage for mainstream understanding of organizational structure and communication (ibid).

Alvesson and Willmott (1996: 62) note that, in their otherwise valuable paradigm framework, Burrell and Morgan (1979) make some major substantive omissions in their discussion of structural inequity and radical change, which would indisputably also add to criticisms of the functionalist paradigm. In particular, Alvesson and Willmott (1996: 62) criticize the absence of any recognition of patriarchy and feminist theory in Burrell and Morgan's *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* (1979).

³⁸ Personal selling and sales management literature in this context refers to marketing and organization studies focusing on selling and salespeople. Among the leading management, marketing, and organization journals, 'The Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management' is most comprehensively focused on studies of these issues. To some extent, the community of sales researchers in this study refers to researchers basing their studies on the North-American school of thought and consequent literature.

However, during the last decade, criticism of the modernist, attitude-behaviour approach in organization and marketing research areas has developed far and also recognized the absence of gender sensitivity inherent in this approach, as well as its consequences for prevailing epistemologies, methodologies and political implications (for reviews and alternative approaches, see, e.g., Hirschman 1993; Fırat & Venkatesh 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery 1996; Katila & Meriläinen 1999; Katila & Meriläinen 2001; Moisander 2001)³⁹.

For example, postmodern/post-structural, deconstructive analyses of different organizational theoretical frameworks have shown that the traits associated with masculinity are often treated as 'given' and taken for granted, whereas the traits defined as feminine are constituted as 'other', as supportive of but not essential for organizational life and organizational theorizing (Bendl 2000). The above notion fits well with the theoretical models within OCB literature as well, in which the 'in-role performance' clearly represents a masculine set of activities, and the 'extra-role performance' – e.g. helping, supporting, and altruism – represents the supportive feminine traits of sales performance. As a result of differentiating between the masculine and the feminine, rational thinking and logic are privileged over emotions and social activities. This distinction highlights also the absence of customers and consumption in theoretical models of sales processes. To some extent, the imagination and feelings have always accompanied conceptions of consumption (Uusitalo 1998), whereas these aspects have systematically been left out of the constructs of production and selling.

Although explicit notions of the importance of extra-role performance may signal positive changes in the stereotypically masculine selling profession, according to Fendas (1997 ref. Bendl 2000), the failure to name these changes as feminization is tantamount to acknowledging that management ideas and practices are gendered.

Furthermore, metaphoric use of language – e.g. salespeople as resources or machines – has its implications, when naturalized and taken for granted. On the face of it, it appears natural and logical to refer to a salesperson as a link between the organization and the customer. However, the machine metaphor is engaged in a wider technological discourse, which constructs machines – and salespeople in this case – as easily replaceable and mechanical products. This view confirms

³⁹ For example, Hirschman (1993) documents the presence of a dominant, masculine ideology in the consumer research area, and suggests ways in which this ideology can be constructively complemented by the admission of previously invisible constituencies and muted voices. Moisander (2001) on the other hand, conceives and criticizes mainstream marketing thought as 'disciplinary' discourse that tends to normalize and impose a certain approach to theorizing and a certain methodology on consumer researchers. Furthermore, Katila and Meriläinen (2001a; 2001b) demonstrate alternative research methodologies, through which gendered and discriminative organizational practices can be made visible and dealt with.

the dichotomous categories of organization/salespeople, where the first term is given superior status over the second (Firat & Venkatesh 1995).

Thus, a constructionist critic of the functionalist paradigm maintains the idea that the choice to follow a particular research tradition is neither innocent nor independent of ideological concerns (see e.g. Hirschman 1993). For instance, Firat and Venkatesh (1995) demonstrate how postmodernism exposes the limitations of modernism in the study of consumption and offers alternative perspectives with a liberating potential (Figure 8). Their review of critique of modernism summarizes and extends the above critiques of a functionalist paradigm, and provides more grounds for creating alternative approaches in studies of selling as well:

Figure 8. Critique of modernism and postmodern potentials and remarks of this study

Critique of modernism	Postmodern potentials	Remarks of this study
As modernism has been guided by science, rationalism, and technology, it has become narrow, dogmatic and unidimensional in its working philosophy.	In addition to science and technology, postmodernism values aesthetics, language, discourses, and practices in order to understand the richness of the human experience.	Focus on sales discourse gives room also to conceptions other than traditional academic conceptions of selling and salespeople thus broadening the established view.
The modernist project has rendered the consumer a reluctant participant in a rational economic system that affords no emotional, symbolic, or spiritual relief.	The postmodernist quest is to 're-enchant human life' and to liberate the consumer from a repressive rational/technological scheme.	
Modernism reduces the world into simple dichotomous categories: subject/object, male/female, produced/consumer and so on. Each pair represents a difference, and usually the first term is given a superior status over the second term.	Postmodernism regards these dichotomies as unsuccessful historical attempts to legitimize partial truths.	This study aims to avoid pre-determined categories and instead explores the structure of diverse categories within different discourses.
Modernism is paradoxical and inconsistent in terms of the unconnectedness of its ideality to its reality. For example, modernism both vilifies and glorifies the consumer.	Postmodernism exposes these contradictions and elevates consumption to a level on par with production, where consuming is also viewed as a value-producing activity.	This study explores the conditions for multiple contradictory views on selling and network marketing thus accepting the idea of conflicting social realities.
In the field of architecture, modernist notions have been criticized as stifling and repressive because of the primary emphasis on rationalism, functionalism and universalism (Jencks 1987 in Firat and Venkatesh 1995).	The postmodern movement in these fields moved closer to expressive forms, symbolic representations, and the mixing of the genres, which opens up possibilities for researchers as well.	
Modernism constructs the consumer-self as the mind separable from body, the individual separable from the social, and the human subject in control over objects of her/his creation.	Postmodernism reveals these paradoxes and proposes radically different perspectives of what the consumer is.	This study aims at proposing several different perspectives of what selling and network marketing are.

Source: Firat and Venkatesh (1995)

To put it briefly: In each study project, fundamental paradigmatic features should be transparently recognized and accepted or replaced depending on the values and goals of the research project in question. My argument is that the discussion of significant changes in sales practices and the selling profession should be extended to meet a need to approach these changes from alternative ontological, epistemological, and methodological perspectives.

3.5 Summary and discussion

Mainstream sales literature agrees with the view that the selling profession is undergoing major changes. These changes are argued to result from a shift from transactional selling to relationship selling. Recent changes in sales jobs imply changes in conceptualization and operationalization of the roles of salespeople, and emphasize the importance of co-operative behaviour (e.g. organizational citizenship behaviours, OCB) in the definitions of the role of salespeople.

The network marketing business model provides an example of relationship selling⁴⁰ in practice. Inherent in NM is the emphasis on organizational citizenship behaviours as a key determinant of individual-, group-, and organizational-level success – both in terms of financial as well as personal gains. Based on a survey study, the roles of NM salespeople can be categorized as members, promoters, networkers and leaders on the basis of their self-reported role definitions. In each category, OCBs are manifest in a variety of ways. The distinguishing feature in the roles of NM salespeople is the explicitly valued norm of co-operative behaviours both inside and outside the sales network.

Dominant academic discourse on selling is grounded on a functionalist paradigm, which in concurrent sales literature is taken for granted and normalized thus providing a ‘received view’ within the academy. The fundamental features of this paradigm involve 1) an implicit or explicit ontological assumption of objective reality, 2) an epistemological and methodological stand on objective instruments and statistical analysis methods as privileged tools to acquire knowledge, 3) a view of human kind and studied objects as rational, cognitive and preferably masculine constructs, and finally 4) a view of researchers as objective observers.

From a functionalist perspective, academic discourse traditionally constructs salespeople as organizational resources or inputs as well as mechanical performers of the organization’s

functions, and selling as a process linking these resources to the objective goals of the organization. The focus of these studies is on relations between a salesperson's individual characteristics (personality traits, attitudes, socio-demographics, etc.), role performance, and the organization's performance – sales volume, effectiveness, aggregate satisfaction and commitment, etc. A reduction of salespeople as part of an organization's resources naturalizes the efforts to control salespeople and creates an image of an organization as a privileged unit separate from the sales force. From this perspective, objective researchers possess the ability to inquire into the organizations' reality through objective instruments. Language in this view is understood as a carrier of true knowledge.

From a constructionist standpoint, the naturalized fundamentals of the functionalist view are not unproblematic. In contrast, masculine ideology and modernist philosophical engagements also underlying the functionalist paradigm have been criticized within organization, consumer and marketing research domains for years now. Firat and Venkatesh (1995) abbreviate these criticisms in stating that among others, modernism has become narrow, dogmatic and unidimensional in its working philosophy, and reduces the world into too simple dichotomous categories where one is usually given a superior status over the other.

From the constructionist perspective, mainstream academic discourse on selling provides a consciously limited view on subjects participating in the sales profession. Salespeople within this discourse are constructed as rational, cognitive and masculine characters, comprising varying bundles of personality traits and behaviours. Through the metaphoric use of language, organization and managers are constructed as superior categories over salespeople, and salespeople as replaceable parts or resources of the organization.

The functionalist research approach is stereotypically masculine in its emphasis on rationality, instrumentality and objectiveness. In its attempt to generalize and find universal truths, this approach omits socio-cultural and local contexts to a certain extent. Voices of other social actors – peers or customers – are rarely present in studies of selling. In most sales performance models, customers are implicitly treated as silent objects of targeted actions. For example, Swan et al. (2001) explicitly state that salesperson relationships with customers have received limited

⁴⁰ Within the marketing literature, there can be found several definitions for the term 'relationship marketing' or 'relationships selling'. In this study, I use these terms on a very general level to refer to the recent contrast between these terms and the traditional conceptions of transaction-focused marketing and selling (as discussed in the introduction section).

attention in the sales and marketing literature⁴¹. Even one of the new suggested forms of extra-role behaviour, namely customer-oriented behaviour, is defined as ‘non-sales-related behaviours directed at the customer’ (MacKenzie et al. 1998; italics added). Thus, the perspective of selling as a social construct mutually negotiated by salespeople and customers remains undeveloped in this field.

Paradoxically, although many authors of academic texts share a concern for the distorted and limited ‘traditional’ view of selling and salespeople, this concern has had no significant consequences for study practices within the sales research community. This omission projects the view of researchers as objective monitors of reality, who have no power in influencing the views and practices of selling organizations. As such, this view is in sharp contrast to a constructionist and postmodern view of researchers as being yet another community constructing and shaping the conceptions and mundane lives of organizations.

Nevertheless, the roles of customers as well as salespeople are under reconstruction in mundane business applications such as NM. Studies as well as practitioner texts on NM suggest that NM blurs the traditional borders between the sales organization and the customer base, salespeople and the customer, selling and buying, in that they conceive all members in their sales network as customers; more like producers or performers of selling and marketing than mere consumers of their products.

In other words, NM salespeople members participate in the NM company’s organizational life in a variety of ways, thus blurring the traditional borders between selling and buying. This critically new perspective parallels notions of breaking dichotomies already being discussed in the services marketing literature (the border between service providers and customers), relationship marketing literature (the border between producers and customers), and consumer marketing (the border between production and consumption (see Firat & Venkatesh 1995)). Moreover, NM blurs the border between the public and private spheres as appropriate contexts for commerce (see Grayson 1998).

Several excellent empirical and conceptual studies have been already conducted in the NM context. These studies have contributed to the mainstream sales literature in many fields of organization and marketing theories. However, as the survey study on the roles of NM salespeople presented in this section illustrates, a persistency to remain in traditional scientific

⁴¹ In her recent study on customer loyalty programmes, Arantola (2002: 39) notes that the consumer view has somewhat surprisingly not even been in the focus of relationship marketing studies or practice.

paradigms is likely to result in a reduced and muted image of NM within academic discourse. Apparently, NM as a multifaceted, contradictory research phenomenon has mainly been forced to fit into existing theories and frameworks and thus, on its part, has failed to challenge conventional selling conceptions at least in the academic field.

In this section, I demonstrated how contemporary sales and NM studies still rely heavily on functionalist assumptions of reality, subjects and knowledge. On the basis of a constructionist critique, I argue that the existing constructs of sales performance and the roles of salespeople, in particular, may fail to capture the emerging tensions of selling especially in complex socio-cultural settings. In accordance with this argument, quantitative survey research may offer exact yet oversimplified measures on sales performance and selling roles in general⁴².

To summarize, although sales management literature in general has noted changes in selling function and the roles of salespeople within a traditional sales organization (e.g. Wotruba 1991; Weitz & Bradford 1999), it has evoked only mild criticisms within the dominant paradigm concerning revision of old models with new variables or modified measures. Constructionists, postmodern approaches - with alternative conceptions of epistemological issues – on selling in diverse socio-cultural realities have not yet been applied within sales research. Neither has there been any major consideration on consequent changes in methodological approaches in future studies of selling.

The question of course, is not about the value of any philosophical or methodological approach as such, but about the ability of the chosen theoretical paradigm and interrelated methodology to provide alternative or complementary insights into the chosen commercial, social and cultural phenomena. As soon as questions of significant changes within the studied area arise, they should inescapably bring with them a concern with epistemological and methodological alternatives to create a different kind of understanding of the phenomena under study.

⁴² For example, the reasoning and the conceptual framework behind the survey study was justified within respective academic literature. However, it can be argued that it provided only a limited and predetermined view on NM salespeople roles through masking or ‘normalizing’ the distinguished features of NM and muting contesting perspectives.

4 NM PRACTITIONER ACCOUNT OF AN INDEPENDENT AND FREE LIFESTYLE

Network marketers work when they want (usually out of their home which offers significant tax advantages), and how they want. There are no standard hours or a retail location that must be opened according to schedule. And remember, Network Marketers are volunteers. You're not obliged to do anything. So how you work your business is completely up to you (Kalench 1991:57).

4.1 Introduction

The above extract provides a typical description of salespeople within the network marketing practitioner literature. The extract constructs salespeople as independent and uncontrolled individuals: a feature which appears to sharply contrast with the image of a salesperson presented in the previous section.

In this section, I provide insights in the NM practitioner discourse on selling and salespeople. The section is based on the analysis of selected practitioner booklets and handbooks. As a starting point for the analysis, I intuitively thought of the academic community as one of the most influential actors in setting the standards for commonly accepted representations of selling and salespeople. From that perspective, I read the NM practitioner texts as a counter-discourse of selling with a remarkably contentious character. These premises were probably derived from my personal experiences as a member of both communities, and unavoidably directed and guided the analysis. As a consequence, it felt natural to break up the analysis in this report in the following form, in which I not only present the identified features of the practitioner discourse but also reflect these features against the academic discourse on selling.

This decision was both useful and theoretically grounded. First of all, this manner of reporting and reflecting on the results corresponds well with the analytical procedures when multiple data are involved. Secondly, as Gamson and Modigliani (1989) state: 'There is no theme without a counter-theme' and it is useful to think of themes dialectically. The theme is conventional and normative; the counter-theme is adversarial and contentious. Both are rooted in culture, and both can be important in assessing the outcome of any specific symbolic contest (*ibid*). In other words, I treated the established academic view of selling in this study as the conventional theme, and NM practitioner discourse as the adversarial counter-theme.

The above theme of NM as a counter-discourse on corporate life is most elaborate in Nicole Biggart's (1989) detailed analysis of direct selling organizations. For example, she states that open opportunity to join the sales force, pursuit to discourage competition between distributors, and active encouragement of effusive and expressive behaviour bind network marketing organizations together, and distinguish them from conventional corporate life (*ibid*: 3-5). Thus, the practitioner account of NM significantly revolves around the contrasts with conventional stereotypes of hierarchical organizations.

In this section, I pose the following questions from the data: what are the ideological characteristics of the practitioner discourse on NM⁴³? What kind of images of selling, network marketing and NM salespeople do practitioner texts depict? These questions will be answered through the analysis of the practitioner writings such as industry descriptions, handbooks and how-to-do-it manuals. These materials form an important body of communication among NM salespeople and thus project the dominant discourse among NM practitioners.

Practitioner community here refers to companies, salespeople and associations applying and advocating the NM business concept. NM community members represent their profession to themselves and to others through an established discourse, which is routinely being repeated and canonized – and also questioned – in the production, consumption and circulation of a variety of textual materials (Atkinson & Coffey 1997: 45). In this view, distributor contracts, newsletters, handbooks, product catalogues, and company manuals form an important body of practitioner discourse across the NM industry. The importance of written texts is further emphasized, since the NM organizations' governance system is relatively unstructured and informal and written materials are used to bind salespeople to each other and to the organization.

Thus, NM salespeople use written materials for multiple communication, socialization, administration and marketing tasks. Written documents are among the methods whereby they publicize themselves, attract new members and customers, compete with each other, and justify themselves to others both internally and externally (see Atkinson & Coffey 1997: 45). As a salesperson (1994-1997) and an industry advocate (1997-) I consider myself a member of the

⁴³ The term ideology in this study is broadly defined as the 'ideas that form the basis of a political or economic theory' (Hawkins, *The Oxford Minidictionary* 1991), which can be traced through the dominant discourse of the community under study.

Finnish NM community, and as such, relatively familiar with practitioner texts and their use in general⁴⁴.

4.1.1 Data procedures

Since 1994, I have collected many types of textual, verbal and visual data on NM. All of this material was not systematically collected for the purposes of this particular study. However, as the study focus became clearer, I selected carefully a data body for the purposes of each separate analysis. In NM organizations, typically used literature comprises descriptive handbooks and how-to-do-it manuals. For the purposes of the analysis in question, I selected the data which comprise books and booklets (Figure 9), which have been written by NM experts and practitioners - salespeople, trainers, consultants, industry advocates, lectures and lawyers - operating in diverse fields within the industry.

One of the books is a research report of the direct selling industry (Biggart 1989), four of the books (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995; Berry 1997; Karvinen 1997; Johansson & al. 1998) are industry reviews and descriptions, and the rest of the books are how-to-do it manuals and handbooks used, e.g., in starter kits by NM organizations. Thus, the genre of the booklets varies from descriptive reviews to self-improvement and inspirational books. Noteworthy, although the selected materials are mainly written in English, they have been used in Finland across many NM organizations. Furthermore, the relatively rare Finnish material is typically based on and refers to books published in the UK and the USA. However, based on my working experience within the NM industry, I presume that the selected data reflect well the dominant discourse of the Finnish NM practitioner community.

Figure 9. Primary data for the analysis of practitioner discourse

Babener, Jeffrey, 1992. Network Marketing. Window of Opportunity. Legaline Publications, US, Oregon.
Berry, Richard, 1997. Direct Selling. From door to door to network marketing. Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
Biggart, Nicole Woolsey, 1989. Charismatic Capitalism. Direct Selling Organizations in America. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
Carmichael, Allen, 1995. Verkostomarkkinointi. Välttämätön opaskirja uuden, palkitsevan liikeidean jännittävään maailmaan. International Marketing Global Partners, Helsinki.
Dewandre, Paul & Corinne Mahieu, 1995. The Future of Multi-level Marketing in Europe. Les Editions du Saint-Bernard, Belgium.

⁴⁴ In 1995, I co-wrote a first Finnish handbook of NM (Leppälä 1995), which was based on my personal experiences and on US practitioner literature. During this process, I became familiar with practitioner texts used in many NM organizations in Finland.

Fogg, John Milton 1994. Money, Money, Money, Money, Money. MLM Publishing, USA.
Hedges, Burke, 1992. Who Stole The American Dream? The Book Your Boss Doesn't Want You To Read! INTI Publications, USA.
Johansson, Marita; Johannes Linden ja Jari Saravuo, 1998. Verkostomarkkinointi. Kiihkoton esitys kiistellystä jakelukanavasta ja yritysjohtajien muodosta. WSOY, Jyväskylä.
Kalench, John, 1990. Yllä Parhaimpaasi Verkostomarkkinoinnissa. Opiskele tietoisuus huipulle verkostomarkkinoinnissa – yhdessä maailman nopeimmin kasvavista elinkeinoista. Avitus Oy, Tampere.
Kalench, John, 1991. The Greatest Opportunity in the History of the World. MIM Publications, USA.
Karvinen, Esa-Pekka, 1997. Sinun elämäsi suuri mahdollisuus. Faktoja ja visioita uudesta kauppatavasta. Diomedea Excellence, Helsinki.
Ludbrook, Edvard, 1996. Se Todellinen Kuva. Verkostomarkkinointi kasvaa räjähdyksmäisesti. Miksi? International Marketing Global Partners Oy: Helsinki.
Sipilä, Leena ja Pekka Helenius, 1997. Hehtaareittain timantteja. Verkostomarkkinointi kasvaa räjähdyksmäisesti. Miten? Osa 1. Double Network, Turku.

Thus, the chosen materials are selected on the basis of my personal experience of the Finnish NM field, and in my view they form a representative body of typical texts created and used within the practitioner community. The data represent the practitioner discourse in that these kinds of materials are typically used across the NM industry for varying purposes from recruiting new members to motivating down-line salespeople in the NM organization, as well as for teaching how to present the products, organize training and promote the NM business in general. Because for most people NM is not well known before they join an organization, and the organization of the sales network is informal and geographically scattered, the importance of written material in multiple socializing tasks is emphasized.

Atkinson and Coffey (1997: 60) state that in some contexts, it takes a highly socialized member of a subculture (such as a professional group) to make any sense at all of a text. I was familiar with all the selected materials and had used them as a salesperson and an industry advocate. Therefore I felt comfortable in my decision that the selected material would suffice as data for the analysis. I also decided that the selected excerpts from these primary data would best enrich the final study report and highlight the results from the analysis⁴⁵.

In the analysis of the data, I viewed the selected literature as cultural texts that encode the dominant discourse of their authors (see Hirschman 1990, 1993); i.e. the knowledge-creating community of NM practitioners and industry advocates. I read the booklets closely and then focused on the identification of repeated discursive and rhetorical techniques, and simultaneously

on common descriptions of and references to beliefs, values, and examples of mundane practices of NM salespeople.

Further on, I started to select and group consistent statements and descriptions of characters, events, and images of NM – that is, ‘practitioners’ facts’ of NM – into separate documents, from which I selected extracts for this final report⁴⁶. Throughout the analysis, I gradually limited the data body that I focused on more thoroughly. The identification of the fundamental discursive characters within the practitioner discourse was significantly aided by comparison and reflection of the previous analysis of academic texts.

Noteworthy, although the characteristics of any particular genre were naturally present in the texts, and distinguished diverse materials from each other, the data were remarkably consistent in terms of the themes that were brought up as relevant aspects of NM. This consistency made it relatively straightforward to identify the recurring patterns and texture of the NM practitioner discourse. In the following, I present the findings of this analysis.

4.2 Fundamentals of network marketing

Dominant practitioner discourse is uniform in its thesis: NM provides a unique and novel business opportunity to ordinary people regardless of their personal, social, educational or other qualities. This relatively provocative argument is expected to raise counter-arguments even within the practitioner community, which again is being prevented through several discursive tactics and rhetorical devices. The following extract aptly depicts the core, nature and common genre of most practitioner texts:

Usko siihen mitä itse pidät totuutena. Älä hyväksy muiden mielipiteitä ennen kuin faktat omassa mielessäsi ovat kohdallaan. Myönnän avoimesti, että itse en täysin hyväksynyt tätä toimialaa ennen kuin rupesin sitä tarkemmin tutkimaan. Ymmärrän siis varautuneisuutesi. On vain sääli, että ihmiset, jotka eivät hyväksy tarjottua mahdollisuutta tuomitsevat sen ilman todellisia perusteita.

⁴⁵ In Goffman's words (1974: 15): 'I do not present these anecdotes, therefore, as evidence or proof, but as clarifying depictions, as frame fantasies which manage, through the hundred liberties taken by their tellers, to celebrate our beliefs about the workings of the world. What was put into these tales is thus what I would like to get out of them.'

⁴⁶ As I conducted the analyses of academic and press writings partially parallel to this analysis, I was able to compare and contrast the emerging themes in all data types. It appeared that, in practitioner writings, themes were represented as harmonious and, as such, they constructed a consistent story of NM as a whole. In contrast, the same themes in press writings produced alternative and conflicting views.

Believe in what you yourself consider as truth. Do not accept other people's opinions before you have the facts in order in your mind. I openly admit that I did not fully accept this industry before I started to investigate it more thoroughly. So I understand your reserveness. It just is a pity, that people, who do not accept the opportunity, denounce it with no real grounds (Ludbrook 1996: 49).

Firstly, the text constructs the truth – facts - about NM as a matter of belief, not a matter of knowledge. The next sentence contrasts and undermines ‘other people’s opinions’ with ‘facts in one’s own mind’, and as a consequence, puts the reader’s personal understanding into a privileged and respected position. Following that, the author uses stake inoculation and avoids an interpretation of blind imitation by confessing his prior negative views, which were then replaced through a careful evaluation. In the next sentence, the author empathizes with the reader thus positioning the two of them on the same side. (The author has already been constructed as a knowledgeable person and, as such, someone whose companion does matter.) From that shared position then, ‘other people’ can be felt sorry for on the basis of their irrational rejection of a unique offer such as NM.

The chosen pursuing and convincing tactics imply the following presumptions within the practitioner community: 1) if there is too little knowledge – i.e. hard facts - on NM, faith is needed instead, 2) other people’s conflicting opinions may be dangerous and depressing – a strong confidence in one’s own opinions is needed instead, 3) prospected people are likely to be reserved and worried about being left without support, respected allies are therefore needed, and 4) in a likely case of rejection by other people, understanding of their inadequate knowledge is needed.

Altogether, practitioner discourse maintains that there are external obstacles to fully understanding the benefits of NM for consumers and salespeople. Firstly, there are not enough statistical and reliable facts about the industry to back up the practitioner discourse through rational evaluation. Secondly, there are other parties involved, such as traditional retail traders, the advertising industry and the media, whose interests clash with the interests of the NM industry. From those parties also, the public audience receives misinformation and half-truths about NM, which again creates confusion and rejection. As a consequence, the practitioner discourse concludes that only those who really understand what NM is all about are likely to join the organization, and those who misunderstand it are left outside.

At a general level, NM practitioner discourse is a specific discourse of selling in social settings, which not only contests the supposedly opposing discourses, but also strongly defends its thesis

through a variety of discursive tactics. In the following sections, I describe the fundamental characteristics of practitioner discourse in a more detailed manner.

4.2.1 Social movement and lifestyle

Practitioner discourse constructs NM very much like a social movement providing salespeople with not only a job, but also a world view, a community of like-minded others, and a self-concept (Biggart 1989: 9). Simultaneously, practitioner texts position 'other' organizations as bureaucratically organized enterprises. To emphasize this view, NM is not seen narrowly as a job or a business opportunity but more like an alternative lifestyle. This kind of lifestyle emphasizes the importance of values other than economic values, and replaces financial success with success in social life. For example, the following extract undermines the rational logic of traditional business life and instead privileges an alternative valuable lifestyle:

Olemme tähän mennessä käsitelleet taloutta, loogisuutta ja rahaa. Tärkeintä elämässä on kuitenkin olla tyytyväinen itseensä ja muihin. Verkostomarkkinoinnin ehdottomasti paras puoli onkin juuri henkilökohtainen kasvu ja toiminnasta poikivat ystävyysuhheet. Se on tällä alalla hyvin keskeinen asia ja toiminnassa mukana oleville suuri hyöty.

So far, we have dealt with the economics, logic and money. The most important thing in life, however, is to be satisfied with oneself and with other people. The best side of network marketing is absolutely the personal growth and friendships stemming from the system. This is central to this field and a great benefit to all involved. (Ludbrook 1996:47)

Paradoxically though, it should be noted that the order of the themes, which the author focuses on in this particular book, is explicitly firstly 'the economics, logic, and money', and only after these issues, 'the personal growth and friendships'. On the one hand, this paradox could be explained either by the conscious attempt to first appeal to the reader's most obvious needs and expectations – presuming that these expectations would primarily concern the rational aspect of NM, such as the financial potential or the business logic of network marketing. From this perspective, the above text takes into consideration the expected values of the audience, but subtly aims at focusing the attention onto the essentially valued issues within the NM practitioner community (...The most important thing in life, however...). On the other hand, the conflict between the order of the NM values (as implicitly present in this particular book) and the overall rhetoric of the importance of values other than economic values (as shown in the above extract)

could also be explained as reflecting a 'real' conflict between the rhetoric and values within the NM community.

However, it should be noted that the research approach adopted in this study does not provide tools for – and is not even interested in – finding out the proof of whether the network marketers genuinely believe in their arguments or not. Instead, on the basis of this analysis I conclude that the NM practitioner discourse in general signals and highlights the sharp contrast between the economic values and the softer, humane values in our contemporary society. Furthermore, as a former NM salesperson, my personal experience is that in everyday life it may often be easier to express values other than the soft values associated with NM if one tries to avoid being labelled as naïve or credulous. To some extent, the discursive formulation of work as a rational, economical construct is more available and more easily accepted than the formulation of work as a means of self-improvement and as part of an alternative lifestyle.

The following extract emphasizes the importance of NM in salespeople's lives and the potential of NM for changing people's lives:

...men and women in Network marketing take responsibility for their own lives and are richly rewarded for their energy and effort and their unique talents and abilities. Above all, Network marketing is a lifestyle – a lifestyle of self-esteem, of making a difference and of personal and professional self-determination and freedom. (Babener 1992: 15)

Network marketing literally transforms people's lives. Something special happens to people as they grow and especially when they directly contribute to the success of others (Kalench 1991:63)

The above extract exemplifies well the way in which NM is represented as subordinate to people's broader goals in life. Although there is an emphasis on individual responsibility and growth, individualism is characteristically linked with altruism within the practitioner discourse. In this sense, the lifestyle of NM represents salespeople as embedded in social relationships instead of viewing salespeople as parts of nothing but the organizational functioning.

4.2.2 Process of trusting and sharing

Practitioner discourse emphasizes social bonds such as trust between the salespeople and customers⁴⁷. In so doing, it simultaneously strips 'conventional selling' of these qualities, and thus

⁴⁷ This kind of contrast is also found, e.g., in IMP (International Marketing and Purchasing) literature.

paradoxically strengthens the negative view of selling⁴⁸: through this contrast, practitioner discourse constructs selling as an uncomfortable or ill-favoured category, and removes NM from the features of conventional selling. For example:

So network marketing is not selling, in the conventional sense. It is not dependent upon persons trained in professional sales approaches. Rather, it is the more trusted and trusting process of sharing personal endorsements with people one already knows – one's sphere of influence. (Babener 1992: 22)

Nimittäin verkostomarkkinointi ei ole myyntiä vaan suosittelemista omien kokemuksien myötä.

Network marketing is not selling but recommending through your own experiences. (Sipilä & Helenius 1997: 44)

Suomessa vaikuttaa 'myymisen' synonyymi olevan 'tyrkyttäminen', jota terminä pidetään kielteisenä. 'Tarjoaminen' kelvanee useimmiten, mutta 'jakelemisessa' on väkisin tehdyn maku. Tuotteiden 'esittäminen' on asiallinen, neutraali ja konstailematon sana juuri tähän ympäristöön, ja se kertoo täsmällisesti, mistä on kysymys.

In Finland, a synonym for 'selling' appears to be 'pushing', which is held as a negative term. 'Offering' would do for the most, but 'distributing' sounds artificial. Product 'presentation' is an objective, neutral and straightforward word specifically in this context and it unfolds precisely what this is all about. (Johansson et al. 1998: 102)

Instead of selling, NM is typically represented by metaphors such as helping, recommending, offering an opportunity, and sharing positive experiences with others. These metaphors are used especially in constructing equal and non-repressive relationships between NM salespeople and customers, and between salespeople and potential recruits.

In Network Marketing Sales, selling is the process of creating positive relationships based on the exchange of value – whether that value is achieved through buying your products or joining you in your business opportunity. (Fogg 1994:33)

Word of mouth is not only powerful, but it guarantees a certain level of truth by its very nature. We are taking charge of our responsibilities and we are becoming wary consumers. Trickery is no longer tolerated. (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 69)

⁴⁸ Of note is the fact that practitioner discourse disregards any possible new developments in sales practices and thus emphasizes and exaggerates the characteristics of 'traditional selling'.

Technically, MLM is the capitalization of the principle of word of mouth. When we like a car, a hotel, a restaurant, a brand of tea or whisky, we publicize it by telling those around us. When we decide to buy a dog or a camcorder, or to go on vacation, we ask the advice of friends and listen to their recommendations with great interest...Most of the time, the business that benefits from this efficient word-of-mouth publicity does not even know that it is going on and can not thank those who are doing it for them. MLM companies are able to reward people who use word of mouth publicity to recommend a product that they like to others. *'As friends share good news, when you discover a product or a service that gives you some benefit, you have a desire to tell others about it. In network marketing, this is exactly why you get paid. Think of this money as a way for the company to say 'thank you'*
- John Kalench, *Being the Best You Can Be in MLM, San Diego: MIM Publications, 1988.* (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 48-49)

Network marketing is a superb method for motivating and rewarding 'consumer advocacy' - the natural human tendency to share our excitement and enthusiasm about the benefits of a product by recommending it to our family and friends. (Babener 1992:10)

The above extracts also exemplify the use of the term 'word of mouth', which is a typical metaphor for selling within the practitioner discourse. This metaphor is used to maintain that selling in the NM context is an unselfish expression, a genuine act of recommending products from consumer to consumer. Furthermore, the extracts construct NM customers as conscious and wary individuals able to take care of their own rights and willing to share their positive experiences with other consumers. On the other hand, this discourse simultaneously confirms the image of traditional selling as tricky and fallacious through introducing 'a certain level of truth' into this novel application of selling.

The practitioner discourse aims at reconstructing the conventional view on selling also through using the family metaphor and associating the comfort and care found in family relationships with network marketing. This will be explicitly shown in the next extract:

Now, you may be uncomfortable with the word 'sales'. If you are, please, consider the following questions...

- Were you to comfort a frightened child who woke up from a nightmare about a wolf under the bed by assuring the child that everything was okay...would that not be *sales*?
- Is there anything you own and value that someone *sold* you?
- Are you married? (Fogg 1994: 32-33)

This extract introduces and questions the taken-for-granted distinction between selling and non-commercial interaction like, for example, relationships between parents and children, people and their valuable possessions, and marriage. Through a tactful irony, the author questions whether there exist clear boundaries between ‘the sales’ and ‘the other’ types of interactions. From an analytical perspective, this example is powerful in reminding us of how through naming, categorizing and describing one issue, we also unconsciously categorize and describe other issues, for example marriage in this case. To be precise, through irony the extract suggests that perhaps we should view marriage as ‘sales’. Would that then require us to change our conception either of ‘the sales’ or ‘the marriage’, or would that only require us to accept the similarities and discard the sharpest contrasts between the two?

Noteworthy, both dominant practitioner as well as dominant academic discourses acknowledge the persistent discourse of selling as an immoral and dishonest activity and profession, and use a variety of rhetorical and fact-construction devices (reification and irony) to construct an opposing view. Paradoxically though, whereas NM handbooks contrast NM with selling in general, within the academic community NM is used as an example of an ethically dubious marginal case of personal selling (e.g. Bloch 1996).

4.2.3 Feminine images

As the representation of selling is reconstructed by the practitioner discourse, the images of NM salespeople are also contrasted with traditional selling roles. As the analysis of the academic discourse on selling shows, the roles of salespeople have traditionally involved stereotypically masculine features such as aggressiveness and insensitivity. This view is acknowledged in the practitioner discourse as well, as the next extract exemplifies:

The kind of *sales* which people object to is the arm-twisting or hyped-up selling approach of the con-man – the person who takes our money, but does not give us fair value in return. (Fogg 1994: 34)

The practitioner discourse tends to use the terms traditional and professional synonymously. For example, the following typical extract exemplifies the way in which NM salespeople are distinguished from ‘professional salespeople’:

Professional sales people also must learn new skills as they are often the people who have most difficulty adapting to the MLM mind-set. Door-to-door selling tricks bring disastrous results when applied to MLM.
(Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 89)

In the above extract, professional selling is implied to equal door-to-door selling tricks. Network marketing's departure from 'door-to-door selling tricks' and thus from professional selling is clearly and explicitly articulated. Overall, the practitioner discourse presumes a culturally universal understanding of door-to-door selling as tricky and disastrous.

The practitioner community also aims to replace 'the pushy door-to-door sales' people with 'helping agents' through associating NM salespeople with professional categories such as teachers or preachers:

What are preachers and teachers, if not salespeople? (Fogg 1994: 32)

Network Marketing is a 'nurturing' business. It's built by caring about others and encouraging them to succeed. That's why the most successful group of people entering Network Marketing are female teachers.

(Kalench 1991: 60)

The above statement of teachers as successful network marketers is often repeated in practitioner texts. Practitioner discourse self-evidently associates feminine features, such as caring and nurturing, with teachers, and connects these qualities to network marketing in a similar vein. Importantly, the practitioners' view on the development of the profession of salespeople from that of a salesperson to that of a communicator and a teacher resembles the academic discussion of the changing roles of salespeople (see e.g. Wotruba 1991) as well as the discussion on the importance of organizational citizenships behaviours.

The distributor's job changes from the role of a salesperson to that of a communicator and teacher, who develops contacts and builds rapport.

(Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 68)

Echoing these views, the interview data also introduced teachers as a privileged category for successful NM salespeople in contrast to professional salespeople⁴⁹. In the following extract, the interviewed salesperson echoes this view and strengthens the argument through referring to practitioner books and 'research', and through constructing the speaker as a critical evaluator of these information sources (..ja sen mä allekirjoitan kyllä – and I do agree on that).

Niinku just Yhdysvalloissa on joku tutkimus tehty, et nää opettajat pikkusen keskitasosta nousee. Mut en mä yhtäään ihmelle sitä. Niin kuin näissä kirjoissa puhutaan, et ne myyjät on ne pahimmat niinku saada heidät ymmärtää ja oppimaan tää ja sen mä allekirjoitan kyllä. Niillä on niin paljon pois opittavaa.

⁴⁹ I chose to include this 'extra' extract in the report, as it depicted aptly how the everyday use of language of the NM salespeople canonized the practitioner literature.

There was research done in the USA that showed that these teachers score somewhat higher than the average. But I am not surprised about that. As it says in these books, it is those salespeople that are the worst - they need to be made understand and learn this - and I do agree on that. They have so much to unlearn.' (Interview 2)

Through contrasting masculine 'hard selling' with feminine 'helping' and 'teaching', practitioner discourse explicitly and implicitly incorporates the feminine characteristics of ideological dualism (see Figure 5, p. 60) into salespeople images. Thus, professional writings challenge traditional masculine roles, but on the other hand – as the extract below shows - they reproduce the gendered view of feminine and masculine characters as congenital possessions of men and women:

The fact is that women are also better talkers and explainers than men. Now please, don't get upset with me. This is a fact. (Kalench 1991: 60)

This project to feminize the constructs of selling and salespeople may serve several purposes. First, it can be used to reinforce the NM salesperson profession to make it more attractive to women who, in most societies, form the greatest recruiting potential for part-time jobs. The rationale for this line of argumentation is that women are presumed to possess more of the stereotypically feminine than masculine characteristics, and thus will respond more openly to opportunities that favour feminine characteristics.

However, at the same time the persistent discourse of professional selling as a masculine construct is acknowledged in texts and made visible through excusing and justifying the feminine approach to selling:

One interesting thing I find is that many of these successful enterprises were begun by the women. Once the men saw how great the business was (and especially after their wives started making more money than they were), the men quit their jobs and joined them. It happens all the time. (Kalench 1991: 61)

The first sentence presents women's success in NM as an unexpected fact. Moreover, this exceptional success had led to an abnormal event – although visible and thus proven and factual - of women earning more money than men. As a consequence, an innumerable amount and a continuous stream of men had realized the business potential of NM, and joined the women⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ In my experience, this line of argumentation was repeated over and over again in several NM meetings and booklets across different organizations in Finland. Practising male salespeople were constantly referred to and were used as examples in order to make the image of the NM business more serious and business-like.

Through abnormalization, normalization and stake inoculation, this argument is constructed, for example, to convince the reader of the suitability of this opportunity also to masculine – male - prospects. I suggest that this kind of argumentation presumes that the statistical fact of women still forming the majority of NM salespeople somehow erodes the professional image of the industry, and requires a male presence if the industry strives to be taken seriously. Overall, these efforts project the privileged representation of selling and salespeople as masculine constructs.

Biggart (1989: 88-89) takes a most explicit stand in contrasting bureaucratically organized, hierarchic, and masculine corporations with NM as 'feminine organizations'. She refers to feminist scholars, and argues that

...the structure of firm organization, including its patterns of control and its reproduction of men's culture, excludes women as a class. Numerous studies show that women workers tend to inhabit occupational categories that do not lead to important decision making positions. They have 'women's jobs', less-valued positions that utilize stereotypical female traits of support and nurturing.

Biggart (ibid: 91) concludes that direct selling

...with its stress on nurturing and cooperation, its absence of authority differences, is clearly feminine when compared with the bureaucratic firm.

Wishfully thinking, feminine organizations might contribute to creating a world of work where women were

...able to pursue success as themselves, not by adopting an alien masculine orientation (ibid).

In this sense, it could be argued that to some extent, practitioner discourse on NM values the empowering of women as individuals and as a class.

Second, the attempt to construct selling and NM as a feminine construct reinforces the suggested representation of NM as a democratic, equal, and unprejudiced opportunity for all discriminated minorities as exemplified in the following section.

4.2.4 Individual freedom

Practitioner writings draw a picture of a successful NM salesperson as rather an omnipotent, heroic individual, and subsume the individual's unlimited freedom of choice. This view challenges or omits cultural or social impediments to success, and states that the essential determinant of an individual is her/his own will. The following extract which was also used in the beginning of this section, condenses this ideology felicitously:

Network Marketers work when they want, where they want (usually out of their home which offers significant tax advantages), and how they want. There are no standard hours or a retail location that must be opened according to schedule. And remember, Network Marketers are volunteers. You're not obligated to do anything. So how you work your business is completely up to you (Kalench 1991: 57).

Correspondingly, happiness in life results from an individual's own choice:

Verkostomarkkinointi sopii sellaiselle ihmiseelle, joka haluaa elää onnellista elämää. Suuri haaste suomalaisessa kulttuurissa onkin se, että monet suomalaiset eivät halua, he haluavat olla pahalla päällä ja rypeä ongelmissa.

Network marketing is suitable for a person who wants to lead a happy life. A big challenge in the Finnish culture is that most people do not want to: they want to be in a bad mood, and wallow in problems.
(Karvinen 1997: 20)

This argument resembles postmodern theories, which assign to consumers a total freedom from market forces, social structures or any other cultural boundaries (Uusitalo 1998). According to Uusitalo (*ibid*), consumers may admittedly be free to choose to a certain extent, but this should be seen as only part of the truth. Instead of a naïve view on individual freedom, structures and social norms do influence the range of choices. However, consumers may still have a considerable autonomy in their activities and choices. Based on this study, practitioner discourse is silent and passive in an attempt to define boundaries for individual freedom within the NM context.

As the following extracts emphasize, control and responsibility of an individual's own life form the centrepiece of the idea of man within the NM practitioner discourse. On the one hand, this view seems to favour individual salespeople as it involves and emphasizes one's freedom of choice. On the other hand, this ideology can serve the purposes of powerful organizations within the industry. In the case of an individual's success, all parties benefit, but in the case of a failure, an individual salesperson alone is responsible for his or her own losses. It should also be noted that the practitioner discourse highlights the positive side of freedom and choices, but is silent about failure and losses. While this in one part relates to the general genre and style of practitioner handbooks, it also reflects the broader ideology of omnipotent individuals.

The uniqueness of NM is that YOU determine what the results and rewards will be. YOU create, direct and manage your future. Your time and your life belong to YOU. In NM, perhaps for the first time in your life - certainly in your working life - YOU have the opportunity to own your own life...to control your destiny...and to be fully responsible for your

success...Is that your window of opportunity? That choice is yours as well. (Babener 1992: 34)

Not surprisingly, there are therefore similarities between the MLM distributors that have made it work. One is a spirit of openness. Also a positive and optimistic character, a willingness to take responsibility for themselves and have clearly defined personal goals. They have a purpose in life and high self esteem. They are persistent and adventurous pioneers. They work hard and are able to help others. (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 52)

Is MLM distribution a 'real profession' or just a hobby for bored housewives looking for a way to make some extra money? ...The principle is that someone who seriously wants to create a distribution business can do it...It is up to the individual to access their own abilities and working habits and decide if MLM is for them. MLM is not a business for those who have never succeeded in any of their goals through laziness or other bad habits. In general it requires people who are (or want to become) self-confident, persistent and of a positive frame of mind...Anyone unhappy with their situation can learn to be a successful MLM distributor. (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 71-72)

Also, in the following extract the author makes a strong claim about the individual's potential to reach whatever she/he wants through NM. However, the author obscures his own agency – i.e. it is not he who has discovered this truth - through assigning the advocacy of the industry to 'millions of people around the world'.

Well, all that you have just read *is real and true*, and as millions of people around the world are discovering, Network Marketing Sales may be your ticket to earning the money you want and deserve and providing you with the lifestyle you've always dreamed of, plus a whole lot more! (Fogg 1994: 21)

Moreover, NM is suggested to provide equal opportunities to succeed independent of the salesperson's socio-demographical, professional, educational and personal background.

There are no barriers of sex, education or experience in this industry. (Kalench 1991: 60)

MLM distributors are from all walks of life, all professions, and have an equal chance of success. Everything that needs to be known can be learned by the new distributor, and in time passed to future new recruits. In this way information and skills can be duplicated down through a network. (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 89)

It does not matter whether or not you have graduated from college, if you are male or female, young or old, black or white. A wide variety of people have succeeded in building MLM businesses. Former waiters,

secretaries, business people, teachers, doctors, veterinarians, carpenters - all of them have had the great success that they so desired by working with the MLM system. (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 51)

There is no prejudice in Network Marketing. None! That's one of the reasons I love it so! Everyone is of such common mind and purpose - there's no time or room for prejudice. (Kalench 1991: 68)

Thus, happiness and success as well as unhappiness and failure in life result from one's own choices. This view is in accordance with the stereotypically American cultural assumption that individuals are (or should be) in control of their actions and that they can affect their immediate circumstances and can influence future outcomes. Conversely, this belief is likely to contrast with the beliefs of many other cultures (Gergen & Thatchenkery 1996).

Paradoxically, the discourse maintains that each independent individual's success is actually dependent on other people's success and voluntary co-operation:

In an increasingly isolated and unfriendly world, Network Marketing offers you tremendous opportunity for expanding your social environment by meeting and working together with new friends who share common values and ideals. In Network Marketing you'll never have to 'do it yourself'. It is a team effort. (Babener 1992: 14)

Your sponsor is a 'partner' in your business. His or her success depends on you and yours. Making sure you're with a person who is committed to your business success can be just as important as making sure you're with a solid, legitimate company. (Babener 1992: 29)

Notably, the practitioner literature takes almost no stand on potential conflicts and disorder within the teams and co-operative networks or between the NM organization and the outside world. As discussed previously, a commonly used rhetorical device to avoid or mute these issues within the texts is categorization – that is, the texts typically make a distinction between those who understand what NM is all about and succeed, and those who misunderstand NM and thus fail to succeed in creating a prosperous and co-operative network.

To summarize, in addition to the individualistic view, practitioner discourse also maintains that each individual's success contributes to everyone else's success and no contradictory goals foil mutual, shared benefits. While this view enforces the contrast between communal NM and traditional selling as a one-man project, it may also be used to support an organization's goals to prevent the competition between salespeople within the same organization.

4.2.5 Private sphere

In concurrent business, services, and consumer marketing literature, commercial relationships are mainly viewed as taking place in a public, organizational space (Iacobucci & Ostrom, 1996). This view on suitable settings for commerce also applies to recent consumer behaviour literature. For example, studies on consumers' shopping experiences view shopping as an activity that is undertaken in the public sphere of shopping malls, shopping centres and the high street (Burton, 2002).

However, there are a growing number of companies applying a variety of personal selling and direct marketing tools to reach consumers in remote, domestic locations. In addition to direct selling (party plan, face-to-face selling and NM), shopping opportunities that do not take place on the high street and in malls include, e.g., mail order, home shopping programmes, CD-ROM, interactive television, the Internet and virtual shopping (*ibid*). These developments imply the emergence of a new commercial setting, where the roles of marketers and consumers are inextricably linked, and private spheres become market places.

Within the so-far developed home shopping opportunities, marketers have developed multiple programmes and incentives to encourage consumers to promote marketers' offerings among other consumers in their social networks. These consumer-to-consumer marketing applications include a variety of member-gets-member-programmes, online interaction in virtual communities (Pitt & al. 2002), as well as NM. Incentives and suggested benefits for consumers involved in these programmes range from exclusively shared information to free products, discounts and other forms of financial compensation.

To a significant extent, NM practitioner discourse fosters shifting the commerce and business from the public space into the private space and people's homes, thus confirming the above-described tendencies. However, as Grayson (1998) argues, in Western societies, today's broader social world does not yet generally consider the home to be an appropriate servicescape.

Grayson (1998) states that what is notable in NM is the way in which marketers can use the established cues to clarify what is otherwise an ambiguous exchange proposition for the consumer – ambiguous because it breaks with the generalized consensus that business and personal spheres are distinct. In his study of private servicescapes, he indicates that agreements about rules of conduct for marketing result from a negotiation among three forces: what the marketer wants, what the consumer wants, and what the broader social world will allow.

Grayson (*ibid*: 479) suggests that the network marketer would prefer that consumers and the broader social world simply accept NM at face value. However, he states that

...because the broader social world has drawn clear distinctions between public and private spheres and because the consumer generally subscribes to this consensus, some explicit negotiation must occur⁵¹.

Thus, Grayson (ibid) shows how the network marketer then has two general options: to work within the existing consensus (e.g. through constructing the sales situation as being as home-oriented as possible) or to try to foster a new one (e.g. through promoting business-orientation via physical and procedural cues).

In practitioner writings – unlike in salespeople interviews in the Grayson study (1998) - private space as a context for commerce is not problematic, but instead praised or normalized:

Direct selling can either be one-to-one between a representative and client in their home or in the form of a product party or showcase. Many companies operate in Europe with travelling salespeople on either a salaried or independent basis, who offer goods and services to consumers. The personalized contact and service that the salesperson provides the client meets the demands of the European market. (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 29)

The party plan approach gives a DSO [direct selling organization] the opportunity to offer direct sellers a well-proven method of achieving sales. (Berry 1997: 49)

Tähän kehitykseen liittyy myös markkinoinnin jakelukanavan muutos yhä enemmän perinteisestä suoramyyntiin. Tälle kehitykselle on monia syitä, joista yksi on kotona viihtyvien ihmisten halu tehdä myös ostoksensa siellä.

This development is related to the change in marketing distribution channels from traditional channels into direct selling. There are many reasons for this development, one of which is the willingness of those who enjoy staying at home to also make their purchases at home.

(Karvinen 1997: 24)

The practitioner view on private space as an appropriate context for commerce may well face one of the most complicated challenges when it comes to NM in our society. While the majority of contemporary marketing rhetoric is based on a relationship metaphor and commerce is increasingly taking place in people's everyday lives – e.g. distance selling, home shopping, on-line

⁵¹ Grayson's (1998) notion on a 'broader social world' overlaps interestingly with the concept of frame used in this study. As will be shown in the analysis of press writings, frames for stories about NM may be viewed as analogous to broader social *worlds*. Depending on the frame, the private sphere may or may not be accepted as a context for commerce. In this sense, the negotiation of the appropriate localized, socio-cultural conditions for commerce takes place between the frames.

commerce and mobile buying - this rhetoric and its applications face much resistance on behalf of, e.g., consumer organizations.

4.2.6 Social networks

In line with the above discussion of the private sphere, practitioner literature explicitly offers social networks as an appropriate context for selling. In this, practitioner discourse departs from academic discourse on selling, which is mainly contextualized within public and organizational settings.

Within the NM practitioner discourse, a view of the social network as a context for commerce is taken for granted and unproblematic. For example:

Recruiting people with whom there is an existing social bond, such as relatives, creates a good basis for business relations in direct selling. When mothers encourage daughters and cousins to support each other in their selling, the act reproduces their non-business relations. Support in selling appears to spring from a long-term foundation of caring, and the financial self-interest of sponsors is obscured. In fact, for distributors who are committed to the ideology of direct selling, there is no separation between the interest of the loved one and self-interest: they truly want to share their commitment with those they love. (Biggart 1989: 77)

We all operate within 'spheres of influence' - the social circle or environment in which we work and live, which is made up of our family members, friends and acquaintances from business, church, school, clubs, recreational activities, and so forth. Within this circle of relationships we are constantly exchanging our thoughts and feelings with a select group of people of our own choosing. We share each other's ideas, new discoveries, resources, things we appreciate and enjoy doing and having, and more. The Network Marketing method of distribution from the producer to the consumer is based on individuals using and recommending products and services they feel good about and sharing their positive experiences with people they already know.

(Babener 1992: 22)

Price and Arnould (1999) note that the absence of conceptual clarity about what relationships, especially friendships, mean in marketing contexts is inimical to the successful deployment of relationship marketing. At a time when academic marketing discourse strongly relies on the relationship metaphor, these questions concern a wide range of commercial applications in which customers are insisted to construct close relationships with marketers.

One of the features of the everyday usage of the category 'friend' is its implication of positive feelings and loyalty; friends are people you stick by. What they are not are people to be attacked and criticized (Potter 1996: 128). Moreover, as Koehn (2001) puts it, friends - or your guests - are apparently not to be sold anything either:

A 'guest' does not come into your house and then try to sell you something. The guest receives; she does not take. (Koehn, 2001.)

It is axiomatic that 'taking' in this context refers to selling.

In contrast, NM practitioner discourse involves a view on friendship, which tolerates commercial activities as the extract below shows:

MLM allows for a form of simplified and pleasant buying. We have security in knowing that we are dealing with a friend who is not trying to 'pull one over on us.' And the pleasure of being able to profit from a warm contact without opening the door to a stranger. Quite the opposite from the traditional idea of a door-to-door salesman forcing his way in and selling things we do not even want.' (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 63).

The NM practitioner view on friendships concurs well with recent empirical findings of Price and Arnould (1999). They conclude that a particular kind of marketing relationship, namely 'commercial friendship' can be isolated from other types of social and business relationships. Commercial friendships, like other friendships, involve affection, intimacy, loyalty and reciprocal gift giving. These relationships can be linked to consequential marketing objectives such as satisfaction, loyalty, and positive word of mouth (*ibid*). To put it in another way, both NM practitioners as well as academic advocates of commercial friendships propose the metaphor of friendship as a suitable context for commercial performance – a context in which both the customer and marketer gain reciprocal benefits.

This view is far from unproblematic in our society; a social fact which is also acknowledged within the NM practitioner discourse. Parallel to arguing for the appropriateness of combining social and business networks, the practitioner community avoids confrontations through replacing commercial terms, such as selling, with metaphors, such as 'sharing commitment' and 'recommending products', as discussed previously. Paradoxically, though, this discourse on the one hand exposes a taken-for-granted view on friendships as genuinely altruistic relationships, and on the other hand, confirms a view of traditional selling as a sordid act with the power to destroy relationships as such.

4.3 Summary and discussion

Fundamentally, practitioner discourse of NM is a discourse of independent individuals, free lifestyle and blurred boundaries between customers and salespeople as well as the private and public spheres. In this sense, the NM practitioner discourse is a counter-discourse of conventional corporate life, work hierarchies and the traditional view on selling. Biggart (1989:2) condenses this view pointedly, and states that

To an outsider, life in a [direct selling organization] is surprising, sometimes even bizarre. It is as though the activity of a traditional firm were viewed in a funhouse mirror; nearly every familiar feature of corporate life is either distorted or missing. Direct selling organizations not only are different, they violate many of the most accepted tenets of management practice today.

Most stereotypical conventions of corporate life and selling are strongly countered within NM practitioner community and replaced by a uniform ideology of a voluntary lifestyle and community of like-minded consumer advocates co-operating within their social networks, towards mutually shared goals.

Accordingly, the NM practitioner community values and promotes individualism and boundless freedom of choice. Paradoxically though, while human subjects are suggested to possess ultimate control over their own lives, the dependency of 'independent salespeople' on social networks and the importance of mutual co-operation between peers are explicitly emphasized. This paradox could be explained either by the objective of emphasizing the differences between NM and traditional selling or by the organizational goal of maintaining a co-operative mindset between the salespeople within same organization.

Thus, NM salespeople are constructed as omnipotent, free individuals in control of their own lives. Within the anti-bureaucratic, anti-hierarchical context there exist no personal, social or cultural impediments (such as gender, age, race, education, experience, physical inability, etc.) to success. More precisely, the only determinant for success is an individual's willingness to engage in the ideology of the NM community. The other potential side of the coin – dependency on other people and the organization, disappointments and failure – is silenced.

The practitioner community shares the view held by the academic community of 'traditional selling' as being a morally dubious activity, repressing and undermining customers. Instead of associating NM with selling, practitioner discourse prefers metaphors such as helping, advocating, recommending and sharing. Through this metaphoric use of language, practitioner discourse also incorporates the traditionally undervalued or silenced set of feminine

characteristics into the construct of selling. Despite its seemingly empowering potential, this type of feminization project may still be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the conscious contrast with traditionally masculine sales roles is maintained as an advantage to be offered to potential (female) prospects – on the other hand, this contrast is explained away and excused in order to attract potential male prospects as well. This ambiguity reflects both the association of masculine characters with male subjects and feminine characters with female subjects, and moreover, reproduces a stereotypically gendered view of the superiority of masculine over feminine.

Practitioner discourse maintains the suitability of private spaces and intimate relationships as unproblematic contexts for commerce. As the characteristically commercial activity of selling is naturalized or masked as helping and sharing experiences, traditional borders between salespeople and customers, public and private, and organization and salespeople become blurred. Practitioner discourse also maintains that shifting commerce into the private sphere empowers consumers, as within this discourse consumers have the dominance and control over their homes and social networks in relation to organizations.

Related to these indisputably distinctive features of NM, Biggart (1989: 13) argues that a conventional economic analysis does not capture the social reality of relationships between direct selling (DS) or network marketing distributors. While the description of DS or NM organizations as ‘firms with a market of independent buyers (salespeople) who further distribute products to consumers’ might be a legally correct definition and suffice for some forms of economic analysis (*ibid*), it misses the distinguishing characteristics of NM. Biggart (1989:13) emphasizes that DS and NM salespeople do not operate like a market, and argues that

...to atomize distributors analytically does violence to the web of social relations that binds them together and creates the conditions for economic success at the level of the firm.

From this perspective, NM practitioner discourse counters not only the socio-cultural practices of traditional sales organizations, but also the research practices and procedures of leading sales studies described in the previous section.

5 MEDIA ACCOUNT OF BUSINESS, CULTS AND MONEY MACHINES

Loistavan tulevaisuuden lupauksia, miljonäärejä, pettymyksiä, huijauksia ja salamyhkkäisyyttä. Verkostomarkkinointiin liittyy näitä kaikkea. Ala on selkeästi juurtunut Suomenkin maaperään. Tänä vuonna kehitys on kulkenut kohti ammattimaisempaa otetta.

Promises of a bright future, millionaires, disappointments, deceptions and secretiveness. All this is involved in network marketing. The industry has clearly taken root in Finland. This year has witnessed the development towards a more professional approach.

(Markkinointi & Mainonta 23/97/press writings data)

5.1 *Introduction*

On the one hand, the above extract depicts the multiplicity of NM representations in the media. On the other hand, it alludes to the possibility that through bringing together and mixing diverse discourses, the media create not only a more complex but also perhaps a more comprehensive view of NM than the academic and practitioner texts.

In this section, I examine the ways in which selling, NM and salespeople are represented in the media, especially in the Finnish press. Informed by post-structural/social constructionist media studies, I scrutinize the selected press writings not as reports reflecting the existing reality, but as accounts constructing the social realities we live in. From this perspective, media and media texts form a scene of continuous battle and are:

part of political and economic power machinery but simultaneously they are part of their users' meaning production. (Lehtonen 2000: 65-66)

According to Gamson et al. (1992) media images can be treated as texts that take many forms – visual imagery, sound, and language. The difficulties of tracking the messages in these texts are compounded by the problem of layers of meaning. Some part of the meaning is naturalized – that is, it comes to us in the form of taken-for-granted assumptions. One cannot take texts at face value since they contain subtexts: a whole set of texts may have an even more invisible metamessage. In this sense, press writing inherently projects multiple discourses coming from multiple communities. These communities aim to advocate and confirm their views and voices through textual representations in the media. In this sense, the media can be seen as a battlefield of alternative truths of diverse social phenomena

During the first study phase, I reviewed the press writings data mainly to keep informed on the public image of NM. At that point, my main concern was how accurately the official conception of NM as a legitimate but misunderstood business was communicated in the media, and how clearly the distinction between illegal pyramid schemes and NM was drawn in the media. More precisely, I was concerned with how and to what extent the media succeeded in reiterating the strictly predetermined essence of NM that I felt I was familiar with in my daily practice when working in this field.

Through this kind of reading, I viewed media texts as transparent, as windows giving onto this or that 'other' phenomenon. The characteristics of language and of the situation in this approach were only taken into account as possible noise in the channel through which the information about the world was conveyed, or as distortions in the lens through which the reality was observed (Alasuutari 1995: 47). Following that, I as a practitioner and a researcher considered myself as being in a position to evaluate the competence of these windows to expose the true NM.

Eventually, from a constructionist perspective I shifted my focus to the construction of the varying social facts and realities of NM. Through the discourse and rhetorical analysis tools described in Section 1, my aim was to answer the following question: how are selling, NM and salespeople represented in the media?

In this study, the role of the press writings analysis was significant in that it provided me with a distant enough position from which to study representations of selling and NM through unfamiliar lenses. In the course of the previous analyses, it was sometimes difficult to identify the important issues from the texts that I was familiar with. For example, in some cases it was difficult to accept some undesirable aspects of NM from academic and practitioner texts if I personally disagreed with the text⁵². In other words, I felt that the membership of the academic and practitioner communities sometimes hindered and complicated the analytical process. In contrast, the press writings material provided surprising aspects and dialogue between diverse discourses, which again assisted in evaluating previously identified textual representations from a fresh perspective.

⁵² For example, I was reluctant to conclude that the dominant practitioner discourse values individualism, as I personally thought that the real value of NM was the co-operation inbuilt in the business concept. As a former NM salesperson, I therefore tried to explain this finding away before accepting it as one of the fundamental characters of the NM practitioner discourse.

In this section, I focus on the findings of the media text analysis. However, as in the preceding section, I also reflect upon the results of this particular analysis while considering the previous analyses to some extent. In my view, this manner of writing assists in reporting the actual analysis process more transparently, as all the seemingly separate analyses and the understanding that they created were built on each other anyway.

5.1.1 Data description

I had collected Finnish press writings of NM from daily newspapers, weekly magazines and economic journals since 1993, mainly for tracing the on-going discourse of the phenomenon and later on for the purposes of the salespeople association that I was involved in. After having started my post-graduate studies in 1997, I continued to collect and analyse press articles as data, which in my view reflected the present-day status quo of NM.

The analysed data consist of 50 articles published in Finnish newspapers, weekly magazines and economic journals during the period 1993–2001 (Appendices 5, 6 and 7). These data cover articles from over 25 publications⁵³ ranging from national and local daily newspapers (4), women's weekly/monthly magazines (4), business newspapers and magazines (6), and yellow press (2), to publications of, e.g., the consumer office or an entrepreneur association. In eight cases, more than one writing per publication was included in the data - in most of these cases, the articles were scattered by the year of publication. A majority of articles (37) were published during 1994–1998 (Appendix 5, p. 181).

Noteworthy, the genre and style of the selected articles ranged from commentaries to news and to more extensive reports depending, e.g., on the type and scope of the publication in question. To some extent, the specific context of the articles and specific extracts were taken into consideration during the analysis. However, my aim was not to explore and make generalizations of differences and similarities of NM representations, for example, across publication or story types. That is, I did not try to pin down how different journal types depicted NM or which representations were most common in different types of publications.

For example, the analysis of the dominant ways of representing NM by publication type or by a specific journal could result in interesting results in the future, but in this study it was not my objective to explore this kind of question. In this study, I prefer to presume that the whole wide range of NM representations can be found in almost any type of publications. That is: I doubt

⁵³ The exact journals in which three pieces of the press writings were published remain unidentified.

that there could be found any consistent 'economic journal' or 'yellow press' representation of NM. Instead, I suggest that although the genre of the publication or the article determines and limits the representations to some extent, a variety of complex images of NM are still identifiable in all types of publications.

Altogether, my explicit aim in this analysis was to gain an understanding of the multiplicity of public perspectives and stories of NM within the Finnish press, which in my view reflect the broader public image of NM in the media and in society in general.

Voices in the data

Within the press writings data, 120 people were quoted as experts (Appendix 6, p. 182). These sources were put into the following 10 categories based on the titles, descriptions and groupings used in the articles: network marketing salespeople (30), NM company representatives (22), chairmen of associations (16, of which 10 had been Chairman of the Finnish Direct Marketing Association), representatives of the academy (13), people who were involved in NM (13), business professionals (8), officials (6), attorneys at law (5), financial experts (4) and others (3).

On the face of it, the majority of voices (75) quoted in the press writings were coming from categories within the NM practitioner community: salespeople, managers and industry advocates. This statistical fact is somewhat surprising as within the practitioner community, the media is often argued to restrict the appearance of industry voices within the stories of NM. This view has likely led to a generally speaking sceptical attitude towards the media as the following extracts depict:

The media like all industries must adhere to the laws of supply and demand. Journalists and newscasters alike have a legitimate concern about how many people their work is reaching. Journalists want to please their clients with high circulations, which in turn mean better revenues, and higher wages. Obviously, therefore it is the work of a journalist to find stories that please the public, and in our society, hot news is about catastrophes, scandals, and things that are going wrong...But do we ever hear about workers who find a new job within a month of being fired? (Dewandre and Mahieu 1995: 84-85)

...Why do journalists only report the negative aspects of this flourishing industry? Why do they put the public on guard against products of excellent quality? Journalists address themselves to their audience. Who is their audience? For the most part it is made up of the group of slow adaptors and cautious people. They are delighted to have their fears confirmed 'in writing'. (ibid: 91).

However, based on the press writings data used in this study, there was no general tendency to mute the industry voices in the media

A further interesting issue concerning the voices in the data was that it was often explicitly stated how hard it was to persuade NM salespeople to give interviews on almost any issue concerning NM. This kind of statement was typically used to reinforce the secrecy and speculation around the NM business, especially its legality and moral status. However, it was seldom brought up that NM organizations typically restrict their members' right to represent the company in public, as their legal status is not that of an employee but that of an independent salesperson⁵⁴. From a salesperson's perspective, it may therefore be safer to refuse to give interviews in order to avoid any legal confusion in terms of the distributor agreement. Nevertheless, independent salespeople were the largest category of cited experts in the data.

Notably, although the interviews of the industry representatives dominated the press writings, it could not be concluded that the media discourse automatically reproduced or reinforced the dominant practitioner discourse. On the contrary, the analysis confirmed the idea of the media as a relatively open field for several competing discourses. In other words, I maintain that the media clearly constructs, and not only transmits, knowledge on specific issues such as selling and NM in this case.

Finally, it was notable that over one-third (47) of the 120 quotations from across the range of articles were in fact from only nine people (see Appendix 7, p. 184). This fact probably reflects the relatively modest size and youth of the NM industry in Finland. In addition, it perhaps exemplifies the way in which the media writings on the same issue refer to, multiply and reiterate previous texts, formulations and stories through, e.g., choosing the same people as experts to give their opinions on the issue in question.

Categorizations and descriptions of these nine quoted people varied across the articles thus highlighting the power of categorization as discussed previously. For example, one particular person was interviewed in the articles seven times, and categorized as 'an independent consultant', a 'leader of one of the largest sales networks in Finland', an 'international distributor', the 'Chair of the Association for Direct Selling and Networking Sales People', a 'former distributor', a 'member of the board', a 'former managing director of a...', etc. While all of these

⁵⁴ NM organizations have no authority, of course, to prevent their members from giving media interviews as private people. However, the organizations typically define the detailed conditions under which the company name, the products, and the business opportunity as well as the distributor's contractual relationship with the company should be defined and expressed in the public context.

descriptions were undoubtedly correct, they were skilfully used to direct the image of NM along a particular direction.

In summary, the analysis exposed the power of categorization and naming in not only constructing a particular person as a knowledgeable source but also in subtly formulating the broader view of NM. Within the press writings data, categorization of the selected voices was identified as one of the most powerful rhetorical tools in directing and fine-tuning the frames and stories of NM.

5.2 NM themes and stereotypes

In the beginning of the analysis, my questions were: what is it that makes a story about network marketing in the media? What aspects of NM are depicted in press writings, and what kinds of images or stereotypes represent these aspects?

For the above-defined purposes, Hacking's (2004) analogy between Erwin Goffman's method in sociology and the following advice on how to draw comic strips was most suitable:

- You must learn how to exaggerate your characters so as to display their personality and social origin. Use the way they dress, their hair-dos, not ignoring their overall look; introduce each one in appropriate milieu. (Mettez-les en scène makes the role playing and stage setting more precise.)
- In your sketches drawn on the spot, learn to distinguish different social categories by the ways in which they behave. Whatever their class, age or culture, each one of your characters must have a place in at least each of these categories, and others as well.
- You have endless possibilities for your choice of characters: Japanese tourists, Olympic athletes, adolescents addicted to their skateboards, mothers and their children in the city. Your only limit is your own imagination.
- Never forget that society is a mosaic of *different personalities*. (Hacking 2004)

In terms of the above advice, my objective was to scrutinize the media mosaic of NM and salespeople through identifying different images of salespeople and their appropriate milieus and social categories. In other words, my aim was to unfold the variety of themes – the building blocks – forming the varying representations of NM.

I started the analysis through reading the articles cautiously and making notes of emerging themes and conspicuous extracts from texts. More specifically, I focused on smaller and smaller parts of the texts through categorizing the headings of each article (Appendix 7, p. 184) on the

basis of the themes they depicted. To increase the reliability of this categorization, I asked a researcher colleague at our department at the HSE to perform the same grouping of the headings and subheadings, which I had written down and printed on small pieces of paper. Following that, we compared the categories, discussed the differences and negotiated the grounds for final grouping. Overall, the above-described quantitative organization of the data, the grouping, as well as the visual organization, of the headings on the white board (on the basis of the central themes as well as the chronological order) assisted in making sense of the relatively wide body of controversial texts.

As a result, I identified several themes and related stereotypes, through which NM and NM salespeople are typically represented in the press writings. By stereotype, I mean the more or less standardized, conventional idea or character of a particular issue within the data (Oxford Minidictionary 1991). In individual articles and even in individual sentences these themes were entangled with each other, and it was difficult (and not always even necessary) to find extracts that would highlight only one particular theme. However, the extracts in this report were selected as best reflecting and illustrating the conclusions drawn from the analysis.

In the following, I present the findings of the analysis through describing the central NM themes and related stereotypes within the media discourse. The themes are discussed in the subsequent order in terms of their frequency in the analysed data.

5.2.1 NM Salespeople: Housewives or tricksters?

Most importantly, media stories about NM are stories about NM salespeople. Visual and textual examples, categories, and stories of people who are involved in NM form a diverse imagery of salespeople. The images of salespeople are reinforced by other central themes and are present in a majority of articles in one way or another.

According to Hacking (2004), Goffman's interpersonal sociology is essential for understanding how classifications of people interact with the people classified, and hence holds potential for the studies of 'making up people'. Hacking emphasizes the dialectic between classification and who is classified, and states that naming – or classification and categorization - has real effects on people, and changes in people have real effects on subsequent classifications. In his view,

Goffman's work is essential for coming to understand how people are made up day by day, within an existing institutional and cultural structure⁵⁵.

For the purposes of this study, Hacking's (2004) notion on Goffman's contribution on understanding 'how people are made up' is thus of significant relevance. My interpretation of Hacking's idea is that the analysis of how, e.g., media texts make salespeople up opens up avenues for further studies of the relationships between the textual representations and the mundane lives of NM salespeople. More specifically, this means that, e.g., a common categorization of NM salespeople as certain stereotypes – e.g. 'housewives' or 'tricksters' – has real effects on people. On the other hand, prevailing categorizations within the texts do have their grounds in salespeople's daily lives.

One of the most common descriptions of the NM salespeople was the broad category of a heterogeneous group of people. For example, the next extract constructs a typical image of NM salespeople as a mixed collection of people in terms of their demographical, educational and professional backgrounds as well as their working orientation within the network.

Verkostomarkkinoijien ikä vaihtelee 18-70 vuoden välillä. Mukana on mm. liikkeenjohdon konsultti, entisiä yrittäjiä, koulunsa päättäneitä nuoria ja kotirouvia. Toiset tekevät työtä koko- ja toiset osapäiväisesti.

The NM salespeople are between 18 and 70 years of age. Among others, NM involves a business consultant, former entrepreneurs, young people who have finished their school and housewives. Some work full-time and some part-time. (Fakta 8/94/Press writings data).

The above kind of listing promotes the idea of an open-for-all sales network, although descriptions are seldom based on statistical facts. The listings in media writings typically include housewives, former business people and young students – a group of people perhaps seldom bunched together in other contexts. Altogether, the above description of the salespeople within the press generally signals a positive orientation towards NM, and often involves descriptions of self-employment and part-time work opportunities within the industry.

Notably, within the same theme – the salespeople – contrasting representations and stereotypes were also found. While the heterogeneity in the above extract is associated positively with the open-for-all opportunity to join the NM community, in some contexts this opportunity was held

⁵⁵ On the other hand, 'Goffman omits completely the question of how institutions come into being, and what organizations of thought and statements have to do with our thinking of them as natural, as part more of the found order than the order of things made by people' (Hacking 2004).

to be strongly negative. For example, the following media extract provides a view of unethical, greedy salespeople and a consequent view of NM as a context for potentially illegal or immoral practices:

Kaikki uudet ilmiöt vetävät puoleensa myös huuhaa-väkeä, joka imee helpot rahat ja siirtyy seuraavaan rahastuskonstiin, Virtanen sanoo.

All new phenomena also attract quacks, who make easy money and then move on to the next, says Virtanen. (Iltalehti 8.4.1995/press writings data)

Above all, these contrasting perspectives address the distinguishing characteristic of NM organizations, namely the easy entry of salespeople into the organization.

In addition to emphasizing the diversity of the NM sales force, media writings often depict the salespeople as being dramatically expressive characters with a strong emotional involvement in NM. This particular aspect of the media writings resonates intensely with the practitioner discourse of NM, which suggests that NM means more to people than a mere job.

Simultaneously, it points out the silenced or muted aspect of selling – passion and enthusiasm - in the dominant academic sales discourse.

In the next extract, the speaker acknowledges a conflict between her emotional expressions and characteristics of a 'developed' salesperson (remember the contrast between the 'NM salespeople' and 'professional salespeople' within the practitioner discourse).

'Olin kuin udestisyntynyt. Aivan kuin olisin löytänyt jonkin uskonnnon. Soittelin sukulaiset ja tuttavat läpi, kauppassin tuotteita ja houkuttelin heitä puolipakolla jälleenmyyjiksi. Sukulaiset olivat varmoja, että olen lopullisesti hurtahtanut. Menin ystävieni työpaikoille ja järjestin esittelyjä. Jälkeenpäin ajatellen olin turhan tohkeissani. Hankin myyjiksi ihmisiä, jotka halusivat vain alennukset koruista eivätkä myyneet itse mitään. Puhuin liikaa enkä antanut asiakkaiden keskittää korujen katseluun. Mutta minä olen kehittynyt.'

'It was like being born again. As if I had found a religion. I called my relatives and acquaintances, offered the products and half-forced them to join as a salesperson. My relatives were sure that I had totally lost it. I went to my friends' offices and organized presentations. In retrospect, I was too excited. I recruited people who only wanted the discounts off the jewellery and did not sell anything. I talked too much and did not allow the customers to focus on viewing the jewellery. But I have developed myself.' (Kotiliesi 18/19.9.1997/press writings data)

In the above extract, the speaker discredits herself sharply for the expressions of enthusiasm and emotions. Paradoxically though, the dominant practitioner discourse emphasizes that it is exactly this enthusiasm of the salespeople that makes them trustworthy, and consequently makes the products and business opportunity appealing to potential customers and prospects. At a more general level, both the media as well as the practitioner community note the discrepancy between the 'emotional' and 'professional' involvement in the selling context. The emotional aspect of the salespeople is absent in the dominant academic discourse of selling, which forms a distinguishing character between the discourses.

Finally, within the media writings, I identified a stream of ironic representations of NM salespeople, which were continuously used to undervalue not only the salespeople but also the NM business in general. As stated before, this underestimation was typically expressed through descriptions of feminine products, and through introducing the private sphere as a place for commerce. A stereotypical NM salesperson in this view was a female character - 'housewife' or 'dabbler' - who trades the products within her social networks:

Onko sittenkään mukavaa tulla tunnetuksi tuttavana, joka kauppaan
rintaliivejä kahvikutsuillaan?

After all, is it really convenient to become known as an acquaintance
who sells bras at her coffee parties? (Espoon seurakuntasanomat
37/15.10.1998/PWD)

Apparently, this view stems from and confirms the discourse that privileges a masculine construct of selling, and as a consequence, public places as an appropriate context for commerce. Overall, descriptions of the heterogeneous group of NM salespeople form a cornerstone of the media image of NM. On the one hand, the listing of the salespeople in terms of their education, socio-demographics, etc., seems to adhere to the broader academic frameworks of salespeople as parts of the distribution channel and links to the organization. On the other hand, the representation of NM salespeople as feminine and expressive characters retells the dominant practitioner view on NM. In this sense, the media struggles in accommodating the distinguishing features of NM with the existing academic models, and signals both the potential dialogue as well as the conflict between the two discourses.

Altogether, the representations of salespeople in the media are far from unequivocal and these polarized images are further confirmed through other major themes in press writings.

5.2.2 NM organizations: Amoebas or snowballs?

The second major theme, which is often dealt with in the media, is the structure and characteristics of the NM organizations. Press writings typically describe direct selling and the NM industry through examples of established and well-known companies and descriptions of their organizational features. These descriptions are often constructed through metaphors and catchphrases, which characterize the extraordinary development and growth of the NM sales organization. Through a metaphoric use of language, media texts point out distinguishing features of the sales network in comparison with conventional hierarchies:

verkosto kasvaa kuin lumipallo
 the network grows like a snowball. (Markkinointi & Mainonta 1/1995/PWD)

verkosto levittäytyy kuin ameeba
 the network expands like an amoeba. (Iltalehti 8.4.1995/PWD)

The above extracts involve an idea of the NM organization's uncontrolled growth, which is implicitly contrasted with the conventional organizations' strategically planned and managed growth. In other words, the extracts use the metaphors of a snowball and an amoeba to depict the NM organizations' growth in terms of the numbers of the salespeople. The growth in this sense is dependent on individual salespeople's unpredictable and voluntary recruiting efforts, and thus contrasts the recruiting processes in conventional sales organizations.

Yet another extract goes even further in distancing NM from traditional organizations, through using the metaphor of a revivalist movement to describe a typical NM sales convention:

Tilaisuudet muistuttavat lähinnä herätyskokouksia.
 Conventions mainly resemble revivalist meetings. (Kotiliesi
 18/19.9.1997/PWD; Iltalehti 8.4.1995/PWD)

It is notable that, in the Finnish context, the revivalist movement is typically associated with overenthusiasm and credulity of some kind, and thus holds a negative connotation in this context. Within the press writings, the metaphor of revivalist meetings is commonly used to refer to unethical behaviour and pies in the sky on behalf of 'the revivalists'. My interpretation is that these associations are bound to the mainstream Finnish culture, in which the religious and spiritual lives of the citizens are held to be private, and society is argued to have become characteristically secular and worldly minded. In general, this notion exemplifies well the importance of the idea of the contextual and local knowledge: in another society and culture, or within some particular Finnish subcultures, the above-described interpretation may well appear false or peculiar.

In contrast to viewing NM companies as uncontrolled or suspiciously expressive organizations, some of the press writings depict NM organizations as transparent and open systems:

Verkostojen tulee olla avoimia ja yhtäläisiä ja jokaisen tulee voida kontrolloida, millä periaatteella hän oman osuutensa siitä saa.

Networks must be open and equal and everybody has to be able to control on which basis he/she receives his/her own share. (Iltalehti 8.4.1995/PWD)

The above extract emphasizes a need to control a fair and equitable share of benefits. This aspect relates to the established academic sales discourse of justice and especially of control. However, the extract addresses the control to the salespeople instead of managers thus distinguishing from the academic view.

All in all, there seems to be no unanimous view of NM organizations in the media, which again reflects the polarization of the sales discourses in general.

5.2.3 NM as a commercial activity: Exploding businesses or pyramid schemes?

Related to the prior themes, media writings revolve around explanations of NM as a commercial activity. In other words, the media aim at unfolding the NM business logic through a variety of definitions and metaphors as the next extracts show:

Uuden jakelukanavan jujuna ovat minimaalinen alkupanos, henkilökohtainen suostuttelu ja räjähtäen kasvava verkosto.

The catch of the new distribution channel is the minimal starting investment, personal persuasion and an exploding network.. (Talouselämä 37/17.11.1995/PWD)

In the above extract, the list of three depicts distinguishing aspects of NM, which resemble the general construct of NM within the practitioner discourse. In line with this view, NM is often represented as an innovative future business concept:

Liikkeenjohdon konsultti, ekonomi X.X. on ollut mukana useissa eri verkostomarkkinointiyrityksissä. Hän on täysin vakuuttunut, että verkostomarkkinoinnin palkkiojärjestelmä ja internetin sähköisen kaupankäynnin mahdollisuudet avaavat yhdessä tien valtavaan bisnekseen.

NN, Master of Science (Econ.), a business consultant, has been involved in many diverse NM companies. He is fully convinced that the compensation plan used in NM and the potential of electronic commerce on the Internet together open avenues to a huge business. (Kauppalehti Optio 23.9.99/PWD)

In the above extract, NM is constructed as a serious business through several discursive and rhetorical practices. Firstly, the speaker is constructed as knowledgeable through positioning him in various professional and expert categories as well as in the category of a personally experienced professional. In this particular article, the expert image is visually enforced with a large photograph, which highlights the speaker's stereotypically masculine business suit and looks. Furthermore, NM is associated with technology and the Internet both verbally as well as visually with drawings of male characters operating on a computer. Together with the text, the masculine imagery reinforces the image of NM as a professional business to be reckoned with.

On the other hand, press writings also describe NM in a strongly contrasting way, as the following extract shows:

Ai, sinäkin olet lähtenyt siihen huuhaa-bisnekseen. Lopeta hyvissä ajoin! Sehän on laitonta. Naisten puuhastelua.

Oh, you too are involved in that humbug business. Quit while you can!
Isn't it illegal. Women's dabbling. (Talouselämä 37/17.11.1995/PWD)

A negative view of NM is also constructed here through a list of three, which in this case involves irrationality (nonsense), illegality, and non-professionalism (women's dabbling). This kind of construct conflicts with the prominent values of the academic discourse, namely rationality, legality and (masculine) professionalism. Consequently, these notions highlight the gendered character of professionalism in the sales context, which will be discussed in greater depth later on.

Yet another negative aspect is often broached in the media, namely the attempt to achieve one's financial goals through the expansion of the network in a greedy manner:

Ylilyöntejäkin tapahtuu, kun työtä yritetään tehdä dollarin kiilto silmissä. Verkostoa laajennetaan hallitsemattomasti ja luullaan, että rahaa tulee ovista ja ikkunoista.

Excesses happen, too, when people try to do their job with dollar signs in their eyes. People expand their network without control and think that money will start pouring in. (Kauppalehti Optio 17/lokakuu 31. 1996/PWD)

The above extract also exemplifies how money and financial issues are closely entangled in the conceptions of NM.

5.2.4 Lifestyle and social relationships: Luxurious mingling or hard work?

Fourthly, the media texts involve descriptions and categories of different kinds of lifestyles, through which NM is positioned in wider socio-cultural contexts. The association of NM with

diverse ways of living is brought up on many occasions, and clearly reflects elements of the dominant practitioner discourse:

Korkealaatuisia tuotteita on helppo myydä, kunhan vain menet kentälle. Saat itse määräätä työaikasi, ja - jos sinusta niin tuntuu - voit aloittaa aivan uuden elämäntavan.

It is easy to sell high-quality products, and only requires you to go out into the field. You can determine your working hours yourself and - if you feel like it - you can start a whole new lifestyle. (Kuluttaja 2/96/PWD)

Representation of a desired lifestyle in media texts typically involves luxurious parties and trips abroad, as the following extract illustrates:

Hän näyttää myös Cannesin Carlton-hotellin edessä kesällä otettua ryhmäkuva Euroopan parhaista jälleenmyyjistä. Totta kai hän oli sielläkin. Ja ihan pian hän on Wienissä, Hofburgin palatsissa, jossa juhlistetaan pukukorujen rynnistystä Itävaltaan.

She also shows a photograph of a group of the European top salespeople, which was taken in front of the Carlton Hotel in Cannes in summer. She was there too, of course. And quite soon she will be in Vienna, in the Hofburg Palace, celebrating costume jewellery, which is now taking Austria by storm. (Gloria helmikuu 1996/PWD)

In addition to focusing on material benefits, media writings depict the quality of life in the NM context as an opportunity to control one's own life, freedom of choice, and personal development, which have been discussed earlier. These qualities are fundamental aspects of the practitioner discourse, and are reproduced and strengthened within the media discourse.

Sellaiset jälleenmyyjät, jotka olivat olleet pidempään mukana arvostivat myös itsessään tapahtunutta kehitystä ihmisenä. Myyjä, jolla on kymmenistä tuhansista jäsenistä muodostuva verkosto totesi, että hän voisi rikastua muunlaisellakin työllä. Sen sijaan hän koki, ettei hän missään saa yhtä loistavaa mahdollisuutta henkilökohtaiseen kehitykseen
Salespeople who had been involved in the business longer also appreciated their personal development as a human being. A salesperson with a network of tens of thousands of salespeople stated that he could get rich in another job, too. However, in his/her view there could not be an opportunity for personal development as brilliant as this.

(Kauppalehti Extra Markkinointi 31.10.2000/PWD)

On the face of it, the above extract praises personal development and values it over financial success. However, financial gains are taken-for-granted as by-products of personal development. Firstly, the salesperson in question is portrayed as having been involved in the business for a long

time, and having already built a huge network. From this perspective, the extract implies that he or she *can already afford* to value personal development over financial benefits. Secondly, the person is portrayed as having voluntarily chosen NM from multiple opportunities to get rich just because of NM's unique potential to develop him/herself as a human being.

Not all the writings praise the NM lifestyle as being luxurious:

Mutta myydessä ja rekrytoidessa saattaa unohtua, että kyseessä alun perin olivat ystävyyss- ja sukulaissuhteet. Kummatkin ovat ilmaisia, paitsi verkostomarkkinoinnissa. Niistä tulee businessuhteita, rahasampo.

It may be that during selling and recruiting one forgets that initially it was question of his/her friends and relatives. Both are free, except in network marketing. They become business relationships, money makers. (Espoon seurakuntasanomat 37/15.10.1998/PWD)

Interestingly, this kind of discourse represents friendships and business relationships as dualistic, exclusive categories with a strong moral code of guarding society against commerce.

Evidently, the NM lifestyle is a multifaceted construct in the media – and inextricably entangled in salespeople's social networks. For example the following extract contradicts the view of a luxurious life and disassociates the ideal way of living strictly from NM:

En nimittäin halua käyttää elämäni suurta mahdollisuutta verkostomarkkinoimiseen. Pelkäään rahan valtaa, enkä halua tehdä ystävyysuhteista liikesuhteita. Liikesuhteista mahdollisimman vapaa ja riippumaton ystävyyssuhde kuuluu minun onnettomaan ihanteeseeni elämänlaadusta.

I do not want to use the big opportunity of my life in network marketing. I am afraid of the power of money, and do not want to turn my friendships into business relationships. My modest idea of quality of life involves viewing friendships as being as free and independent of business relations as possible. (Espoon seurakuntasanomat 37/15.10.1998/PWD)

Through irony, the speaker praises altruistic friendship on the one hand, and disassociates his/her friendships from demoralizing NM on the other hand. Within this view, the speaker strictly separates commerce from social relationships.

The above kinds of statements raise important issues concerning business and social relationships. It appears as though transforming business relationships into social relationships could still be socially and culturally more acceptable than turning social relationships into business relationships. As marketers have recently started to develop a wide range of consumer-

to-consumer marketing concepts, this notion may have implications for the rhetoric and practices of consumer marketing organizations in general.

5.2.5 Money and rewards: Big wallets or pin-money?

Fifthly, one of the overriding themes in the media revolves around money and financial rewards in NM as has been shown also in the previous extracts. For example, a persistent sub-theme concerns uncovered promises of financial rewards:

Markkinatuomioistuimen mukaan XX ja sen jälleenmyyjät eivät saa enää värvätä uusia jälleenmyyjiä, jos näille ei anneta riittäviä tietoja toiminnan taloudellisuudesta.

According to the Market Court, XX and its salespeople are not allowed to recruit new distributors unless they are provided with adequate information on the financial aspects of the system. (Ilta-Sanomat 1.9.1994/PWD)

Media discourse involves strongly conflicting views on individuals' financial success. On the one hand, it is maintained that success results from one's own efforts, while on the other hand it is suggested that financial success results from other people's efforts. Both aspects can be represented as either morally desirable or as morally avoidable, depending on which stand is taken on the fair division of individuals' rights and obligations in general.

The following extracts illustrate these contesting views:

Menestys rakennetaan auttamalla muita eikä heidän kustannuksellaan, koska oma tulos riippuu myös muiden tuloksesta.

Success is built through helping others, not at the expense of them, because one's own results also depend on other people's results. (FAKTA 8/94/PWD)

Huomionarvoista on, että verkoston edelleen kasvaessa ensimmäisenä mukaan ehtineiden lompakko lihoo kovaa vauhtia. Raha on peräisin muiden ponnistelusta.

Interestingly, along with the network growth, those who were there first get bigger and bigger returns. That money comes from other people's efforts. (Espoon seurakuntasanomat ESSE 37/15.10.1998/PWD)

Additionally, media discourse draws a picture of NM in which financial benefits are belittled and social aspects easily override them:

Enemmänkin kysymys on opiskelijoiden, kotiäitien tai perheen vanhempien lisätienestistä.

The question is more about the extra income of students, housewives or parents. (Kuluttaja 2/96/PWD)

Tällaiseen ostamiseen liittyy jotain muuta kuin tavalliseen käyntiin tavaratalossa. Väillä tarjotaan kahvia ja leivonnaisia sekä tietysti seurustellaan. Rahapusseja ei kaiveta heti kättelyssä esille. Raha-asiat hoidetaan myöhemmin.

This kind of buying involves something else other than the usual visit to a department store. Coffee and cakes are served every now and then, and then there is mingling of course. Purses are not taken out immediately. Financial matters are taken care of later. (Kauppalehti OPTIO 17/31.10.1996/PWD)

This view on NM as a primarily social activity contextualizes NM in private places and social networks. Within this view, money and finance play an insignificant role. The latter extract also shows how this kind of construct alters the representation of NM through focusing on buying instead of selling. Notably, buying in the NM context is typically depicted as being a more acceptable activity than selling. This paradox is also explicit in the next extract, in which the speaker uses irony to accentuate the double moral standard related to buying and selling:

- Asiakkaan toimenkuvaan on kuulunut tulla ostamaan, mutta myyjän toimenkuvaan ei ole kuulunut myydä, XX kuvaaa perinteisiä kaupan asenteita.
- The customer's job description has included buying, but the salesperson's job description has excluded selling, describes XX the traditional attitudes in trade. (Iltalehti 8.4.1995/PWD)

All in all, media representations of NM are contradictory in terms of their conception of money and financial benefits.

5.2.6 NM & society: Self-employment or grey economy?

The sixth perceptible theme within the press writings was the general role of NM in society. This theme was naturally related to the images of salespeople and the business concept as a whole, but still revealed new insights on the issue.

On the one hand, media discourse represents NM as a serious business and a significant means of self-employment:

'Näen verkostomarkkinoinnin myös varteenotettavana työllistämistapana. Uskon, että yli satatuhatta suomalaista voisi järjestää sen avulla itselleen pysyvän työpaikan.'

'In my view, network marketing is a self-employment opportunity to be reckoned with. I believe that over one hundred thousand Finns⁵⁶ could have a permanent job through NM.' (Talouselämä 37/17.11.1995/PWD)

Tämä on varteenotettava tapa työllistää itsensä ja verkoston kautta vetää työhön mukaan muitakin ihmisiä.

This is a self-employment opportunity to be reckoned with and an opportunity to draw other people into work through a network.

(Kauppalehti OPTIO 17/31.10.1996/PWD)

On the other hand, the media discourse alternatively represents NM as a passing phenomenon with detrimental side-effects:

'Liiketoiminta kuoli ahneuteen'. Verkostomarkkinoinnin huuma laantui Suomessa.

'The business died of greed'. Network marketing fever faded away in Finland. (Iltalehti 6.6.2000/PWD)

Then again, the media also depicts surprisingly passionless images of NM suggesting that NM may also fall between the two extremes of a superior or a corrupt phenomenon in society:

Monien mielestä verkostomarkkinointi on miellyttävä tapa tavata muita ihmisiä.

Many people think that network marketing is a pleasant way to meet other people. (Kotiliesi 18/19.9.1997/PWD)

As shown above, each of the major themes of NM involves conflicting representations, which take their form through several discursive framing devices: metaphors, examples, catchphrases, descriptions and categories. Figure 10 exemplifies the phase of the analysis in which I distinguished diverse representations within the major themes.

⁵⁶ The population of Finland comprises approximately 5 million people.

Figure 10. Examples of diverse representations of the major themes of NM in the media

Major themes of NM *	Frame 1	Frame 2	Frame 3	Frame 4
NM organization	<p>Verkostomarkkinointi liitetään yleensä ulkomaisiin 'naisten' tuotteisiin, kuten kosmetiikkaan, koruihin ja puhdistusaineisiin. NM is usually related to imported 'women's' products such as cosmetics, jewellery, and cleaning products (Iltalehti 8.4.1995).</p> <p>naisten puuhastelua women's dabbling (Talouselämä 37/17.11.1995)</p> <p>viidakorumpu grapevine (Kauppalehti extra 31.10.2000; Mainosuutiset 15/93; Iltalehti 8.4.1995)</p> <p>verkosto kasvaa kuin lumipallo the network grows like a snowball. (M&M 1/1995)</p> <p>verkosto levittäytyy kuin amoeba the network expands like an amoeba (Iltalehti 8.4.1995)</p>	<p>...[xx] on supisuomalainen verkostomarkkinointiyhtiö, joka markkinoi...lämpömuunninta, joka on perinteisesti ajatellen taatusti miehinen juttu. Yrityksessä on kaikki valmiina maailman valloitukseen. [xx] is an archetypical Finnish NM company, which markets...an energy-saving product, which traditionally is an exclusively male thing. In the company everything is ready for conquering the world (Iltalehti 8.4.1995)</p> <p>Verkostojen tulee olla avoimia ja yhtäläisiä ja jokaisen tulee voina kontrolloida, millä periaatteella hän omant osuutensa siinä saa. Networks must be open and equal and everybody has to be able to control on what basis he/she receives his/her own share (Iltalehti 8.4.1995)</p>	<p>Tilaisuudet muistuttavat lähinnä herätyskokouksia Conventions resemble mainly revivalist meetings (Kotiliesi 18/19.9.1997; Iltalehti 8.4.1995)</p> <p>Äkkiseltään ilmiöstä tulevat mieleen kielletyt ketjukirjeet ..the phenomenon resembles illegal chain letters (Iltalehti 8.5.1995; Talouselämä 37/17.11.1995; HS 17.4.2001)</p>	<p>Verkostomarkkinoinnissa yhdistyy kuluttajan aktiivisuus ostopäätöksen tekijänä ja markkinoidjan terve itsekkyys ja ahneus. – Nämä on ilmeisesti todellisuudessa länsimaisen markkinatalouden perusarvoja. NM combines the consumer's activeness in making purchase decisions with the marketer's healthy selfishness and greed. – In fact, these appear to be fundamental values of the western market economy (Yrittäjä 6/1995).</p>
Salespeople	<p>kotirouvia housewives (FAKTA 8/94)</p> <p>'ihan tavalliset ihmiset' ordinary people (M&M 1/1995)</p>	<p>liikkeenjohdon konsultti, entisiä yrityjä business consultant, former entrepreneurs (FAKTA 8/94) eräs verkostomarkkinoinnin suomalaisista tienraajajista one of the Finnish NM pioneers (Iltalehti 8.4.1995)</p>	<p>matkasaarnaaja preacher (Iltasanomat 24.11.1995)</p> <p>uskonsisar ja -veli sister and brother (Iltalehti 8.4.1995)</p> <p>ketjuun myöhemmin hirahtuneet errants, the ones who have happened into the chain later on (Iltalehti 8.4.1995)</p> <p>hyväuskoiset hõlmöt gullible fools (Kauppalehti 20.5.1999; Iltasanomat 27.11.1995)</p>	<p>kojarit, vejarit, hujarit, hämärämiehet rogues, conmen, shady characters (Aviisi 30.11.94; Talouselämä 37/17.11.1995; M&M 23/97)</p> <p>greedy roughnecks (Iltalehti 6.6.2000)</p>
Lifestyle &	Kotikutsuilla myydään	...kuluttajat luottavat	Verkostomarkkinointi	Verkostomarkkinointi uhkaa

Major themes of NM *	Frame 1	Frame 2	Frame 3	Frame 4
social relationships	tuttavankaupalla Generating sales at home parties in a circle of acquaintances (Kotiliesi 18/19.9.1997) Hauskaa harrastamista Amusing leisure activity (Kauppalehti/20.5.1999; aviisi 30.22.94) sosiaalisen kontaktin muoto form of social contact (aviisi 30.11.1994)	enemmän tuntemansa ihmisen suositteluun kuin mainoksiin medioissa. ...consumers trust more in recommendations of the person they know, than ads in the media (FAKTA 8/94; Mainosuutiset 15/93; Italehti 8.4.1995)	käy kauppaan ihmisiin NM trades social relationships (HS/4.7.1998)	ystävyys suhteita. NM threatens friendships (Espoon seurakuntasanomat/ 15.10.1998)
Rewards and money	Myyntityöllä lisätuloja Additional income through sales (M&M 1/1995)	Menestys rakennetaan auttamalla muita eikä heidän kustannuksellaan... Success is built through helping others, not at the expense of them ... (FAKTA 8/94) perinteiset jakelukanavat alkavat käydä liian kalliiksi traditional distribution channels are getting too costly (M&M 1/1995) Aloittamista ei automaattisesti seuraa menestys, vaan se on kovan työn takana. Success will not result automatically from joining, but from hard work (Kotiliesi 18/19.9.1997; FAKTA 2/1997)	Alkuunpanijat keräävät rahaa. Alempaan hierarkiassa olevat maksavat eivätkä saa vastineeksi mitään. Initiators collect the money – people on the lower levels pay and receive nothing in return (Italehti 30.5.1995)	Raha on peräisin muiden ponnisteluista. Money comes from other people's efforts (Espoon seurakuntasanomat/15.10.1998) Verkostomarkkinointi mahdollistaa häikäilemättömissä käissä ruman välistäetämisen NM allows for chicanery in ruthless hands (avisi M&M 1/1995)

* (constructed through metaphors, examples, descriptions, catchphrases and categorization)

Note: All citations in this figure are drawn from the press writings data

5.3 Summary and discussion

To summarize, the first step in the analysis of the press writings was to identify the themes that form the body of NM stories within the media. In general, media discourse provides a significantly fragmented view of NM, combining elements of taken-for-granted assumptions of selling in social settings with academic and NM practitioner discourses on selling. Within the media, salespeople are constructed as gendered social subjects embedded in complex socio-cultural settings.

The major themes of NM in the media were identified as following: NM salespeople, the NM organization, NM as a commercial activity, NM lifestyle and social relationships, money and rewards, and NM and society. All of the selected articles took a stand on one or more of these

themes. However, representations within the above-mentioned theme categories were altogether controversial, which indicated the existence of one or more interpretive frames within the media discourse on NM.

The role of the press writings data in this study was two-fold. Firstly, it provided me as a researcher with a distant position from which to explore selling and NM from a fresh perspective. As a member of the academic and NM practitioner communities, I found it sometimes difficult to distance myself from the ideological and political engagements of the dominant discourses of both communities. In that sense, the press writings appeared unexpected and surprising, which again assisted in marking important aspects of the other discourses as well. Secondly, the analysis of controversial press writings provided grounds and direction for the intertextual analysis of academic, NM practitioner and media discourses. As such, the role of the press writings data in this study was central in exposing possible explanations for conflicting representations of selling and NM across diverse communities.

6 ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM OF SELLING AND NETWORK MARKETING

The central nature of selling – a negotiation between buyer and seller – is inherently a laboratory of ethical scenarios. (Wotruba 1990)

MLM is unique in that anyone can do it. (Dewandre & Mahieu 1995: 71)

6.1 *Introduction*

The above extracts more than aptly describe the principles around which the multiple representations of selling and network marketing are constructed.

In Section 5, I suggested that the media depicts four different types of frames – extremes or typifications - of network marketing. These extremes were distinguished from the data on the basis of the different stereotypes, which were classed as representatives of the major themes of NM. Thus, the key finding of the analysis of the press writings at that phase provided a diverse view of the media discourse.

In this section, my aim is to provide some explanations for the controversial representations of selling and NM across diverse communities. In other words, my aim is to draw together and identify the overlaps and incongruencies of the academic, NM practitioner and media discourses. Firstly, I identify the key principles distinguishing the frames for diverse NM representations within the media writings. These principles, in my view, frame varying stories of network marketing and, at a more general level, reflect concurrent conditions for commerce in social settings. Secondly, I describe these frames and the consequent stories mainly through extracts drawn from the press writings data. Thirdly, I present the keys for transforming the frames, which were identified through the analysis. The section is based on the intertextual analysis of the previously discussed accounts, and the emphasis is on the penetration of the academic and NM practitioner discourses within the media discourse.

6.2 *Frames for polarized network marketing stories*

The starting point for this step in the analysis was the notion of the multiple theme categories forming the NM stories on the one hand, and the variety of representations within these categories on the other hand. In contrast to the notable inconsistency of representations *within* the theme categories, there appeared to evolve a relatively consistent logic of the diverse aspects

between the categories. This notion implied the existence of more than one interpretive frame – storyline - in the media context. More precisely, the analysis of the media texts introduced four extreme frames or storylines and significant intertextual relationships across diverse data sets.

From the analytical perspective, it thus became my primary goal to make sense of the principles that constitute, hold together and give coherence to different stories of selling in general and NM specifically. As I had already finished with the analyses of the academic and NM practitioner texts, as well as the first step of the media analysis, I focused on the findings to date and concentrated on the overlaps, inclusions and exclusions of certain themes within the academic, practitioner and media accounts.

In so doing, I started to reconstruct diverse interpretive repertoires, which frame the multiplicity of the representations of NM. In practice, this was accomplished through re-reading the texts with the focus on similarities and differences between the other types of texts. On the one hand, I once again focused on the rhetorical tools that were used in constructing the naturalized truths, claims, descriptions and arguments on NM as social facts. On the other hand, I compared the representations that were created through those discursive tactics. This process was similar to the separate data analyses procedures, only with the difference that I was now more conscious of alternative representations and thus more sensitive in noting the patterns of diverse discourses within the data.

In practice, I focused on the differences between the stereotypical images within and between the theme categories. For example, I tried to identify the principle that separated the representation of NM salespeople as 'housewives' or 'business consultants' from 'preachers' and 'greedy roughnecks' (see Figure 10, p. 129). On the one hand, the distinction between these particular representations seemed to relate to the working roles of the NM salespeople either as voluntary part-timers (housewives and preachers) or full-time business professionals (business consultants and greedy roughnecks). On the other hand, the distinction related to the correctness and legality of NM practices, drawing the line between morally acceptable characters (housewives and business consultants) and morally dubious characters (preachers and greedy roughnecks).

As these distinctions seem to work well as organizing principles within the 'salespeople' theme category, I continued the analysis through focusing on the next theme category, namely the NM organization. Within that category, my task was to explore distinctions between, for example, the representations of the NM organization as a 'grapevine', a 'legal recommendation business', an 'illegal chain letter' and a 'weird hierarchy'. Again, the distinguishing principles appeared to

connect to the moral status of the NM business on the one hand, and the professional status of the business on the other hand.

As a result of a thorough analysis of all the major theme categories and their respective representations, I eventually identified two principles as general framing organizers of stories of selling, NM, and salespeople, namely *ethics* and *professionalism*. By the term *ethics*, I understand here a contextually - historically, culturally and socially - bounded understanding of morally correct, honourable practices. These practices can include constructs of the moral principles (Hawkins 1991) guiding people, the norms for proper business conduct, an agreed distinction between right and wrong, the fundamental values of conducting sales, a sense of making the correct decisions as well as respectful treatment of other people (for a detailed discussion of the construction of morals, see Panula 1999:67-73). *Professionalism*, on the other hand, can be defined as belonging to a profession, showing the skill of a trained person, doing specified work, etc., for payment, not as a pastime – and thus *profession* can be seen as one that requires advanced learning (Oxford Minidictionary 1991).

Figure 11 visualizes the key principles framing NM stories and thus the emergence of the ethical/non-professional, ethical/professional, unethical/non-professional, and unethical/professional frames for network marketing.

Figure 11. Ethics and professionalism as key principles framing NM stories

Frame 1: Ethical/non-professional network marketing and salespeople	Frame 2: Ethical/professional network marketing and salespeople
Frame 3. Unethical/non-professional network marketing and salespeople	Frame 4. Unethical/professional network marketing and salespeople

To summarize, on the basis of this analysis, I argue that the media discourse of selling and NM involves four different kinds of interpretative frames. These frames revolve around ethical/unethical and professional/non-professional dimensions and provide alternative stories of selling, NM and NM salespeople. The fundamental questions concerning NM thus seem to be: under what conditions can commerce be ethically acceptable in social settings? Under what conditions can commercial practices lead to morally unacceptable results? The descriptions and explanations of these conditions broaden our view not only on selling and NM but also on entrenched assumptions of ethics and professionalism, thus unfolding yet other interconnected social discourses as will be discussed later on.

In the following, I will describe the frames in greater detail. As such, these descriptions are typologies and may omit exceptions and special features of the data. However, my argument is that it is exactly these kinds of typologies and interpretive repertoires that are generally used to read and write texts on NM.

6.2.1 Social activity for dabblers

The ethical/non-professional frame represents NM as a social activity for housewives, better-off folks and other people with lots of leisure time. Dabblers – whether male or female – are featured as highly feminine and emotionally involved people, who openly and enthusiastically advocate positive consumption experiences among their social networks. Within this frame, NM mainly takes place in private locations: dabblers operate in their homes, among their friends and relatives.

Kysyessäsi enemmän hän näyttää pukukoruja tai ottaa laukustaan purkin tai pullon. Hän kertoo itse käyttävänsä tuotetta, ihastuneensa siihen, ja suosittelee sitä sinullekin. Kenties hän kutsuu sinut esittelytilaisuuteen tai lupaa tulla sinun kotiisi.

When you ask for more information, she/he shows you jewellery or takes a pot or a bottle from her bag. She/he tells you that she/he uses the product her/himself, fancies it, and recommends it to you, too. Perhaps she/he invites you to a presentation or promises to come to your home. (Kuluttaja 2/96/PWD)

Verkostomarkkinointi on perinteisesti ollut vahvimmillaan naisväen keskuudessa. Ompeluseuroja pidetään Amerikoissa kuten meilläkin ja siinä sivussa käy kotikemikaalien, vitamiinien, kauneudenhoitoaineiden ja korujen kauppa vinhaan.

Network marketing has traditionally had a strong position among womenfolk. Sewing clubs have been held in America just like here, and on the side they provide a suitable context for fast selling of household chemicals, cosmetics, and jewellery. (Markkinointi & Mainonta 18/97/PWD)

Financial benefits for salespeople within this frame are insignificant, whereas social benefits are emphasized. Under these conditions, it is natural and acceptable that social relationships form a basis for shared consumption experiences. Within this frame, the role of buying clearly flattens the role of selling. That is, buying and shopping hold positive connotations within this frame, and the emphasis of the stories here is often on the customers' perspective. As a consumer club based on social relationships, NM represents no significant role in society's economy.

6.2.2 Serious enterprise for businesswomen and entrepreneurs

Within the ethical/professional business frame, NM represents a novel business model with significant growth potential and economic value in the future. As the economic value of concurrent NM organizations is suggested to grow, much of traditional commerce is predicted to shift to commercial networks as well.

Kaksikymmentä prosenttia Yhdysvaltojen miljonääreistä on tehnyt omaisuutensa verkostomarkkinoinnilla ja se on yksi Yhdysvaltojen nopeimmin kasvavia aloja.

Twenty percent of US millionaires have made their fortune through network marketing and it is one of the fastest growing industries in the USA. (Markkinointi & Mainonta 1/1995/PWD)

Yhdysvalloissa verkostomarkkinointi on levinnyt kulovalkean tavoin ja sitä voidaan oikeutetusti pitää nopeimmin kasvavana markkinoinnin toimintamallina. (...) Verkostomarkkinoinnin työllisyysvaikutukset näkyvät Yhdysvalloissa jo miljoonatasolla työpaikkoina. Suomessa saattaisi hyvinakin olla tilaa kymmenien tuhansien tasolle yltävälle verkostomarkkinoiden joukolle.

Network marketing has spread like wildfire in the USA and it is justified to say that it is the fastest growing marketing model. (...) The employment effects of network marketing businesses in the USA can be counted in millions of jobs. In Finland, there may easily be room for tens of thousands of network marketers. (Yrittäjä 6/95)

This frame provides a view on the huge business potential of NM, which is argued to rely on the combination of rational commercial activity, hard work, and financial rewards with spontaneous consumer advocacy. Besides that, NM is seen to create new job opportunities for marginal groups such as unemployed people, women, and racial minorities.

Verkostomarkkinointi on tullut jäädäkseen. Ystävän suosittelema tuote on parasta mainosta, jos käyttäjä on siihen myös tyytyväinen. Ystävään luotetaan enemmän kuin mahtavaan mainoskampanjaan.

Network marketing is here to stay. Product recommendation by a friend is the best advertising, if the user is satisfied with it. A friend is more trusted than a huge advertising campaign. (Fakta 2/1997/PWD)

Tämä ei ole pajatso, joka takaa mielettömät tulot. Toimiva verkosto ei synny itsestään, vaan se edellyttää työntekoa. Minua tässä viehättää demokraattisuus. Jokaisella on mahdollisuus edetä verkostossa parempiin ansioihin. Siinä ei ole esteenä sukupuoli, koulutustaso, ikä tai fyysinen vamma.

This is not a slot machine that guarantees tremendous returns. A functioning network does not develop automatically, it requires work.

What I like about this is the democracy. Everyone can advance in the network towards better earnings. There are no impediments such as gender, education, age or a physical inability. (Me Naiset (38) /15.9.1995/PWD)

NM salespeople in this frame are self-employed entrepreneurs and businesswomen, both characterized by stereotype masculine features. Female salespeople are typically described in masculine terms in order to add to their professional credibility. Alternatively, it is emphasized that there are also male salespeople in women's networks:

Moni ihmettelee, että miten viidenkympin korvikset voivat viedä ympäri maailmaa, mutta kun näytän nämä raportit niin miehetkin sanovat, että kerropa lisää. (Viidennes korumyyjistä on miehiä. Yksi X:n löytöjä on meriupseeri, jonka salkkuun mahtuu aina myös näytentytti.)

Many people wonder how earrings worth fifty marks can take you around the world, but when I show these reports even men ask me to tell them more. (One-fifth of the jewellery salespeople are men. One of X's findings is a naval officer, who always carries product samples in his briefcase. (Gloria/helmi 1996/PWD)

Tuskin se väreistä johtuu, mutta xx:stä saa helposti kovan vaikutelman. Varsinkin silloin, kun hän puhuu kuin konekivääri ja lopettaa lauseet vähän kärsimättömästi retoriseen kysymykseen okei?

It is hardly because of the colours, but xx easily gives you a tough impression. Particularly when she speaks like a machine gun and ends her sentences impatiently with a rhetorical question *okay*?

(Gloria/helmi 1996/PWD)

The following extract illustrates well how gender is used to transform the dabbling frame into the business frame:

Miehiä tulee kaupan piiriin entistä enemmän ja kauppatapa on muuttunut entistä bisnesmäisemmäksi. Ompeluseurat ovat vaihtuneet hotelleissa järjestettyihin kongresseihin ja kauppaan käydään paljon myös internetin välityksellä.

More and more men have joined the trade and the whole trade practice has become more business like. Sewing clubs have changed into hotel conferences and a lot of trade takes place via the Internet.

(Markkinointi & Mainonta 18/97/PWD)

Thus, NM as a masculine business construct is constructed through the association of male characters, public places, and technological devices, whereas feminine features such as womenfolk, sewing and household chemicals construct NM as mere dabbling.

Sales professionals in this frame act rationally, and the driving force of their business is financial benefit. On the one hand, the frame is silent about the risks of turning social relationships into business relationships. On the other hand, it is acceptable to complement business relationships with social relationships. Notably, the use of social networks as a basis for a business network is not seen to be problematic within this frame.

6.2.3 Suspicious cult for revivalists and converts

Thirdly, within the unethical/non-professional frame, NM is viewed either as an illegal money collection scheme or as a suspicious and secretive cult. For example:

Verkostoajattelu voi synnyttää ajatuksia myös keinottelusta ja salaseurasta. Viime aikoina kokoonsa nähden melkoista julkisuutta on saanut X, joka markkinoi sijoitusyhtiöideaa verkostomallilla. X: a on syytetty ketjukirjeilystä, huijaamisesta ja pakkemarkkinoinnista.

Network thinking can also raise thoughts about speculation and a secret society. X, which markets an investment company idea through a network model, has lately received quite a lot of publicity relative to its size. X has been accused of being a chain letter, cheating and practicing coercive marketing. (Aamulehti 4.3.96/PWD)

Outo hierarkia. X vierastaa voimakkaasti systeemiin leivottua hierarkkista järjestelmää, jossa lisää sijoittamalla ja uusia sijoittajia värväämälä kohtaan arvoasteikossa yhä ylemmäs kuin jossain hämyisessä salaseurassa.

Weird hierarchy. X strongly considers as odd the hierarchy, which is inbuilt in the system, and in which it is possible to achieve a higher position in a status hierarchy as in some kind of a shadowy secret society, through investing more and recruiting new investors.

(Iltalehti/30.5.1995/PWD)

X-sijoitusyhtiö oli ensisijaisesti verkostomarkkinointiyhtiö, joka levisi ikään kuin ketjukirje, luotetulta kaverilta toiselle.

X investment company was initially a network marketing company, which spread like a chain letter, from one trusted friend to another.

(Iltalehti/30.5.1995/PWD)

Äkkiseltään ilmiöstä tulevat mieleen kielletyt ketjukirjeet - joita taas tuntuu olevan liikkeellä jopa päiväkoteja myöten - joissa potin korjaavat ne, jotka ovat panneet hankkeen liikkeelle ja näppejään jäävät nuolemaan ketjuun myöhemmin hairahtaneet.

On the first impression, the phenomenon is reminiscent of forbidden chain letters - which seem to be around again even in day-care centres

- in which the initiators collect the money while those who have become later links in the chain are left with nothing. (Iltalehti 8.4.1995/PWD)

Within the unethical/non-professional frame, NM salespeople are constructed either as aggressive missionaries or naive converts. Emotional and spiritual involvement is present in this frame to the extent that NM salespeople are described as fanatical and overenthusiastic cult members:

Verkostomarkkinointiyritykset järjestävät myyjille ja myyjiksi aikoville tilaisuuksia, joissa valetaan uskoa tuotteen ja myymisen voimaan. Tilaisuudet muistuttavat lähinnä herätyskokouksia. 'Hurmoshenkisyyss ehkä tehoa ihmisiin, jotka eivät tiedä myymisestä mitään, mutta ammattilaisiin tuollainen juttu ei uppoa kovin helposti', toteaa XX.

NM companies organize events, in which salespeople and potential salespeople are infused with a belief in the power of products and selling. These events resemble mainly missionary meetings. 'Ecstasy may work with people who know nothing about selling, but that kind of stuff does not easily work with professionals,' says XX. (Kotiliesi 18/19.9.1997/PWD)

Tuoteuskoon täytyy lähes hurtahtaa, jotta omalle suhdeverkostolleen eli yleensä ystävilleen kehtaa lähteä kauppaamaan. Se on kuin ilosanoma, jota haluaa levittää.

You almost have to have a religious belief in your product in order to have the guts to go out and sell to your social network, usually your friends. It is like a gospel you want to spread around. (Keski-Uusimaa/26.10.1995/PWD)

Typically, within this frame, a voice is often given to betrayed and short-changed former NM salespeople. Financial benefits of leading cult members equal financial losses of converted salespeople. In this frame, stories claim that NM destroys its members' social relationships.

Interestingly, this frame constructs friendships as sacred relationships. According to Cooley (2002), these kinds of friendships are taken as an Aristotelian ideal of intrinsic, perfect friendships. Within this kind of relationship, there is little if any room for financial gains or utility of any kind.

6.2.4 Money machine for conmen

The frame for unethical but legal and professional NM projects traditional prejudices against the selling profession. For example, Jolson (1997) states that for most of the past five decades, the word 'salesmanship' has conjured up a picture of pushy, insincere tactics engineered by a 'get-the-

order-any-way-you-can' philosophy. Within this frame, representations of NM and NM salespeople pretty much follow the line of this kind of salesmanship:

X toteaa omassa materiaalissaan, että 'verkostomarkkinointi on maailman nopeimmin kasvava markkinointitapa'. Eli: jokainen meistä on ennen pitkää vaarassa joutua jonkin verkoston värvärin kohteksi.

X states in its material that 'network marketing is the fastest growing marketing model in the world.' In other words: sooner or later every one of us is in danger of being attacked by a network recruiter.

(Iltasanomat 27.11.1995/PWD)

In this frame, NM salespeople are professional conmen and greedy roughnecks who opportunistically attack and exploit other people through turning social relationships into business relationships. Salespeople in these stories are constructed as masculine and detached from intimate and emotional relationships. This frame acknowledges the legality of NM, but questions its ethics and morals.

Figure 12 summarizes the above-discussed frames and provides the key features of the stories within each frame in terms of the major themes of NM in the media.

Figure 12. Key features of the frames for network marketing in press writings

	Ethical/non-professional business and salespeople: Social activity for dabblers	Ethical/professional business and salespeople: Serious enterprise for businesswomen and entrepreneurs	Unethical/non-professional business and salespeople: Suspicious cult for revivalists and converts	Unethical/professional business and salespeople: Legal and professional money machine for conmen
Salespeople	dabblers, better-off folks, leisured people salespeople as feminine characters	businesswomen, self employed, entrepreneurs salespeople as masculine characters	revivalists, converts revivalists as masculine and converts as feminine characters	conmen, greedy roughnecks salespeople as masculine characters
NM organizations	direct selling organizations providing party plan concepts uncontrollable growth based on social networks and friendships	novel business applications rationally managed growth based on consumer advocacy effective direct marketing channel	illegal pyramid schemes, chain letters irrational, emotional involvement in a spiritual cult	traditional sales organizations rationally managed and determinate growth
NM as a commercial activity	buying is more relevant than selling social activity overrides commercial meaning	consumer-to-consumer marketing serious business and self-employment opportunity	taking advantage of other people's credulity unethical and illegal money collection	manipulation, hard selling tactics legal but unethical business

	Ethical/non-professional business and salespeople: Social activity for dabblers	Ethical/professional business and salespeople: Serious enterprise for businesswomen and entrepreneurs	Unethical/non-professional business and salespeople: Suspicious cult for revivalists and converts	Unethical/professional business and salespeople: Legal and professional money machine for conmen
			scheme or closed and secretive cult	
Lifestyle and social relationships	social relationships tolerate NM as a social activity in private settings as far as the financial aspect is not significant	NM provides a potential avenue for financial success through hard work independency provides better quality of life social and business relationships coexist	secretive, indefinite and dubious way of living social relationships are exploited by commercial efforts	hard work is separated from social settings competitive values and the logic of survival of the fittest business relationships destroy social relationships
Money and rewards	social rewards override financial rewards – money is 'pin money' and not relevant in this frame	financial - even significant - rewards result from hard work – the system is transparent and open for everyone	unfair distribution of financial rewards – initiators collect the money and the rest get paid for nothing	money comes from other people's efforts – financial rewards are gained through manipulative sales tactics
NM and society	NM as a hobby has no effects on the economy NM is best suited in socio-cultural settings in which women remain at home	'fourth sector' NM is a significant form of self-employment business as usual	NM takes place in grey markets	NM confirms an ancient view of selling and is but a new application of the door-to-door sales profession

In each of the frames, general themes concerning the NM business philosophy, organization, lifestyle, rewards, etc. (see the above central themes) are given diverse meanings. Within each frame also the images of salespeople vary and adopt appropriate forms suitable for the frame in question. Individual articles are seldom built on one clearly identifiable frame, but instead are functions of two to four frames. Within a single press writing, the simultaneous existence of conflicting statements on different themes – and thus, coexisting frames – indicate a clash between NM and taken-for-granted views on selling. As such, identification of different frames exposes the conditions under which different types of NM and selling are appropriate to exist in this historical, cultural and social context.

6.3 Gender and emotions as keys for transforming the frames

As shown in the previous section, constructs of ethics and professionalism in the NM context are complex. On the one hand, ethics and professionalism are not necessarily connected to each other in this context. For example, common representations of ‘greedy roughnecks’ and ‘rogues’ refer to professional but unethical salespeople. In other words, there seems to be no unanimous cultural construct of ‘a sales professional’, which would self-evidently include ethics as a taken-for-granted aspect of professional behaviour. On the other hand, the analysis of NM texts shows that social constructs of ethics and professionalism are not fixed, but instead are negotiated and reconstructed in various historical, social and cultural contexts.

A thorough reading of the data from the perspective of the media stories of NM suggested that there were two important constructs - namely gender and emotions - which were involved in all the stories in one way or another, and were commonly used in implying the author’s/text’s stand on ethics and professionalism. For example, the texts that brought up emotions and feminine aspects of NM marketing implied a non-professional frame whereas the professional frames were silent on emotions and replaced feminine characters with masculine characters. In one way or another, gender and emotions were incorporated into most of the diverse representations within any of the major themes. As such, I understood these aspects as the primary building blocks of ethics and professionalism of commerce in social settings.

From the analytical perspective, I noted constructs of gender and emotions in the texts as clues for identifying the frame in question. This manner of reading was broadly adopted from Goffman (1974) to whom a central concept in his frame analysis method was *the key*. This term refers ‘to the set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something quite else’, and consequently: ‘The process of transcription can be called keying’ (Goffman 1974:44). Goffman continues (*ibid*: 47), that ‘actions framed entirely in terms of a primary framework are said to be real or actual, to be really or actually or literally occurring. A keying of these actions performed, say, onstage provides us with something that is not literal or real or actually occurring.’

I also found this notion of keys and keying useful especially in exploring how frames are altered within the texts, even within one single article. For example, in the following extract the speaker uses both emotions and gender in keying a specific situation into a purported frame, i.e. to mask her initial emotional involvement in NM with rational thinking:

‘Ajoin kotiin innoissani. Kaikki kuulostti uskomattomalta. Ajattelin,
että näin ihana juttu ei voi olla totta. Siinä on pakko olla jotain

hämärää. Olin kyllä heti valmis kirjoittamaan sopimuspaperit. Mies sanoi, että tään iltana ei laitteta nimiä yhteenkään paperiin, vaan luetaan jokainen kohta tarkkaan.'

'I drove home full of enthusiasm. It all sounded incredible. I thought that this kind of thing was too good to be true. There must be something suspect in it. However, I was ready to sign the contract immediately. My husband said that we would not put our names on any papers that night, but instead read every item carefully'. (Kotiliesi 18/19.9.1997/PWD)

Within this extract, both the frame for unethical/non-professional NM and the frame for ethical/professional NM are present. In the beginning of the extract, the speaker depicts enthusiasm and strong emotional involvement as her initial responses to the NM opportunity. Simultaneously, she acknowledges the potential association of these emotions with primarily suspect schemes. Therefore the speaker then uses stake confession, and in order to 'make the frame go round', distances herself from the unethical/non-professional frame through re-framing – keying - the initially irrational and emotional decision to join NM as a result of a rational decision - rational here being represented by her husband.

As the above example illustrates, gender and emotions as the keys for varying frames are closely entangled in ethics and professionalism as the key principles that organize descriptions, examples and images of NM and salespeople into a coherent story entirely different from that in another frame. This interpretation of the keys and framing principles clearly differs from the Goffmanian use of the concepts in several respects. For example, Goffman mainly focuses on face-to-face interactions – gestures, speech, etc. - between people, while in this study the analysis is merely concerned with textual constructs of social interaction. Furthermore, from a constructionist perspective the notion of a 'real, actually occurring event' is rather problematic, and instead of keying 'primary frameworks' the focus here is on transforming one socially created frame into another, *different* creation.

In Goffmanian terms and metaphorically speaking, different frames provide different stages for varying performances of NM within the media discourse. Keying – or dramatization - then takes place within and by texts. Consequently, the organizing principles each involve a set of conventions or taken-for-granted cues – emotions and gender - on what is considered to be professional or ethical in this context. On a rather abstract level, this view implies a dualistic relationship between what principles construct a frame and what is being framed. On the one hand, portraying NM as a suspicious religious cult and NM salespeople as non-professional, unethical revivalists reveals a particular conception of commerce in social settings; on the other

hand, the same story reveals particular gendered and emotional conceptions of professionalism and ethics.

6.4 Overlaps and incongruencies in the academic, NM practitioner and media accounts

Finally, the media analysis provided the grounds from which to evaluate the overlaps and incongruencies in the academic, NM practitioner and media accounts of selling and network marketing. An intertextual analysis of the accounts exposes not only the issues that are included in dominant discourses within a particular community, but also the issues that are excluded from those discourses. In order to expose overlaps and divergences between the discourses, I transferred the results of the media text analysis into other contexts. That is, I combined the understanding of the media frames with the results from previous analyses.

On the face of it, mainstream academic discourse is uniform and consistent in its view on selling. This view is based on a functionalist research paradigm and social psychological role theories, which determine the world view and the views on humankind within the academic community, and consequently determine the representation of selling, salespeople and the context in which selling is taken to exist. Besides this established view within the academic community, there seems to be evolving a strengthening argumentation of significant changes in constructs of selling and the selling profession⁵⁷. Yet these arguments appear to be muted by the conventions of knowledge-creating processes within the academic community. In other words: the academic community sets boundaries in conceiving, acquiring and evaluating knowledge, and thus limits the possibilities to view sales-related issues differently than before. Within the academic discourse, it is difficult to identify NM practitioner or media voices, whereas both the NM practitioner community and the media refer to the academic discourse to a certain degree.

Also, the NM practitioner discourse is characterized by a uniform ideology, which in this case endorses the individual freedom of choice. This discourse contrasts NM strongly with traditional hierarchies and bureaucracy, and replaces conventional corporate life with a lifestyle of co-operating consumer advocates. NM practitioner discourse seems to collide most seriously with entrenched assumptions related to professional selling as a job, and what are considered to be

⁵⁷ In this study, I refer to these differing insights using a general term 'relationship selling', which in this context provides a contrast to the traditional view on selling within the functionalist research paradigm. There can be found several specific definitions for the term relationship selling within the marketing literature.

ethical business practices between people in intimate relationships. Practitioner discourse explicitly introduces feminine and emotional characteristics in traditionally masculine constructs, thus blurring the boundaries between public and private spheres, as well as the boundaries between organizations, salespeople and customers. These attempts are strongly confronted within the academic discourse, in which there is a tradition to view 'professional selling' as a rational, masculine and public construction, and consequently, social activities (such as extra-role performance) especially in private spheres as merely feminine constructs.

Media discourse, on the other hand, constructs a fragmented and incongruous view of NM, referring to and combining new insights into academic and NM practitioner discourses. Unlike the uniform academic and practitioner discourses, the media discourse introduces multiple social realities of selling simultaneously, and thus provides a basis for identifying the boundaries - the frames - for different stories of NM.

As a result of the intertextual analysis, the framing principles identified within the media discourse – ethics and professionalism - appear to frame the other discourses on selling and network marketing as well. While the framing principles remain the same, each community constructs the stories within the frames in varying ways, depending on their beliefs, values and political objectives. In this sense, my argument is that the constructs of selling - especially in social settings - are bounded by the universal-like dimensions of ethics and professionalism. However, the particular, contextualized and local meaning of ethics and professionalism are under continuous negotiation. Figure 13 illustrates how different communities draw elements from a variety of discourses in their constructs of professional, non-professional, ethical and unethical selling and NM. In other words, the figure provides all the storylines of selling and NM identified in this study.

Figure 13. Central overlaps and incongruencies between academic, media and practitioner accounts of selling and network marketing

Ethical/non-professional frame Media discourse: NM is an emotional and feminine construct – dabbling or a hobby. NM practitioner discourse: NM is an emotional and feminine construct - consumer-to-consumer advocacy or a hobby.	Ethical/professional frame Academic discourse: Selling is a rational and masculine construct, but feminine aspects are emerging (e.g. extra-role performance and relationship selling). NM practitioner discourse: NM is relationship selling in effect. However, the feminine aspect of NM is masked as masculine through several rhetorical devices. Media discourse: Emotional and feminine aspects of NM are fitted into the established rational and masculine academic models and theories of selling. As a result, NM is constructed as an example of a novel sales application.
Unethical/non-professional frame Academic and media discourses: NM is an illegal money collection scheme or a suspicious pyramid system. As such, the construct involves irrational, feminine and overemotional features. Practitioner discourse: NM is a legal business application and clearly distinguished from the illegal money collection and pyramid schemes.	Unethical/professional frame Academic discourse: Traditional view of selling as an unethical construct is old-fashioned and distorted and will be replaced by the novel conception of relationship selling. Practitioner discourse: Professional selling is a synonym for traditional selling, and both involve unethical practices. NM is strongly disassociated from traditional selling. Media discourse: NM equals traditional selling and both involve professional but unethical practices.

Within the ethical/non-professional frame, certain naturalized truths of the media discourse resonate well with the NM practitioner discourse. This frame creates representations of NM as a modest business application, through which housewives can express social activities among their networks. Within the practitioner discourse, this image is explicitly introduced through using the concepts of recommending, helping and advocating as primary metaphors for selling. Academic discourse on the other hand is relatively silent within this frame. The taken-for-granted image of a salesperson within the academic community is a professional salesperson, who works in organizational settings, and consequently, non-professionals are almost totally excluded within that discourse.

Within the ethical/professional frame, media texts construct NM as an innovative business application through combining elements from the academic and NM practitioner discourses. This frame clearly shows the overlapping and shared interest of academics and NM practitioners to reconstruct the common conception of selling and the sales profession. This common interest is achieved through a two-fold discursive strategy: firstly through promoting the privileged representation of selling and salespeople within the ethical/professional frame, and secondly, through explicitly contrasting these representations with the characters within the

unethical/professional frame. As a result, within the ethical/professional frame the academic discourse contrasts 'traditional selling' with the novel conception of relationship selling, and NM practitioner discourse contrasts 'traditional selling' with NM.

The unethical/professional frame in this sense is used by both academic and NM practitioner communities for making the distinction. Within the academic discourse, traditional, unethical selling is positioned within this frame and replaced by the ethical construct of relationship selling. Within the NM practitioner discourse, traditional selling is used as a synonym for professional selling, and both are strongly distinguished from the ethical construct of NM. Within this frame, the media discourse takes the most cynical stand and bluntly equates NM with traditional selling, which involves both professional and unethical practices.

Finally, within the unethical/non-professional frame, the media discourse represents NM as an illegal money collection scheme or a pyramid. This image has its analogous counterpart within the academic discourse, in which NM is associated with unethical and illegal systems. Within the NM practitioner discourse then, academic and media representations of NM within this frame are commonly acknowledged and thoroughly discussed, but strongly disassociated from 'true' NM through several rhetorical techniques.

6.5 Summary and discussion

In this section, my aim was to identify the principles that frame varying stories of NM firstly within the media, and secondly within the academic and NM practitioner communities. The section was based on the application of the frame analysis to the press writings data, and following that, the intertextual analysis of the findings from the previous analyses of the separate data sets.

Through combining an application of frame analysis and intertextual analysis to the data, I identified the organizing principles – namely professionalism/non-professionalism and ethical/unethical behaviour – which organize the representations of NM and NM salespeople in the media. Importantly, each frame provides conditions for a coherent story of NM in terms of the previously identified themes. The different stories within the media discourse are more or less explicitly interconnected with the academic and practitioner discourses on selling and NM, thus bringing new insight on the central themes of NM.

Within the media discourse, each frame is built on different constructs of ethics and professionalism and, respectively, unethical behaviour and non-professionalism. As a

consequence, a comparison of the stories within the frames reveals possible explanations for conflicting images and opinions on selling and NM-related topics. To illustrate this, the extreme views on NM can be condensed into the following short stories: firstly, the non-professional/unethical frame represents a story of greedy and fanatical masculine salespeople (revivalists) taking advantage of their feminine social networks (victims) thus destroying friendships through money. Secondly, the professional/ethical frame omits emotions in order to create a professional view, and instead creates a serious business scenario in which a rational masculine salesperson (businesswoman or entrepreneur) turns business relationships into social acquaintances in a naturalized manner. Thirdly, the non-professional/ethical frame represents feminine salespeople (housewives and mothers) dabbling enthusiastically within their social networks without financial goals or social risks. Finally, the professional/unethical frame creates a story of stereotypically aggressive salesmen (conmen) turning social relationships into business relationships thus destroying social relationships in a legal but unethical manner.

Through the analysis, I gradually identified the typical keys, which were used to imply a particular stand on ethics and professionalism within the texts. It was shown that within the media, the representations of gender and emotions are especially used to transform or key the descriptions of the 'primary NM events' such as selling activities, training, or salespeople's meetings into other descriptions suitable within another frame. For example, within the ethical/professional frame, the sales conventions adopt a rational image of a business opportunity meeting, in which relationships are formal and public and financial benefits play a significant role. In contrast, the non-professional/unethical frame constructs the same events as dubious revivalist meetings characterized by a strong emotional involvement and dirty money. The descriptions and examples of emotions in this case alter the frame and the consequent stories even within one particular article.

To summarize, entangled in constructs of ethical, unethical, professional and non-professional NM are varying conceptions of gender and emotions. In Goffmanian terms, these concepts assist in keying the different frames. In this section, it was shown that these concepts were used to specify and/or alter the frame, for example within individual press writings.

Finally, the analysis of the media discourse provided grounds from which to analyse the overlaps and incongruencies of the academic, NM practitioner and media texts. The intertextual analysis of the accounts clearly showed how ethics and professionalism as organizing principles are entangled in all major themes of selling and NM – salespeople's images, organizational

characteristics, lifestyle, etc. - shaping and bringing together various images and storylines not only within the media, but also within the academic and practitioner community.

Altogether, the complexity of the media discourse provided a colourful context in which diverse knowledge-creating communities negotiate and make sense of selling and NM through several textual and visual formulations. Based on this study, this negotiation entails bringing together, adjusting or abandoning taken-for-granted assumptions of ethical and professional commercial performance especially in social settings.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS AND REFLECTION

As a starting point for this study, I viewed academics, NM practitioners and the media as communities which all create knowledge of selling and NM on the basis of their ontological, epistemological, ideological and political engagements. My general objective was to identify and compare these discourses in order to make sense of the conflicting images overriding representations of selling in general and NM businesses specifically.

Firstly, I identified the key characteristics of the dominant discourses among academics, NM practitioners and the media. Secondly, I focused on the interconnected, intertextual nature of the seemingly uniform academic and practitioner discourses as well as on the controversial and inconsistent discourse in the media. Thirdly, I identified the key organizing principles, namely professionalism and ethics, which appear to frame varying stories of NM in the media. Fourthly, I explored ways in which academic, practitioner, and media discourses on selling and NM are connected with each other and, as such, in wider entrenched assumptions of commerce in social settings. Finally, I suggested that diverse communities each take a stand or are silent on emotional and gendered aspects of professional and ethical selling and the sales profession. In other words, varying constructs of gender and emotions seem to be the building blocks of ethics and professionalism in the sales context. As such, representations of emotions and gender operate as keys for transforming the socially created frames into other creations – thus relentlessly making the frames ‘go round’ within the texts.

All in all, this study of conflicting discourses of selling and NM exposed the contextualized and dynamic character of ethical and unethical, professional and non-professional commerce. The study depicted diverse conditions under which commerce and social settings may be adjusted with each other – or alternatively, comprehensively exclude each other. Furthermore, the study showed how different ontological, epistemological and methodological engagements lead to the creation of varied representations and explanations of the phenomena of interest.

To conclude this study report, I discuss the findings and evaluate the procedures of this study. Firstly, I summarize and draw together the findings of the study. Secondly, I evaluate the study in terms of its validity, reliability and transferability. Finally, I discuss the contribution of this study to sales and NM discourses.

7.1 *Fundamentals of selling and network marketing*

In this section, I summarize the fundamental features of academic, NM practitioner and media discourses on selling and NM identified in this study.

On the basis of the analysis of academic texts, I argue that the relatively uniform and uncontested ideological basis of the academic sales research community is grounded in a functionalist research paradigm. As a consequence, the dominant academic discourse on selling involves the following discursive characteristics: grounds in functionalist ontological and epistemological assumptions of objective reality and social-psychological and sociological role theories, and engagement in consequent knowledge production processes. This established view dominates concurrent sales research, but the emergence of opposing and competing voices can also be discerned within the community. These opposing views revolve mainly around the need to reconstruct and re-conceptualize organizations' selling functions and the roles of salespeople, and aim to view contemporary 'relationships selling' as the opposite of 'traditional selling'. Although these opposing views have not yet challenged the prevalent epistemology and methodology of sales research, they could work as an impetus to consider novel ways to complement sales studies with alternative study approaches.

The analysis of NM practitioner texts, on the other hand, suggests that the dominant ideology adopted within the practitioner community builds on assumptions of boundless individual freedom of choice. Altogether, the practitioner discourse forms a counter-discourse on conventional corporate life and work hierarchies, and constructs NM more like a lifestyle than a job. While the academic community often views NM as a marginal and suspicious business scheme, practitioner discourse strongly distinguishes NM from professional selling. Paradoxically though, both academic and practitioner discourses share the antipathy towards the unethical 'traditional selling' and use overlapping terminology in constructing the novel conception of selling and salespeople. Yet another paradox within the NM practitioner community is the valuing of co-operation and interdependency between salespeople despite the simultaneous preference for independency and individualism.

The analysis of media texts shows that the media not only reproduces the academic and practitioner discourses, but also creates new insight into selling and NM. Importantly, the media discourse positions varying images of selling and NM alongside the taken-for-granted assumptions on commerce in social settings, and as such, assists in identifying boundaries between contrasting views.

Within the academic discourse, selling is contextualized in organizational, public settings. As a result of the chosen paradigmatic perspective, knowledge of selling is viewed to take place in the perceptions of salespeople and managers, and is thus contextualized into the theoretical frameworks of, e.g., role perceptions and performance.

In contrast, the NM practitioner discourse creates social networks and the private sphere as an anti-hierarchic, anti-bureaucratic context for NM. While the academic discourse sets boundaries for selling and salespeople through the organizational hierarchy and role structure, practitioner discourse argues for non-existent personal, social or cultural impediments to success.

Furthermore, whereas academic discourse positions knowledge of selling in the perceptions' or of salespeople and managers, NM practitioners emphasize emotions and feelings as decisive indicators of true knowledge.

Finally, media discourse introduces all the above options for appropriate contexts for selling, and exposes a continuous attempt to find a balance between the entrenched dichotomies of public/private and business/social spheres. Thus, instead of taking one particular definite stand, the media constructs several options for suitable conditions for commerce in social settings.

Within the academic community, selling is understood to be a part of the organization's marketing function. This function is performed by the salespeople and targeted at the customers. However, as objects of targeted actions, customer voices are absent from most theoretical models of selling. Following from the functionalist assumptions, salespeople are typically viewed as resources or parts of the organization, and can be reduced to measurable variables in terms of their role performances. For example, NM salespeople can be conceptualized as using, selling, recruiting and advocating agents on the basis of their self-reported organizational behaviours. Following that, the images of salespeople within academic discourse tend to be detached from their socio-cultural and historical contexts, gender and emotions. Yet it should be noted that the functionalist study approach as well as the established conceptualization of selling reflect an ideology that is inclined to value stereotypically masculine processes and characteristics over feminine ones.

The NM practitioner discourse constructs commercial transactions as altruistic acts through replacing selling with the metaphors of recommending, giving and helping. Customers in this view are present as partners or potential peers, and the border between selling and buying becomes blurred. This view parallels the emerging themes within the academic discourse of the changing roles of salespeople and customers. On the other hand, NM salespeople are viewed as omnipotent, heroic individuals and consumer advocates, who form a powerful counterpart to

traditional trading organizations. Furthermore, NM is viewed as an extraordinary lifestyle with an empowering character. Within the NM practitioner community, feminine characteristics are explicitly and implicitly brought into the construct of selling and sales roles.

Finally, the media discourse mixes elements of academic and practitioner discourses and as a result, provides a wide range of representations of salespeople as gendered and cultural stereotypes. These images convey several taken-for-granted assumptions on combinations of gender and emotions, and thus provide varying views on suitable conditions for commerce in social settings.

Related to the above discussion, academic discourse determines salespeople as doing, behaving and performing subjects bounded by their fixed roles. Salespeople's performance is controlled, encouraged and/or limited by the organization and managers. Viewed from this kind of theoretical framework, the resulting images for NM salespeople are, for example, *members, promoters, networkers and leaders*, whose roles are defined by the organization's functions manifest in each role. In contrast, the NM practitioner discourse determines NM salespeople as willing and feeling subjects, *independent and free social actors in control of their own lives*. Importantly, the images of buying and selling roles, customers and salespeople are disordered and mixed up. This disorder is prevalent in media discourse as well, in which a heterogeneous gallery of *dabblers, housewives, businesswomen, entrepreneurs, revivalists, converts and conmen* are brought up on stage.

Figure 14 summarizes the fundamental features of academic, practitioner and media accounts of selling, NM and NM salespeople.

Figure 14. Summary of academic, practitioner and media accounts of selling, NM and NM salespeople

	Academic account: Discourse on resources and functions	Practitioner account: Discourse on independent and free lifestyle	Media account: Discourse on business, cults, and money machines
Ideological basis and fundamental discursive characteristics	Uniform and uncontested ideology of selling within the personal selling and sales management literature Functionalist paradigm Realist ontology and epistemology Social-psychological/sociological role theories Emergence of relationship selling in contrast to the traditional view	Individualism and freedom of choice Uniform ideology Counter-discourse on conventional corporate life and traditional view on selling Terminology of consumer-to-consumer and relationship marketing overlapping with the	A mixture of academic and practitioner discourse, and taken-for-granted views on selling in intimate relationships Conflicting discourses framed by assumptions on professionalism and ethics

		Academic account: Discourse on resources and functions	Practitioner account: Discourse on independent and free lifestyle	Media account: Discourse on business, cults, and money machines
		on selling	academic discourse	
Context		Organization Cognitions, perceptions Theoretical frameworks of role perceptions and performance Public sphere	Anti-corporate, anti-hierarchical, anti-bureaucratic, social network, private sphere Non-existent personal, social, or cultural impediments to success Emotions and feelings	Social, intimate relationships as well as business networks, private sphere as well as public places
Representations of selling		Part of the organization's marketing function Customers as objects of activities, absent	Altruistic act; metaphorically replaced with recommending, giving, and helping Lifestyle Customers as partners	Moral act: ethical/unethical Professional/non-professional act Customers as friends/partners/victims/objects or absent Persistent contest between the stereotypical view on selling as masculine and social activities as feminine constructs, and selling as ethically questioned profession
Representations of salespeople		Salespeople as organizations resources: using, selling, recruiting and advocating agents Salespeople as performers of functional roles are detached from historical and socio-cultural contexts, gender and emotions Active: doing Controlled by the organization NM salespeople as members, promoters, networkers, and leaders with varying organizational functions manifest in each role	Salespeople as omnipotent, heroic individuals Consumer advocates Feminine characters contrasted with conventional, masculine sales roles Determinate: willing Emotional: feeling In control of their lives Independent, free social actors Disorder and mix up of buying and selling roles, customers and salespeople	Salespeople as gendered, cultural stereotypes Images convey taken-for-granted assumptions on friendships, gender, emotions and money, and consequently, social, domestic settings as a context for commerce Active, doing, gendered, determinate, willing, emotional and feeling Uncontrolled or in control Fragmented and conflicting images: dabblers, businesswomen, revivalists, conmen

7.2 Ethics and professionalism under negotiation

As a key result of this study, the analysis of the media writings exposed the central framing principles for conflicting stories of network marketing, namely professionalism and ethics. These principles can be concluded to frame also the academic and practitioner discourses, although the boundaries of these seemingly uniform discourses were not so easily identifiable.

The organization of diverse NM and sales stories around ethics and professionalism should hardly be surprising. Both aspects of selling – the existence or the lack of them – have been widely discussed both within the academic and the NM practitioner communities. For example (as cited in the beginning of this section), Wotruba (1990) provides an extensive framework for the analysis of ethical behaviour in sales organizations, and states that

The central nature of selling – a negotiation between buyer and seller – is inherently a laboratory of ethical scenarios.

Wotruba (*ibid*) points out that the organizational roles of salespeople as boundary spanners forces them constantly into situations in which ethical and moral choices have to be made often

...apart from each other, experiencing little daily contact with supervisors, subordinates or peers and thus participating in little or no formal company socialization process which would provide feelings of group affiliation and understanding of corporate norms.

(Dubinsky et al. 1986 ref. Wotruba 1990)

These features are especially emphasized in NM organizations, in which the accomplishment of socialization depends on independent peer salespeople instead of formal programmes, company managers or subordinates.

The NM strategy, which encourages participants to sell products among family members and friends, also poses specific ethical difficulties. For example Koehn (2001) states that

Participants, desperate to succeed at their new MLM business, may feel driven to pressure relatives and friends into buying cosmetics, water filters, jewellery, etc. In other words, MLMs can alter human relationships, encouraging people to 'instrumentalize' relations rooted in love and affection. Relatives may feel somewhat forced into buying goods in order to keep their sons or daughters from feeling ashamed, to show support or to avoid a big fight within the family.

Moreover, Koehn (2001) states that MLMs blur the line between the social setting and the selling set-up, and recruit people by promising them immediate and unlimited rewards. As a consequence, network marketers are likely to 'exploit the host-guest relationship' as well as 'put people on a dangerous course by encouraging greed' (*ibid*).

On a more general level, Cooley (2002) discusses the conditions for combining business and friendships, and argues that most relationships in business must be kept on the lower level of business acquaintanceship. On the one hand, the rigours of competing well in the current economic system may well lead to unethical relationships on the parts of the participants. On the other hand, by refraining from deceiving those in business relationships with them and treating everyone including themselves as ends in themselves, each person can create good business acquaintanceships that will help them compete efficiently and ethically (*ibid*).

As discussed previously, the established view on commerce as a primarily organizational act puts the NM practitioner view on friendships to the test. The NM practitioner community as well as some relationship marketing academics (see Price & Arnould 1999) propose friendships as suitable contexts for commerce. In this view, both marketers and customers gain mutual benefits through engaging in relationships with each other via affection, loyalty and reciprocal gift giving. This instrumental view clashes with the view on friendships as expressive and altruistic relationships, and thus reveals the modernist, dualistic assumptions related to the issue.

It is noteworthy that business ethics and salespeople's professionalism are often viewed as entangled and interconnected constructs. For example, Hawes et al. (2004) conclude that the classification of a sales job as a profession will require the development and enforcement of an ethical code. This view is explicitly recognized within the direct selling industry, which develops and markets its international and national ethical codes and best practices through the industry associations around the world.

In their study on gendered practices within an academic work community, Katila and Meriläinen (1999:117) note how the characteristics required for professional identity at university seems to be 'tied to a system of values in which identities defined as masculine were prioritized'. Their study shows how women's gender positions are made explicit through categorizing them, for example, as a 'girl' or a 'seducer' in an academic context. Further on, this image of incompetent women is strengthened by the behaviour of all organizational members. Men display masculinity by being public, visible, and aggressive whereas women tend to adopt a feminine position by being more private, invisible, and submissive. They conclude that according to the academic standards of professionalism, women's behaviour is regarded as unprofessional (*ibid*).

Media discourse on NM reveals similar standards of professionalism associated with selling jobs. Professional NM salespeople adopt the images, e.g., of businesswomen or men – both described in masculine terms as self-determined, visible, and public characters. Furthermore, professionalism in this context is associated with success in financial terms, which also seems to

require masculine features from salespeople. Non-professionalism then is constructed through feminine cues, such as altruism, privacy, and financial insignificance, leading to representations of the NM salespeople as housewives and stay-at-home mothers.

Altogether, this study implies that it is still more convenient and natural to see women dabbling at home, than running financially significant businesses. For example, the statistical fact that most NM salespeople are female appears to erode and lessen the professional status of NM. This implies that the prevailing cultural conditions for female-dominated businesses are still likely to be restricted and bounded by stereotypically gendered prejudices. The common presumption in the NM context is that the female-driven sales organization is ethical, but in financial terms a 'pin money business'.

Furthermore, the analysis of the media discourse shows a prevailing tendency to separate emotions from work and rational thinking from intimate relationships. In general, this view implies unwillingness to tolerate emotional involvement with professional work, and a disinclination to accept commercial activities in the context of intimate relationships.

Following that, in order to gain a professional and ethical identity, NM salespeople in the ethical/professional frame are constituted as stereotypically masculine characters, which are detached from emotions and intimate relationships. Accordingly, businesswomen in this frame are featured as having masculine characteristics also, and social networks are seldom seen as appropriate scenes for commercial activities.

The distinction between the sales and NM stories, in terms of ethics and professionalism identified in this study, has a notable analogy to a broader discussion of a suggested differentiation between morality and economy. For example, Panula (1999) argues that moral and economic choices are always exclusive, that we enter daily the crossroads of ethical and business worlds, and that in any new ethical choice situation we as cognitive human beings make our choices either on the basis of our good moral will or on the basis of our amoral goals. In this view, postmodern social reality distinguishes between a rational and instrumental world, which may override the normative and expressive aspects of human lives, resulting in a world view of differentiated moral and economical worlds (*ibid* 12-13).

Analogous to this view is the visualization of NM frames consisting of the horizontal dimension with the extremes of non-professionalism and professionalism, and the vertical dimension with the extremes of ethical and unethical. Whereas Panula in his study focuses particularly on the crossroads of the moral (ethical) and economic (professional) dimensions of individual choices, my focus here has been on the conditions in which the representations of selling and NM take

diverse forms in terms of the ethical, unethical, professional and non-professional dimensions. Thus, in this study I have identified and described the discursive battles and negotiations between the moral and business worlds.

Panula (1999:12) states that one is admittedly likely to argue against the suggested differentiation between moral and economic worlds: why should it be impossible to have both morality and economy? Why cannot one have both? In this study, I share this view on our common concern to 'have it all', and argue that this particular dilemma is an elementary aspect and determinant of clashes between the conflicting views of NM. In other words, the attempt to combine ethical and economic choices in these specific social settings for commerce underlies the discursive clashes concerning selling and NM. Furthermore, these clashes are likely to take place independently of the viewers' beliefs whether the attempt to combine ethics and economy is discursive and rhetorical, political, ideological, and/or cognitive and rational. On the basis of this study, I argue that regardless of whether or not it is possible to have both morality and economy in terms of commerce in social settings, we as incomplete humans continually strive to have it all.

Taking the above discussion into consideration, the representations of ethical and professional selling, NM and NM salespeople are in a flux, as diverse knowledge-creating communities negotiate their views between the potential moral and economic choices and the results of those choices.

To summarize, NM business applications challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions of the established conditions for ethical and professional commerce in a variety of ways. Competing discourses in the media deal with and take a stand on whether business relationships can coexist and complement relationships that are primarily social, or whether business relationships destroy and substitute intimate relationships. The conditions for NM are thus strongly bounded by cultural norms concerning relationship ethics and business professionalism. Overall, it can be concluded that all communities creating knowledge of NM acknowledge the features that raise serious concerns related to the ethics and professionalism of selling in private settings, among social relationships, and that use several discursive, practical and/or cognitive tactics to solve or avoid them. As can be concluded, consideration of ethics and professionalism is likely to be of extreme relevance in other types of consumer-to-consumer marketing applications as well.

7.3 *Evaluation of the study*

The most difficult task in this study was to engage in a theoretical and methodological study approach, in which the researcher has no access or even an interest in finding ‘the truth’ behind the statements, stories and images of the phenomenon under study. Following that, opening up the analyses in this report sometimes required writing through denial, constant journeys back to the original texts, and consequent rewriting of the analyses sections.

In retrospect, my resistance to accept the varying social realities of selling and NM as equal representations of the ‘truth’ resulted from my personal and professional involvement in the academic and practitioner communities. In other words, I was reluctant to criticize and question the dominant discourses of the communities of which I was a member. As Moisander and Valtonen (forthcoming) note, the term ‘critical’ in everyday talk is usually understood as something negative like ‘inclined to judge severely and find fault’. It required much effort to understand and apply critical thinking as both an open-minded and sceptical attempt to systematically gather and synthesize information in order to identify and question prevailing assumptions and beliefs as well as to discern hidden or implicit values (*ibid*).

In this sense, the membership of the academic and NM practitioner community was both an advantage and a disadvantage. On the one hand, the easy access and authentic socialization in diverse discourses was clearly an advantage, but on the other hand, a strong personal sympathy and a received view on the correct, ethical and professional NM and mainstream study practices were disadvantages as well.

More specifically, in the analysis of diverse texts, I found it very difficult to distance myself from personal experiences, memories and opinions of academic study procedures and mundane NM practices on the one hand, and even more importantly, memories and opinions of colleagues and texts within diverse communities on the other hand. As Valtonen (2004:20) notes, seeing the world through the same categories as the respondents – or communities under study in this case – is likely to cause a problem of overfamiliarity, especially when studying everyday life. It is a serious misunderstanding to think that a qualitatively orientated, social constructionist or/and postmodern inquiry would not require distance from the studied issue at certain analysis and writing phases – it does.

At least in this study, I tried to balance between distance and closeness especially from the beginning of the press writings analysis phase. Instead of trying to empirically verify my own received views on selling and NM, I chose to show how impersonal and uncontrollable media texts (such as the press writings appeared to me) created, criticized and praised varying images,

events and social conditions for selling and NM. Because of my own entrenched assumptions on the explored issue, the attempt to keep all the options for conflicting representations open was very frustrating, very difficult and extremely interesting.

For example, in a draft of this report, I cited a piece of text published in the World Federation of Direct Selling Associations, which described the NM industry and its practices. In the initial text, I referred to this extract as 'a neutral description like this...' To my surprise, two of my colleagues who continuously read and commented on the draft, marked this sentence as strange and biased. In their view, the extract was not nearly a neutral description, but instead took a strong stand on a particular social construct of NM.

The above example illustrates well the difficulty in detaching from my own presumptions and preferences on the studied issue. In retrospect, I argue that this kind of study requires from an inquirer a nearly unattainable ability to first experience (living in a social, historical and cultural context), then forget (analysis of texts, rhetoric and discourses), and finally reflect (conclusion, evaluation and reflection) all about the studied issue. As Valtonen (*ibid*: 21) stresses, a common suggestion regarding this problem is that 'when involved in the studied field' one should cultivate strangeness and distance. According to her suggestion, the primary role of cultivating strangeness here is given to the theory and a critical self-reflection, in addition to the role of the media texts as providing a distant position in the analysis phase

Related to the above-discussed issues, it is quite a difficult task to evaluate or set criteria for this kind of study as well. Nevertheless, in the following I present a set of criteria for cultural studies in general, and evaluate the ability of this study to meet these requirements.

Criteria for a good study

The theoretical perspective of this study evolved from a functionalist into a constructionist perspective, which required consequent reshaping of the initially chosen research questions and data procedures. This process was useful, as it forced me to make explicit the theoretical framework and engagements of the initial and eventual paradigmatic positions. For the purposes of this study, it was relevant to identify and question the received mainstream view on marketing studies, and to simultaneously adapt to a social constructionist world view. The chosen study approach guided the methodological choices and data procedures, and also provided grounds for reflecting and evaluating the study.

I adopt here a view on evaluation which maintains that criteria for good research are not discovered but negotiated. More specifically, the appropriate criteria are derived from community consensus among researchers and other interest groups regarding what is trustworthy and useful,

and has meaning for further action at a certain time and under certain conditions. Furthermore, a good piece of research should also provide people with new opportunities to make their own choices, and offer new perspectives to researchers, practitioners and various other social actors (see Moisander & Valtonen forthcoming). In the following, I evaluate this study in light of its validity, reliability and transferability and discuss its general epistemic practices.

Validity

The evaluation of the validity of the research, which assumes that knowledge is never value free and that no method can deliver on ultimate truths concerning the state of affairs in social life, is problematic. Instead of trying to discover facts about a single social reality, studies like this focus on cultural, social constructs and aim to understand the interplay between cultural discourses and mundane practices in particular settings. In that task, a combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials and perspectives are used to add rigour, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to the inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 2000:4; Moisander & Valtonen forthcoming).

In the 'crystallization process' (see Richardson 2000:934) - or in the process of turning a kaleidoscope - the writer tells the same tale from different points of view. There is no one correct telling of this story, but instead each telling reflects a different perspective on particular incidents and events. Consequently, this kind of crystallization deconstructs the traditional idea of validity. As Richardson (2000: 934) puts it:

... (We feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves), and crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know.

Although the superiority of academic knowledge over other types of knowledge, and the superiority of any particular method over other methods is doubted in the postmodernist context, this view still allows us to know something. That is, having a partial, local, historical knowledge is still knowing (Richardson 2000:928). However, perspectives do matter, and knowledge is not disinterested, apolitical or neutral but in some sense ideological, political and permeated with values. As Moisander and Valtonen (forthcoming) suggest, this leads to view validity as something that the audience of the research reports and papers decides on – whether or not we want or accept it. This audience is ultimately the community of scholars, but also practitioners and other communities in our society. In their words (*ibid*):

Particularly, research that problematizes taken-for-granted ideas and questions received wisdoms in an attempt to offer new perspectives to consumers, marketers and policy-makers seems 'valid'.

Thus, the criteria for evaluating the integrity of a cultural study tends to be pragmatic, and the study can be evaluated by the degree to which it makes possible new and meaningful interpretations of the phenomena it investigates. This interpretation also involves an ethical stand that the researchers to a paramount degree must take moral responsibility for what they construct (Moisander & Valtonen forthcoming).

In this study, I viewed NM first from a functionalist perspective, and following that, from a social constructionist perspective. In so doing, I combined quantitative and qualitative analysis methods for multiple sets of data. During the study process, I conducted interviews and a survey study, and collected several sets of textual data, which were then analysed first through functionalist lenses, and then through constructionist, interpretive and critical discourse analysis lenses. In order to increase the breadth of the inquiry and to make sure that multiple perspectives were included in the study, I selected three different communities for the study. Thus, the perspectives that I adopted ranged from academic to practitioner and media communities. As a result, the study displayed multiple competing social realities for selling and NM simultaneously, thus providing grounds for understanding conflicts and overlaps between varying discourses.

In the course of this study, I also engaged in a continuous dialogue with the communities under study. More specifically, I exposed partial analyses of the study under critical inspection in the form of academic conference and seminar papers and publications as well as discussion papers, articles and presentations in NM practitioner publications and conventions, and interviews and writings in the media. On the basis of these dialogues and discussions, it was possible to reflect the study throughout the process, which also increased the validity of the study in the above-discussed sense.

During the writing process, I also tried to make explicit the bridge between the texts and my interpretation of them through reflecting the findings with the existing theories and analyses of other data types. For example, to say that a particular discursively created altruistic, socially oriented and gentle salesperson within the media discourse is feminine, involves both a description of the text as well as my interpretation of it. Following that, it was my task to demonstrate how this interpretation is grounded in theoretical discussions as well as in lived experiences of culturally bounded gender stereotypes. Furthermore, my task was to back up the interpretation by comparing the feminine character with other kinds of salespeople constructs

within different discourses thus highlighting the interpretation through contrasts even more thoroughly.

Reliability

According to Moisander and Valtonen (forthcoming), cultural researchers should also make explicit the theoretical stance from which the interpretation takes place as well as methodological procedures such as data production processes, analytical procedures and principles, how interpretations were developed, and conclusions drawn. The reliability of these procedures reflects to what extent the overall practice of conducting research has been systematic and rigorous.

In this study, the challenge was not only 'how to do it' but also how to report, describe and exemplify explicitly enough the wide range of partial analyses of multiple data sets in the final report. Within a constructionist framework, writing a study report is not only simply reporting what was done while studying. Instead, writing involves also the reconstruction of the ideas and conclusions that were drawn previously while reading, thinking and analysing the written materials. Following that, when explaining the analyses procedures, it was difficult to decide which analysis processes should be explained in a more detailed manner, which extracts would best illustrate the basis for certain interpretations, and which conclusions would need a more thorough reflection on the basis of prior studies or theories.

However, throughout the study process, I attempted to secure the reliability of the study and collect, organize and finally analyse the multiple data in a systematic way. On the other hand, while writing this final report, my objective was to make the research procedures as transparent as possible through explicating and discussing my theoretical stance and consequent methodological choices in a detailed manner, and through choosing the extracts from the data carefully.

Transferability

The question of transferability, i.e. whether or not the results of the study can be transferred and applied to other contexts and situations by the audience of the study report, is relevant in evaluating the integrity of the study. Transferability in this sense refers to the degree to which the readers can transfer the understanding created by this study to other contexts and situations that they are familiar with (Moisander & Valtonen, forthcoming). In cultural studies the question is not about the attempt to find universal laws and theories that could be empirically tested and statistically generalized to larger populations or contexts. Instead, the aim is to gain a better

understanding of the historically and locally specified cultural practices and systems of representation that structure the production of meaning.

As Moisander and Valtonen (*ibid*) maintain,

Generally institutionalized and culturally standard discourses tend to take the form of fairly enduring albeit continuously negotiated cultural regimes. Therefore, knowledge on these practices and representational systems is largely transferable and can be applied to the historical and cultural context in which they were studied.

7.4 *Contribution and implications*

The contribution of this study firstly provides an understanding of the varying representations of selling and network marketing across diverse knowledge-creating communities, and secondly approaches selling from an other than taken-for-granted paradigmatic research perspective. From the perspective of knowledge-creating communities, understanding of the identified socio-cultural frames for selling assists in understanding why and how their privileged discourses may face conflicting views in mundane practical encounters and, for example, in the media.

For instance, the feminine construct of selling and salespeople within the NM practitioner discourse is easily accepted in broader settings - on the condition that it involves no significant financial gains and is contextualized in private settings and thus implies a non-professional/ethical frame for NM. Any effort to add potential financial significance and rational relevance to the picture is likely to lead to a professional/ethical frame, in which salespeople are presumed to possess masculine characters, and selling takes place in organizational, public settings. On the other hand, each pre-existing frame constructs subjects and events differently. As discussed earlier, within an unethical/non-professional frame, the sales convention is likely to be described as an emotionally loaded revivalist meeting, whereas within the ethical/professional frame the same event will probably be described as a rational and public business opportunity meeting. In this sense, it becomes relevant to explicitly identify, articulate and promote the valued frame within and outside the community in question.

An enlightened understanding of the multifaceted reality of NM should also encourage fruitful dialogue between the diverse communities. Related to this, the study raised relevant issues and questions, which might interest sales researchers, practitioners and the media in the future. In the following, I will discuss the findings of this study in the light of their potential contribution in developing innovations and preventing further conflicts in the area of selling and NM.

Who and what is privileged by established sales discourses?

Fundamental discursive features – e.g. valuing a masculine set of characters over the feminine, constructing researchers as objective and neutral subjects, or fostering an individualistic belief in boundless freedom of choice – project the system of beliefs and values that emanate from and promulgate the world view of the dominant group in a given community. The maintenance and promulgation of a specific ideology may be used to sustain and legitimize the power of the dominant group over perceptions of social reality, and to legitimize this group's control of social relations and institutions as well (see Hirschman 1993). As Eagleton (1991: 5 ref. Hirschman 1993) notes, ideology may be used in legitimization through, e.g., promoting respective beliefs and values, by naturalizing and universalizing such beliefs as being self-evident and inevitable, by denigrating challenging ideas, by excluding rivals of thought, and by obscuring social reality in ways convenient to itself.

For example, in the critical conceptualization of management the mystification metaphor is used to draw the attention to the ways in which managers strive to construct a favourable image of themselves and/or their organization through the careful arrangement of symbols and ceremonies (Rosen 1985; Alvesson 1996 ref. Alvesson & Willmott 1996:100). Alvesson and Willmott (1996) stress that researchers or other analysts do not necessarily occupy a position that permits them privileged access to any 'objective' reality behind the mystique. Rather, the metaphor is used to indicate how management contrives to shape the way people – employees, consumers and citizens – make sense of the social world and participate in it. From this perspective, the advocacy of NM as a counter-discourse of corporate life would be a chosen competitive strategy to appeal to and commit members into the organization. Or from the feminist perspective, the persistency to keep up the established study standards and procedures and limit other perspectives for its part might reflect a broader pretension to maintain a patriarchal dominance within the academic community.

To summarize, the mystification metaphor understands management as an institution, whose agents mould and influence people's beliefs, meanings, values and self-understanding. This view can also be broadened to cover other communities and their management – those in power – as well. An important question then is the composition and justification of 'the dominant group' or 'mystifying managers', and their values within the community. In other words: which social groups and broader discourses will be privileged through the dominance of any particular type of discourse on selling?

The contribution of this study, in terms of identifying the established power relations, results from the identification of the fundamental features of the dominant discourses within the academic and practitioner communities. However, this study does not provide a thorough understanding of the constitution of the dominant groups, or the precise nature of the knowledge-creating processes and boundaries within the communities in question. Several related questions of power thus remain unresolved, which might interest researchers studying institutional power relations and asymmetry in society in the future.

What are the boundaries of selling?

This study provided important insights into traditionally taken-for-granted dichotomies and their potential reconstruction across sales studies and practices. Among 'universal' dichotomies, such as masculine/feminine, public/private, rational/emotional and social/commercial, these dichotomies involved specific categorizations used in sales settings: salespeople/customers, organization/salespeople, managers/salespeople, and selling/buying. It was noted that although these categories are well established, both academic studies – e.g. in the consumer and services marketing field – as well as practical marketing applications – such as NM or advanced member-get-member-programmes – challenge and signal a need to re-evaluate and reconstruct the boundaries between these categories.

My argument is that the contradicting views of NM reflect a broader clash between consumer-to-consumer marketing applications and prevailing socio-cultural conditions. Through blurring the boundaries between salespeople and customers, selling and buying, and promoting private spheres and friendships as acceptable contexts for commerce, NM provokes highly conflicting opinions and emotions ranging from unreserved acceptance and enthusiasm to pure depreciation and cynicism. These conflicts signal the pressure to keep up and maintain the traditional boundaries on the one hand, and the need to rethink conditions for commerce on the other hand. Overall, extreme reactions underline the value put on these issues thus providing avenues for further studies.

Because of the emerging break of the taken-for-granted categories, I have consciously avoided the discussion of the generalizability of the outcomes of this study into specific sales settings. Instead, my intention is to encourage researchers to deconstruct their presumptions on sales settings through questions such as, for example, when is it possible or useful to distinguish between organizations and individuals as buyers? Where does public end and private begin in selling? Which groups are involved in constructing selling, and whose constructs are used in the established theoretical frameworks of prevailing studies or practical applications of selling and

NM? When is it useful or possible to distinguish between the business and social relationships between the buyers and sellers? These kinds of questions may encourage researchers to explore and reconstitute the contextual, spatial, temporal, and gendered boundaries of selling in the future.

What is network marketing?

The last question here can be understood at least in three different ways. Firstly, it can be taken as a deeper, philosophical question trying to solve the meaning of NM in broader social settings. From this perspective, the above-described discourse of breaking boundaries also relates to a more general academic discourse on postmodern conditions. Certain aspects of NM practitioner discourse resonate well with the philosophy of postmodernism, which suggests that a postmodern perspective will help us adapt to changes already taking place, ironically as a result of continuing applications of modernist science and technology (Hatch 1997: 45). In this view,

Predictions are that the future will find us occupying smaller, more decentralized, informal, and flexible organizations that will be predominantly service- or information-oriented and will use automated production strategies and computer-based technology. As a result of these changes, we will experience organizations as more eclectic, participative, and loosely coupled than ever before, with the implication that members of organizations will confront more paradox, contradiction, and ambiguity (Hatch 1997: 45).

And furthermore,

This [One postmodernist idea] means seeking greater levels of participation by marginalized members of organizations such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, and the oldest and youngest employees (Hatch 1997: 46).

In this sense, the NM practitioner community constructs NM as if not a postmodern, at least an anti-modern organization. This notion raises yet other questions, such as the one Biggart (1989: 91-97) poses: does NM empower women or other marginalized groups? To summarize her answer, so far the larger social world is not prepared at least for genuinely feminist organizations. To a certain extent, NM is a feminine construct and may empower women at the individual level and make them *feel* liberated and modern. However, this can only be safely achieved within a patriarchy, without upsetting the traditional premises of our contemporary lives (Biggart 1989: 97).

Whether one agrees or not with the above suggestion, it seems indisputable that a masculine construct of selling and salespeople is under reconstruction, and that NM is one of the practical applications taking advantage or advancing this reconstruction. In this sense, NM provides

intriguing social worlds for researchers interested in postmodern conditions, feminist organizations and the like.

Secondly, the question 'What is network marketing?' can be understood in a more practical – maybe even quantifiable - manner, for example as an attempt to explore the frequency or the relative importance of distinct NM frames and consequent stories in a given society, organization or medium. As an example, Brodie et al. (2004) conducted an international survey study on the public image of direct selling, in which they collected data from seven countries in order to determine general conceptions of direct selling and salespeople in the seven different countries.

In a similar vein, a survey study could be designed on the basis of the general storylines of each frame identified in this study, in order to determine which frames are most common among any particular society, culture, and social group or medium of interest. In this kind of use, this study could serve as a starting point or a framework for specific, contextual knowledge on questions such as 'What is the dominant construct of NM in this particular historical, social, and cultural context?'

Thirdly, since the beginning of this study project, I have been constantly involved in exasperating situations, in which a hand is raised and a demanding voice asks: 'Yes, I understand your point, but I still wonder what is REALLY going on in network marketing?' From this perspective, to ask 'What is network marketing?' after all this studying could be taken as a serious signal of a disastrous failure.

Fortunately, the social constructionist framework adopted in the study allows and requires me to argue the opposite, and maintain that the value of this study is relative to its ability to question and keep open the options for multiple social realities of selling and NM. In my opinion, the spirit of the constructionist study approach requires and encourages me as a researcher and as a practitioner to try to advance the ethics and professionalism of NM through participating in the studied discourses and communities.

Considering all of the above, I finally do have an answer to one of the most persistently asked questions: 'Yes, Mom, I still do believe in network marketing.'

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9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interviewed salespeople (members of the Board of the Association for Direct Selling and Network Marketing Salespeople, elected in autumn/1998)

Source	Age	Occupation	Experience in NM	Network marketing company	Estimate of active distributors in down line
1.	46	Entrepreneur: part-time NM salesperson; in addition sells insurances, housing	Since 1997	Since 1999: HomCareJeunique - jewellery & accessories, household cleaning products, personal care products	15
2.	44	Entrepreneur: part-time NM salesperson; in addition consultant in textile industry	Since 1994	Since 1995: Prendimi underwear, cosmetics	4000
3.	40	Entrepreneur: part-time NM salesperson, in addition catering	Since 1994	Since 1999: HomCareJeunique - jewellery & accessories, household cleaning products, personal care products	40
4.	50	Entrepreneur: part-time NM salesperson; in addition trainer in entrepreneurship	Since 1993	Since 1999: PartyLite - decorative candles & gifts	25
5.	48	Entrepreneur: full-time NM salesperson	Since 1993	Since 1993: GNLD - household cleaning products, personal care products	10 000
6.	54	Entrepreneur: part-time NM salesperson; in addition candy franchisee	Since 1994	Since 1997: EcoWay - household cleaning products	300
7.	53	Entrepreneur: part-time NM salesperson; in addition works in construction business	Since 1994	Since 1994: HerbalLife - nutritional products, personal care products	50
8.	56	Entrepreneur: part-time NM salesperson; in addition farmer		GNLD - household cleaning products, personal care products	

Appendix 2. Themes of the interviews

<p>Background</p> <p>1. Age 2. Gender 3. Occupation 4. Education 5. Principal NM company (in case you operate in more than one direct selling network, report the network within which you mainly operate) 6. When did you sign the contract with this particular NM company? 7. When did you sign your first contract with any NM company? 8. How many distributor contracts do you currently have?</p> <p>Motives and goals concerning network marketing</p> <p>9. How and why did you start with network marketing? 10. How and why did you choose your current principal company? 11. Have you got any goals as a distributor? 12. What kind of goals concerning network marketing do you have? 13. What would you do instead of NM, if that was not a choice?</p> <p>Content of network marketing</p> <p>13. What does network marketing mean in your case; how do you operate on a practical level within the sales network? Describe your network marketing activities during the past six months. 14. How do you look for/have found distributors in your network? 15. Where do you sell the company's products? 16. Where have you found your customers?</p> <p>Profile of a network marketing salesperson</p> <p>17. Describe the network of your principal company; what kind of people operate in it? 18. Are distributors in different organizations alike? 19. In what respect do you think they are alike/different? 20. How would you describe a typical GLND distributor? HerbalLife Distributor? Prendimi distributor? Jeauunique distributor? Any others? 21. Do you consider yourself as a typical network marketing distributor?</p>	<p>Views about success in network marketing</p> <p>22. What does success mean in network marketing? 23. Does chance play any role in succeeding in network marketing? 24. What kind of things do you think have an effect on success in network marketing? 25. In your opinion, what kinds of people succeed in network marketing? Mention three characteristics that you consider as most important prerequisites of success in network marketing. 26. Identify a successful network marketing distributor you know personally or by name? 27. Which are the worst obstacles in succeeding in network marketing? 28. What are your strengths in network marketing? 29. What are your weaknesses in network marketing? 30. What kind of experiences of success have you had in network marketing? 31. Why do people fail in network marketing? 32. What kind of disappointments or adversities have you had in network marketing?</p> <p>Satisfaction and commitment</p> <p>33. Are you a satisfied network marketing distributor? 34. With what you are satisfied/dissatisfied? 35. Are you a committed distributor? 36. What are you committed to? 37. What would you do, if your principal company should stop operating? 38. (If would change...) into which organization would you change in that case?</p> <p>Network marketing outcomes; sales volume, size of the network, commissions</p> <p>39. Estimate how many regular customers you have (customers with whom you regularly communicate). 40. Estimate your average sales volume. 41. How many distributors have you personally recruited to your network? 42. How many distributors do you have in your down line? 43. Estimate your average commissions resulting from the sales of your down line 44. How much time approximately do you spend in network marketing?</p>
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Appendix 3. Examples of OCB definitions and categorizations

Morrison (1994), adapting Organ (1988): OCBs are discretionary, as there are no contractual obligations to perform any actions within the organization, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, as the compensation is performance - not behaviour - based, and in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization.	Netemeyer et al. (1997) define OCBs in a personal selling context as 'discretionary behaviors on the part of the salesperson that directly promote the effective functioning of the organization, without necessarily influencing a salesperson's objective sales productivity.' Netemeyer et al. Adapt conceptualization and operationalizations of Organ's (1988), MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Fetter's (1993), and Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994).	Van Dyne et al. (1994): Organizational citizenship can be conceptualized as a global concept that includes all positive organizationally relevant behaviours of individual organization members (adapted from Graham 1991: 255).
Altruism: behaviours that help a specific other person	Altruism: discretionary behaviour that involves helping others within the organization with company tasks (e.g. helping new salespeople get oriented and sharing selling strategies)	Loyalty: identification with and allegiance to an organization's leaders and the organization as a whole, transcending the parochial interests of individuals, work groups and departments. Representative behaviours include defending the organization against threats, contributing to its good reputation, and co-operating with others to serve the interests of the whole.
Conscientiousness: behaviours that go 'well beyond the minimum requirement' in the areas of attendance, obeying rules, taking breaks, and so forth (Podsakoff et al. 1990: 115)	Conscientiousness: behaviours above and beyond the role requirements of the organization; working long days, being prompt in returning calls, not bending the company rules, and entertaining only when it is in the company's best interest	Obedience: acceptance of the necessity and desirability of rational rules and regulations governing organizational structure, job descriptions and personnel policies. Can be demonstrated by respect for rules and instructions, punctuality in attendance and task completion, and stewardship of organizational resources.
Involvement: one aspect of civic virtue (Organ 1988: behaviours reflecting responsible participation in, involvement with, and concern about the life of the employing organization), namely participation in organizational functions (Morrison 1994)	Civic virtue: behaviours in which a salesperson responsibly engages that show concern for the company and employee initiative in recommending how the firm can improve operations	Functional participation: behaviours of a dedicated individual contributor, whose commitment, self-development, and participation add value to the functioning of the organization. Performance of additional work activities, self-development, and volunteering for special assignments.
Keeping up: another aspect of civic virtue, keeping informed about organizational events and changes (Morrison 1994)		Social participation: forms of participation that are non-controversial and involve interaction with others, interpersonal and affiliative behaviours. Examples are attending at meetings, engaging in positive communications with others, and involvement in other affiliative group activities.

		Advocacy participation (voice behaviour; VanDyne and LePine 1998): behaviours targeted at other members of an organization and reflecting a willingness to be controversial, that are typical of an internal change agent., e.g. innovation, maintaining high standards, challenging others
Sportsmanship: see Organ's definition willingness to tolerate less than ideal circumstances without complaining.	Sportsmanship: willingness on the part of the salesperson to tolerate less than ideal circumstances without complaining...railing against real or imagined slights, and making federal cases out of small potatoes	
Courtesy: behaviours aimed at preventing work-related problems with others.		

Appendix 4. Networking behaviour measure

OCB CATEGORY/SOURCE/DEVELOPMENT OF ITEM	ITEM
Participation/Van Dyne et al. 1994/adjusted from: shares ideas for new projects or improvements widely	24. I share ideas and experiences with my down line
Participation/Van Dyne et al. 1994/adjusted from shares ideas for new projects or improvements widely	25. I share ideas and experiences with other LR distributors
Participation/Van Dyne et al. 1994/ /adjusted from: keeps informed about products and services and tells others	15. I keep informed about issues that affect the LR-distributor network, and inform about them to others
Participation/Van Dyne et al. 1994/ only attends work-related meetings if required by job C; Sportsmanship /Morrison 1994/ adjusted from: attending voluntary meetings	26. I participate in the trainings and meetings organized by LR or my up line
-/Van Dyne et al. (1994); new	27. I keep in touch with my up line
-/Van Dyne et al. (1994); new	7. I recruit new members into the LR organization
-/Van Dyne et al. (1994); new	28. I keep in touch with my down line
-/Van Dyne et al. (1994); new	29. I keep in touch with the personnel in the LR office
-/Van Dyne et al. (1994); new	4. I organize product presentations
-/Van Dyne et al. (1994); new	6. I keep in touch with my hostesses regularly
-/Van Dyne et al. (1994); new	5. I keep in touch with my customers regularly
-/Van Dyne et al. (1994); new	1. I use LR products regularly
Courtesy/Morrison 1994/ adjusted from: keeping up with changes	2. I gather product information related to LR products and keep it up -to date
Advocacy participation/ Van Dyne et al (1994); Voice/Van Dyne and LePine (1998)	16. I speak up about issues that affect the LR-distributor network (e.g. in trainings)
Advocacy participation/ Van Dyne et al (1994); Voice/VanDyne and LePine (1998)	14. I make recommendations to the LR company concerning issues that affect the distributor network
Advocacy participation/ Van Dyne et al (1994); Voice/VanDyne and LePine (1998)	17. I aim at contributing to issues concerning direct selling and network marketing among other DS and NM organizations
Advocacy participation/ Van Dyne et al (1994); Voice/VanDyne and LePine (1998)	30. I aim at contributing to the development of direct selling and networking activity e.g. through associations
Advocacy participation/ Van Dyne et al (1994); Voice/VanDyne and LePine (1998)	18. I keep in touch with direct selling and networking distributors in other DS or NM organizations
Morrison 1994/adjusted from: helping organize get-togethers	12. I organize trainings
Morrison 1994/adjusted from: helping organize get-togethers	13. I organize business opportunity meetings
Altruism/Morrison 1994/adjusted from: Helping orient new people; Helping, Van Dyne and LePine (1998)	8. I initiate new members in my down line into LR activities
Altruism/Morrison 1994/adjusted from: Helping orient new people; Helping, Van Dyne and LePine (1998)	11. I initiate other LR members into LR activities

OCB CATEGORY/SOURCE/DEVELOPMENT OF ITEM	ITEM
Altruism/Morrison 1994/adjusted from: Helping orient new people; Helping, Van Dyne and LePine (1998)	9. I initiate my down line into product selling
Altruism/Morrison 1994/adjusted from: Helping orient new people; Helping, Van Dyne and LePine (1998)	10. I initiate my down line into recruiting and sponsoring
Loyalty/Van Dyne et al. 1994/ adjusted from: represents org. favourably to outsiders	20. I recommend LR membership to other people besides acquaintances
Loyalty/Van Dyne et al. 1994/ adjusted from: represents org. favourably to outsiders	19. I recommend LR membership among acquaintances
Loyalty/Van Dyne et al. 1994/adjusted from: actively promotes organization's products and services	21. I recommend LR products to other people besides acquaintances
Loyalty/Van Dyne et al. 1994/adjusted from: actively promotes organization's products and services	3. I recommend LR products among acquaintances
Obedience/Van Dyne et al. 1994/adjusted from: follows work rules and instructions with extreme care	23. In my activities, I follow the model given by my sponsor (or up line)
Obedience/Van Dyne et al. 1994/ adjusted from: follows work rules and instructions with extreme care	22. I follow the distributor contract with extreme care

Appendix 5. Press writings by the publication/year of publication

	?	-93	-94	-95	-96	-97	-98	-99	-2000	-2001	Articles
Aamulehti	1				2						3
Aviisi			1								1
Eeva					1						1
Espoon Seurakuntasanomat							1				1
Fakta			1			1					2
Gloria					1						1
Helsingin Sanomat	1					1				1	3
Hufvudstadsbladet				1							1
Iltalehти				3					1		4
Ilta-Sanomat			2	3	1						6
Kauppalehti				2		1	1	1	1		6
Kauppalehti OPTIO					1	1		1			3
Kauppateknikko							1				1
Keski-Uusimaa				1							1
Kotiliesi							1				1
Kuluttaja					1						1
Luottolista						1					1
Mainosuutiset		1									1
Markkinoointi&Mainonta				1		2					3
Markkinoointi/myyntimiehet					1						1
MeNaiset				1							1
Pellervo							1				1
Talouselämä				1							1
Yrittäjä				1							1
YrittäjäNainen					1						1
?	2				1						3
	4	1	4	14	10	7	5	2	2	1	50

Appendix 6. Categorization of the interviewed people in press writings

Haastateltujen tai lainattujen asema/Categorization of interviewed or quoted people		
perustaja/founder	5	Pääyritysten edustajat/NM company representatives 22
omistaja/owner	2	
hallituksen jäsen/board member	1	
toimitusjohtaja/managing director	7	
vetäjä (aluejohtaja, verkostojohtaja tms.)/leader (regional manager, network leader)	7	
jälleenmyyjä/distributor (experience network marketer)	27+1	Jälleenmyyjät/salespeople 30
executive-tason jälleenmyyjä/executive distributor	2	
professori/university professor	6	Tutkijat, opettajat, opiskelijat/researchers, teachers, students 13
markkinoinnin lehtori/academic lecture of marketing	1	
tutkija/researcher	1	
pro-gradun tekijä/a student working on a Master's thesis	3	
asiaa tutkinut/researching the topic	2	
ekonomi, KTM/master of science, economics	7	Ekonomit, konsultit/business professionals 8
liikkeenjohdon konsultti/business consultant	1	
sijoitusekspertit/investment expert	1	Rahoitusalan asiantuntijat/financial experts 4
pankinjohtaja/bank director	1	
pörssikolumnisti/columnist on the stock exchange	2	
toimistoylipäällikkö, toimiston johtaja/head of office	3	Viranomaiset/Officials 6
ylitarkastaja/senior inspector	2	
talousrikosylikomisario/chief inspector (of white collar crime)	1	
asianajaja/attorney at law	2	Juristit, asianajajat/lawyers, attorneys at law 5
lakimies/lawyer	1	
juristi/lawyer	1	
varatuomari/Master of Laws, trained on the bench	1	
SSML:n puheenjohtaja/chairman of the Finnish Direct Marketing Association	10	Liittojen ja yhdistysten puheenjohtajat/chairmen of associations 16
muun liiton/yhdistyksen puheenjohtaja/Chairman of an association	6	
verkostomarkkinoija kouluttanut/trainer of NM salespeople	1	Alalla toimineet/involved in NM 13
entinen verkostomarkkinoija/former NM salesperson	1	
aiheesta luennoinut/lecturer on the topic	2	
alaa seuraava/industry observer	1	
mukana olevat/involved in NM	4	
tilaisuksiin osallistuneet/participants in presentations	2	
korukauppoja tekemässä/jewellery customers	1	

Haastateltujen tai lainattujen asema/Categorization of interviewed or quoted people		
Meriupseeri/naval officer	1	Muut/Others 3
Kansanedustaja/Member of Parliament	1	
Pääjohtaja/CEO	1	
		Yhteensä/Total 119

Appendix 7. Articles by date and publication, quoted people and headings

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
1.Mainosuutiset 15/93		90-luvun markkinointi rahastaa suihin ottamalla Lumivyöryjä 90-luvulla
2.FAKTA 8/94	omistaja	Verkostomarkkinoinnilla lähelle kuluttajaa Helposti myytävät tuotteet Nopeasti levijävä verkosto
3.Iltasanomat 1.9.1994	toimitusjohtaja	Saippuakauppias sai puolen miljoonan uhkasakon Golden Products ei saa värvätä uusia jälleenmyyjiä
4.Iltasanomat 2.9.1994	nimetön jälleenmyyjien edustaja	Golden Products uusi sopimukset jo vuosi sitten
5.Aviisi 30.11.1994	perustaja markkinoinnin lehtori	Shampooilla taivaaseen eli opiskelurahat bisneksellä? Provisio toisten työstä Tulonhankintaa vai harrastus? Markkinointi ja myynti menevät sekaisin Myyjillä on päällä amerikan meininki Jono kasvaa oven taakse
6.Markkinointi/Mainonta 1/1995	perustaja ja toimitusjohtaja toimitusjohtaja toimitusjohtaja verkostomarkkinoija toimitusjohtaja	Tuntemattomien yritysten miljardibisnes Kalliiiden jakelukanavien korvike Verkosto kasvaa kuin lumipallo Verkkoon 150 markalla Mukaan ilman omaa pääomaa Tehokas verkko syntyy parissa vuodessa 'Tällä elää ihan hyvin' Ketjukirjehuji pilasi maineen
7.Kauppalehti 3.3.1995	asianajaja	Cabouchon kasvaa huimasti verkostomarkkinoinnilla Kolmessa vuodessa yli 650 miljoonan liikevaihto Ei aivan halpoja Verkon rakentaminen ratkaisee kaiken Suomessa tulossa nimiriita 'Pohjoismaiden äkkirikastuneet naiset väittävät haluavansa vain aitoja koruja. Muualla maailmassa ihmiset käyttävät aitoja ja pukukoruja rinnakkain.'
8.Iltalehti 8.4.1995	toimitusjohtaja	Viidakkorumpu tehoa paremmin kuin mainos

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
Raili Nurvala	Nimettömät 'mukana olevat' lakimies	Kaupankäynti siirtyy verkostoihin Joidenkin yritysten myynti- ja esittelytilaisuudet muistuttavat erehdystävästi herätykokouksia Menneisyyden huono kaiku Laillista toimintaa Viritä hälytyskellot Yrittäjä joka junaan Rajoja jo koeteltu Herätykokouksen henkeä mukana 'Olemme päässeet pirun helpolla' Tiedot kulkevat viidakorumpuna ja verkosto levittäätyy kuin ameba ympäriinsä
Sama kuin edellä		Eettiset säännöt pitävät kaidalla tiellä Kohtuullisuutta kaikkialla Ei katteettomia lupauksia
Sama kuin edellä	itsenäinen konsultti	Cissen kotikutsuilla Shampanjan helmeilyä ja korujen kimallusta Mies myy naiselle Voi itku kun kauniita! Taas uusi jäsen verkkoon
Sama kuin edellä	itsenäinen konsultti	Marita Johanssonin uusi, iloinen elämä Liituraita vaihtui värien ja korujen hehkuun Suomeen tytäryhtö Ansiot vain myynnistä Työllistä itse itsesi Ei oikotietä onneen
Sama kuin edellä	yrittäjaprofessori	Yrittäjaprofessori siirtäisi sosiaali- ja terveyspalvelut verkostoihin 'Kymmenien miljardien säästöt mahdollisia' Hyöty jaetaan verkoston sisällä Mukaan muutamalla tonnilla Jokaisen voitava kontrolloida Säästöt jopa kymmeniä miljardeja
Sama kuin edellä	toimitusjohtaja	Suomalaiskeksintö maailmalle verkostoja pitkin 'Mahdollisimman nopeasti, mahdollisimman tehokkaasti' Nopea ja tehokas Kerro muille niin pärjääät Katso peiliin, jos ei ole rahaa

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
9.Hufvudstadsbladet 6.5.1995	återförsäljare	'Sälja via nätverk passar arbetslösä' Smycken går åt Kontroll
10.Iltalehti 30.5.1995	puheenjohtaja	Varojen hallinta siirtyy suomalaiselle yritykselle Marshall-verkostoyhtiön toiminta on lopetettu Kaksi yhtiötä samassa raamissa Hierarkinen järjestelmä Man-saaren lainsääädäntö Julkkiksiä mukana
Sama juttu	kansantaloustieteen professori	Kansantaloustieteilijä ei lähtisi mukaan 'Miksi kukaan haluaisi maksaa toisen bonuksia' Omituinen hierarkia 'Hallintokulut' huomattavia
Sama juttu	talousrikosylikomisario toimiston päällikkö	Talousrikostutkija tiukkana: 'Selvä ketjukirje ja sellaisena laiton'
11.Iltasanomat 2.6.1995	suomalaiskonsultti	Kotimyntikorista on tullut vilitys Hely Abbondati innostaa suomalaisia uudenlaiseen bisnekseen Kauppaan käydään kasvotusten Miljonääriksi verkostojen avulla?
12.Iltalehti 3.6.1995		1.5 miljardin markan imperiumin hetkessä luonut Petra Döring sen tietää 'Ihmiset haluavat koristautua' Leipurin tyttärestä huippuliikenaiseksi Odotukset ylittyneet joka puolella Täyttyvätkö markkinat?
13.MeNaiset (38) 15.9.1995		Itsensä työlistäjät Rohkeat ja itsenäiset Äitiyslomalta verkostomarkkinojaksi Verkosto ei synny itsestään, se on luotava
14.Keski-Uusimaa 26.10.1995	ekonomi toimitusjohtaja myyjä	Poikkeavissa erikoistuotteissa suoramyynnin taika Verkostomarkkinointi luo organisaatiota Jälleenmyynnistä osa- tai kokopäiväistä tuloa
15.Talouselämä (37) 17.11.1995 Merkki	ekonomi toimitusjohtaja vetäjä	'Famu ostaa – vaikka säälistää' Verkko käärii potin 'Kullattuja pukukoruja...saako olla?'

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
	toimitusjohtaja	Leon tytär aloitti 'Monivitamiinitabletteja...suosittelen.' Aurinkorannoille Insinööritoote verkossa 'Suomessa keksitty lämpömuunni...asennetaanko heti?' Riesana kojarit
16.Ilt-Sanomat 24.11.1995	Network Investment Oy:n esittelijä	Pentti Matikainen valmentaa nyt verkostomyyjiä ja myy osakkeita 'Aktiiviruheiilja ei ehdi mukaan'
Sama juttu		Mikä ihmeen NWI?
Sama juttu Mitä nyt?	hallituksen jäsen	Onko malli haettu Tupperware-kutsuista? 'Vaientamisesta ei ole kyse' Osake takaisin 490 markalla
Sama juttu		Verkosto halii 65 osallistujaa Kalastajatorpalle
17.Ilt-Sanomat 27.11.1995	sijoitusekspertit puheenjohtaja, liiketaloustieteen professori toimitusjohtaja pankinjohtaja, pörssikolumnisti pörssikolumnisti	Verkostomarkkinointi hämmentää asiantuntijoita 'Mihin varat menevät ja millä tuotolla?' 'Verkosto ei lisää sijoituksen arvoa' 'Verkosto voisi olla saippuakauppiaas' 'Suosittelen vain supiikkimiehille' 'Osingon pitäisi olla 10-15 prosenttia'
Sama juttu		Verkostoon värvätään suku ja tuttavat
18.Yrittäjä 6/95 markkinointi	professori	Verkostomarkkinointi: Avain markkinoiden kehittämiseen ja osaratkaisu työttömyysongelmanaan Kuluttajan aito valinta Markkinojan terve ahneus Verkostomarkkinoja kaupan kehittäjänä Jakelutie maksaa Vastaan 'kirpputoria' Vähentää vieraantumista Naiset hyvä pioneeriryhmä Verkostomarkkinoinnin eettisistä säännöistä mm:
19.23.1.1996		Rahoitustarkastus puuttui NWI:n markkinointiin
20.Kuluttaja 2/96	tilaisuuksiin osallistuneet Cabouchon ja Golden Productsin tilaisuuksissa	Ostaisitko korut ja pesuaineet verkostosta?

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
	mukana ollut KTM pro gradu – tutkielman tekijät toimitusjohtaja juristi, ylitarkastaja asiaa tutkinut	Verkostot kirjavia Amerikkalainen idea Lupaukset ja todellisuus Kaikki eivät ole huippumyyjiä Nuoria ja koulutettuja Missä kuluttajanäkökulma? Ihmissuhteista tulee kauppasuhteita Toimii ja ei toimi Toveri ei petä Saksassa tiukempi linja Ennakkotapaus tarpeen EU:lla ei vielä kantaa Kuluttajan palvelua vai rahastusta Jos ryhdyt verkostomarkkinoijaksi:
21.Gloria Helmikuu 1996 Lähikuva	Cabouchon-pukukorujen jälleenmyyjä	Kumma typpi – puhuu häpeilemättä rahasta ja menestyksestä. Pohjolan paras pukukorujen myyjä Raija Lydecken on ennekin tehnyt asioita eri tavalla. Senkin takia, että on ollut pakko. Nyt hän tietää osuneensa todelliseen kultasuoneen. Raha on hyvästä Tein niinkuin käskettiin Parempaa väkeä Takaisin kotiin Retki parvekkeelle Kovanaama lähtee kalaan
22.Aamulehti 4.3.1996 Talous	aluesijoittaja	Verkostotalous on tulossa ryminällä Markkinoinnista kitketään ketjukirjeluonne Verkostot korvaavat kauppapuodit Maailmalta Suomeen Cabouchon aloitti verkostomyynnin Network Investment mediaryöpytyksessä
23.YrittäjäNainen Yrittäjänaisten keskusliitto/jäsenlehti 3/96		Verkostomarkkinoinnin aika on nyt! Laiilinen suosittelubisnes Voimakasta kasvua odottavissa Maailmalla arvostettu toimintatapa Pienellä investoinilla alkuun Joka naisen bisnes: ei riskejä ja hyvät ansiot!
24.Aamulehti 6.5.1996	Cabouchonin yhtä Suomen suurinta myyntiverkkoa vetävä	Cabouchon pyrkii maineeseen verkostomarkkinoinnin koruna

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
		<p>Suomen toimintojen vetäjät toivovat lisää valvontaa liikeiden ulkopuolella tapahtuvaan markkinoointiin</p> <p>Myyjistä iso osa luopuu puolesta vuodessa</p> <p>Tarkempia säädöksiä kaivattaisiin</p> <p>Tutkimus suoraan markkinoivista</p>
25.Ilt-Sanomat 6.5.1996 Mitä nyt?	johtaja	<p>Puolittuuko työttömyys verkostomarkkinoinnilla?</p>
26.Markkinointi- Myyntimiehet 1996:8 s.18- 20	Ideapäivillä verkostomarkkinoinnista puhunut	<p>Verkostomarkkinointi: Myyntimiehen unelma, kaupan uhka?</p> <p>Vanha kunnon viidakorumpu!</p> <p>Kävelevä tietopankki</p> <p>Millainen tuote sopii?</p> <p>Päätyö vai lisäänsiomahdollisuus?</p> <p>Jotta tuote sopisi verkostomarkkinointiin, sille on asetettava seuraavat vaatimukset:</p>
27.Eeva 8 elokuu 1996	perustaja	<p>Petra Döring haaveili itsensä miljonääriksi</p> <p>Tekemällä oppii</p> <p>Leipurintärestä maailmannaiseksi</p> <p>Oma idea ja lainarahat</p> <p>Itsenäisyys ajoit yrittämään</p> <p>Uhrautumaton yksineläjä</p> <p>Nuorin kunnioitohitori</p> <p>Äiti ylpeä tyttärestään</p> <p>Unelma kasvaa</p>
28.Kauppalehti OPTIO (17) lokakuu 31. 1996 Markkinointi	meriupseeri korukauppoja tekemässä toimitusjohtaja professori verkostojohtaja	<p>Kaupanteko ei katso aikaa eikä paikkaa</p> <p>Verkosto on aina auki</p> <p>Ensin myydään sukulaisille, tuttaville, työtovereille ja siitä verkosto laajenee</p> <p>Maailmalla voimakkaassa kasvussa</p> <p>Pieni osuuus vähittäiskaupasta</p> <p>Hyvä alkuperä Prendimini</p> <p>Verkostomarkkinointiyhtiöitä Suomessa</p> <p>Suomalainen verkosto myy italialaisia sukkahousuja Ruotsissa ja Virossa</p>
Sama juttu		<p>Nuori Petra Döring keksi kultasuonen</p> <p>Leipurin tytär</p> <p>Vaihtuva mallisto</p>

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
		Edustava johtaja Kutsut kotona
29.Luottolista 1997:4 5-6	toimitusjohtaja verkostojohtaja itsenäinen verkostomyyjä	Tehokasta suoraa Tutunkauppa verkossa Bisnes Atlantin takaa Sukkahousuilla menestyksen makuun Uuden epäily hyväksytään Luontaistuotteita ympäri maata
30.Markkinointi&Mainonta 23/97 Markkinointi	Cabouchon korujen kansainvälinen jälleenmyyjä, Verkostomarkkinoiden Yrittäjäliitto ry:n VEMY:n puheenjohtaja Suomen aluejohtaja GNLD:n jälleenmyyjä puheenjohtaja presidentti Quorum International GmbH:n Ruotsin itsenäinen jälleenmyyjä Quorumin executive-tason edustaja yhtiön Pohjois-Euroopan varajohtaja toimitusjohtaja GNLD:n menestyvimpinä tiiminjohtajiin kuuluva	Verkostomarkkinointi ammattimaistuu Tuotemynnillä leipä, bonuksilla leikkeet Mitalin toinen puoli: hämärävejarit Verkostossa pyörii yli 300 miljoonaa markkaa Verkostomarkkinointia käsitlevää suomenkielistä kirjallisuutta:
31.Markkinointi&Mainonta 18/97 Myynti		Verkostomarkkinointi kasvaa rajusti USA:ssa Naisten bisnestä Halu menestyä tuo tulosta Pohjois-Amerikan 5 suurinta network- marketing yritystä 1996:
32.Fakta (2) helmikuu 1997	markkinointiekonomi jälleenmyyjä perustaja toimitusjohtaja	Verkostomarkkinoinnin kuuma buumi Marita Johanssonin come back Neljäskin sektori Rahaa ja työtä tutuille ja tuttujen tutuille Verkostomarkkinointi kutsuu Alan sanat: Hurmosta vai motivointia Sammakot sikiävät Laillista bisnestä Ei jakelukustannuksia Alkaako kauppa painostaa? Ystävä, paras mainosmedia

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
		Salaseuran eettiset säännöt Verkostopelin henki
sama juttu	Cabouchonin pukukorujen ja lahjatarvoinen itsenäinen jälleenmyyjä	Johtaminen vaatii osaamista Marita Johanssonin come back 'Naisten puuhastelu' Takuu ja palautusoikeus Yrittäjän kynnys matala 'Verot tulee maksaa' Uutterasti ilman riskiä
Sama juttu	verkostojohtaja kansanedustaja	20 miljoonalla sukkahousuja Tukkuostajaksi 100 markalla Jatkuva koulutus 'Vaimo ihastui'
33.Helsingin Sanomat 6.3.1997 Talous	toimistopäällikkö yhtiöiden palkkaama asianajaja	Rata vaatii markkinointikieltoa verkostomarkkinointiyhtiölle Markkinointitapaa epäillään laittomaksi ketjukirjeeksi Sijoitusyhtiöllä jatkuva osakeanti
34.Kauppalehti OPTIO 30.4.1997 LifeStyle	luennoija	Myykää toisilleen! 'Kotimyyni on tulevaisuuden ostotapa' 'haluatko miljardööraksi?' 'Suomi on oikotie Venäjälle?'
35.Kotiliesi (18) 19.9.1997	englantilaisen verkostomarkkinointirytyksen Cabouchonin itsenäinen jälleenmyyjä	Kotikutsuilla myydään tuttavankaupalla Pirkko Naukkarisen tuli verkostomarkkinoija, koska hän etsi vaihtelua elämäänsä 'Naiset hakevat kotikutsulta glamouria' Jos aiot jälleenmyyjäksi: Jos ostat verkostosta 'Kotikutsuilla saa imartelevaa palvelua'
sama juttu	toimitusjohtaja verkostomarkkinointia tutkiva KTM varatuomari	Verkostomyynti yleistyy Hurmoshenkeä Työlästä työtä Valituksen vaikeus
36.Kauppalehti 30.10.1997	äänilvaltaisia osakkeita oman yhtiönsä kautta hallitsevat Quorumin jälleenmyyjät	Quorum liivistää otettaan Suomen verkostomarkkinoista Appliedin tytär
37.Kauppateknikko 1998:1 s.11		Verkostomarkkinointi Sitoutuminen verkostomyyjäksi

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
		Ostajan oikeuksista Viranomaiset Työttömyysturva Eläkevakuutus Ja lopuksi
38.Pellervo 1/tammikuu 1998	toimitusjohtaja	Liity sinäkin Pellervo-Tiimin jäseneksi Verkostomarkkinointi lähellä osuustoimintaa Tule mukaan esittelyyn
39.Kauppalehti 24.6.1998	suomalainen verkostomarkkinoinnin asiantuntija Cabouchonin entinen itsenäinen jälleenmyyjä Zepterin itsenäinen jälleenmyyjä kokenuut verkostomarkkinoja	Cabouchonin verkosto hajosi tuhansiksi paloiksi Verkostomarkkinoinnin tähtiyritys nurin, jälleenmyyjät uusjakoon 'Mitäään näin rajua ei ole tapahtunut' Zepter aikoo levittää Cabouchonin tilalle Uusi Cabouchon yrittää ylöspäin
40.Espoon seurakuntasanomat ESSE 15.10.1998 nro 37		Verkostomarkkinointi uhkaa ystävyysuhdeita Rahaa ja onnea monistamassa Kasvun rajat ja tyhmän loppu Rahat pois hõlmöiltä – ystäviltä? Uni onnellisesta elämästä Pennejä taivaasta Onnettaren lahja Resepti Ai niin, Tuote! Ystävä ja kylänmiehet Rahan virta Hyvä hyvä, kaikki hyvin
sama juttu		Tositarina: Mitä on verkostomarkkinointi? Mitä on elämänlaatu?
41.Kauppalehti 20.5.1999 Markkinointi	pukukoruja, kosmetiikkaa ja tyhjiöpakkausastioita Suomessa myyvän Zepter-verkoston jälleenmyyjä Helsingin yliopiston kuluttajaekonomian laitoksella tarkastetun pro gradu -tutkielman tekijä toimitusjohtaja	Verkostomyynnissä uusi aalto Hauskaa harrastamista Ammattimaisuus vahvistuu Ala jälleen kasvussa Tulevaisuudessa mahdollisuuksia Direktiivejä valmistellaan Mikä ihmeen Zepter?

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
42.Kauppalehti OPTIO 23.9.99 OPTIO SPECIAL	liikkeenjohdon konsultti, ekonomi, Suomen suoramarkkinointiliiton hallituksen jäsen verkostomarkkinoinnissa itsekin mukana olleet kauppatieteillijät yrityjäyysprofessori pääjohtaja	Verkossa Verkostomarkkinoinnin uudet muodot mullistavat kaupankäynnin Vielä 15 vuotta sitten verkostomarkkinointiyritykset myivät lähinnä pesuaineita Amway tuli Suomeen kesällä Verkostomarkkointi on suoramyyntiä Verkostomarkkointi eksittiin jo 1940-luvulla Myyntitapa jakaa mielipiteitä Verkostomarkkointi on auttamisbisnestä Verkoston voi myös antaa perinnöksi Mikä tuotteissa maksaa SOK:n pääjohtaja Jere Lahti: Kyllä perinteinen kauppa tässä kilvassa pärjää Kaupassakäynnistä tehdään elämys
43.Iltalehti 6.6.2000	vuonna 1995 verkostomarkkinoinnin aloittanut verkostomarkkinoijia muutama vuosi sitten kouluttanut	'Liiketoiminta kuoli ahneuteen' Verkostomarkkinoinnin huuma laantuu Suomessa Insinöörin tulotaso 'Ahneus tappoi toiminnan'
sama juttu	alaa seuraava ekonomi	Uusia yrityksiä rantautuu Suomeen
sama juttu	verkostomarkkinointyrittäjä	'Nyt mennään oikeaan suuntaan'
44.Kauppalehti EXTRA 31.10.2000 MARKKINOINTI	tutkija suoramyyjä	Jäalleenmyyjän rooli kehittyneet verkostomarkkinoinnissa Ketkä menestyvät? Verkostomarkkinoinnin suurin haaste Kilpailua vai kumpanuutta? Viidakorumpu voi muuttua rikkinäiseksi puhelimeksi Harrastuksesta voi tulla elämäntapa Tarvitaan sitoutumista ja itsekuria Ihmisten kannustaminen kantaa hedelmää
45.Helsingin Sanomat 17.4.2001		Pyramiden alapää kantaa aina tappioit verkostomarkkinoinnissa
46.Kauppalehti 6/1995?	yrityksen perustaja	Cabouchonille tytäryhtiö Pohjoismaihin
47.Uutistausta	hallituksen puheenjohtaja	Kauppatie lyhenee hovikelpoisesti Palkkio neljän tason myynnistä

Articles	Quoted people	Headings
		Parhaista rikkaita Mikroyrityksille tilaus
48. Helsingin Sanomat		Herbalife-laihdutusvalmiste ei pidä, mitä lupaa Herbalife ei ole maineensa mukainen Kyseenalainen asiantuntemus Katteettomia väitteitä Kuitupuriste on lähes kuiduton Usko voi auttaa – hetkellisesti Järkevä ruoka pähittää ihmeaineet
49.	suomalaisyntyinen, Englannissa asuva Cabouchoniin kome vuotta sitten liittynyt	Pienestä bisneksesta tulikin suuri Korujen kotimynti kannattaa Suomessakin Iama helpotti pukukorujen myyntiä
50. Aamulehti 25.11.	ylitarkastaja	Verkostosijoitusyhtiö heräättää ihmetystä Osakkaista voi tulla myös myyjiä 'Periaatteet on kerrottava tarkasti'

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