

# MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT: A RESYNTHESIS OF KNOWLEDGE

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## ABSTRACT

A close reading of the literature reveals four critical gaps in the understanding of the relationship between marketing and development. Researchers have largely ignored the ways in which marketing catalyzes development, affects the socio-political environment in which it is embedded, acts as an agent of acculturation, and evolves within the context of a world system. An emerging cautionary view that questions the wisdom of unilaterally supplanting indigenous practices with modern marketing practices requires that these gaps be bridged. Toward this end, this paper reviews conceptions of development, explores the critical knowledge gaps and provides a more comprehensive framework for assessing the relationship between marketing and development. By demonstrating how little is actually known about this relationship, and providing direction for research into frontier issues, the paper attempts to advance theoretical understanding of the relationship.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Science as a form of knowledge gained ascendancy with the realization that people were capable of understanding and influencing natural phenomena. In the

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nineteenth century, the social sciences emerged for the purpose of understanding and influencing social phenomena. A major objective of the social sciences was to improve society. The basic idea was that of "progress" (Preston 1982), which later came to be called "development" (Wallerstein 1979, 1984). This "scientific" worldview, shaped and reinforced by a particular socioeconomic ethos, has affected most societies on the planet, with variable results.

In a fundamental sense, therefore, development is *the* project of social sciences. The study of development is fundamental in another sense: it often calls into question the basic paradigmatic structure of social science disciplines. In recent years, for example, the evolution of indigenous, non-Western models of development has prompted a reexamination of our social scientific assumptions and normative orientations (Wiarda 1985).

All aspects of social sciences, pure and applied, have been concerned with development. Marketing is no exception. A significant body of literature concerning marketing and development has come into being. Following a brief review of this literature, we identify some crucial gaps in our understanding of marketing and development. Then we review the emerging conceptions of development and explore how these help in filling the gaps in the knowledge about marketing and development.

#### A. A Brief Review

Work on marketing and development was spurred by the overall interest in economic development in the 1950s. Pioneering articles on marketing and economic development appeared in the 1950s (Bauer 1954; Drucker 1958; Fisher 1954; Galbraith & Holton 1955; Holton 1953). The thrust of these articles was to show that efficiencies achieved in marketing institutions (tertiary sector) could enhance overall economic efficiency and induce growth. Drucker (1958 p. 256) crystallized these ideas by making a strong case for marketing as a catalytic agent in the economic development process: "Marketing can convert latent demand into effective demand. It cannot, by itself, create purchasing power. But it can uncover and channel all purchasing power that exists. It can, therefore, create rapidly the conditions for much higher level of economic activity than existed before. . . ."

Research on marketing and development continued through the 1960s and 1970s, although with somewhat lower intensity than in the 1950s (Moyer 1965; Moyer & Hollander 1968). Notable were the contributions of Slater (1965, 1968, 1970), who pioneered the modeling of the overall marketing system in a developing country (see Nason & White 1981 for assessment of Slater's work). There were also case studies of marketing institutions and processes in specific countries (Bennett 1966; Hamid 1960; Holton 1953; Schooler 1965; Westfall & Boyd 1960; Wind 1967), comparative studies of distribution systems (Arndt 1972; Bartels 1963; Cox 1965; Cundiff 1965; Douglas 1971; Shapiro 1965;

Wadinambiaratchi 1965), and examinations of particular marketing processes in particular countries (Dahringer 1978; Goldman 1974).

In the 1980s, there has been a resurgence of interest in marketing and development (Cundiff 1982; Dholakia & Dholakia 1984; Duhaime, McTavish, & Ross 1985; El-Sherbini 1983; Hill & Still 1984; Kaynak 1982; Kaynak & Savitt 1984; Kindra 1984; Layton 1985; Mentzer & Samli 1981; Sethi & Etemad 1983; Thorelli & Sentell 1982; Vardarajan 1984; Yavas & Kaynak 1980). While the earlier streams of work have continued in the 1980s, there are some significant changes. The "catalytic" view of marketing has been restated in a more elaborate form (Cundiff 1982; Cundiff & Hilger 1982; Etemad 1984). A "cautionary" view has emerged which points out that modern marketing sometimes makes things worse by supplanting highly adapted indigenous practices (Anderson 1984; Dholakia & Dholakia 1984; Simon-Miller 1984). At the other extreme, the forceful but controversial advocacy of "global" marketing strategies has challenged the very need for cultural adaptation of marketing to developing countries (Levitt 1983).

This intellectual ferment represents an opportunity to advance the theoretical understanding of marketing and development to a new level. This paper is an attempt at such an advance. It is not a review of marketing and development. It is, rather, an attempt to close certain gaps in understanding and to synthesize the knowledge of marketing and development at a higher level.

#### B. Gaps in Understanding

While considerable research has been done on marketing and development, some important gaps in knowledge remain. These gaps have to be closed if marketing is to become an effective instrument of development. Four gaps will recur in the discussion undertaken in this paper.

First, the view that marketing is a catalytic agent in economic development has not been developed beyond the level of positing some simplistic notions of economic psychology. The typical causal chain, with marketing as the stimulatory or catalytic agent, is shown in Figure 1. While such "growth spirals" with marketing as the catalyst do occur, they do not occur universally or automatically. It is not known what conditions trigger the catalytic role of marketing. The issue of how a "developmental ethos"—which stimulates both marketing and production—comes into being in certain countries in particular periods is not fully understood. This gap in knowledge, since it pertains to the catalytic role of marketing, will be termed the "catalytic gap."

While the relationship between marketing and economic development has been explored to some degree, that between marketing and social-political development has not. Marketing affects social and political development, and is in turn affected by these. This is reflected, for example, in the social criticism of marketing in developing countries (e.g., censuring of Nestlé for its infant for-



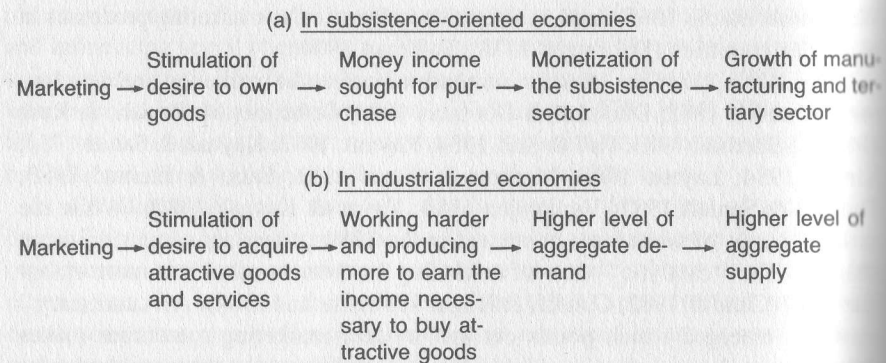


Figure 1. Views of marketing as a catalyst for economic development.

Sources: Authors' conceptualizations based on (a) Moyer and Mascarenhas (1979) and Thorelli and Senell (1982); (b) Hirschman (1958) and Etemad (1984).

mula marketing practices) and in the political control of marketing [e.g., sumptuary legislation restricting sale of alcohol, tobacco, and the like; see Hollander (1984)]. The economic impact of marketing is often thoroughly enmeshed with sociopolitical factors. Ignoring these sociopolitical factors completely distorts the relationship between marketing and development. Yet, little research exists on the sociopolitical impact of marketing. Not only does marketing have extensive sociopolitical impact, marketing itself is becoming an important political activity. Apart from the obvious use of marketing in election campaigns, marketing concepts are being utilized in lobbying, advocacy, opinion formation, and international negotiations (Kotler 1986). Developing countries are frequent targets of such political forms of marketing. Recently, such concepts as "megamarketing" (Kotler 1986) and "cultural propriety" (Sherry 1987a), which capture some of the profound political implications of marketing activities on a social level, have been elaborated. Very little is known about the use and effects of such forms of marketing. These factors create the "sociopolitical gap" in our knowledge about marketing and development.

A third gap arises from the fact that while *cultural adaptation* of marketing practices in developing countries is given a lot of attention, marketing itself is rarely analyzed as a *cultural process* (for an exception see Sherry 1987b). But marketing does play a crucial acculturating role in the process of development. In fact, Levitt's (1983) forceful advocacy of a global marketing strategy may be interpreted as an explicit championing of marketing as a global acculturating agent: a Coke is a Coke and will create its own culture wherever it is marketed. Ohmae (1985) argues that the global marketing and consumption culture is not truly "global" but limited to the affluent "triad" of North America, Europe, and Japan, while Sherry (1987) examines some of the dysfunctional consequences of exporting such culture indiscriminately. There is very little understanding of this

cultural phenomenon, leading to an "acculturation gap" in the knowledge about marketing and development.

The fourth and final gap in knowledge arises from the lack of understanding about how marketing affects, and is affected by, relations among nations. Marketing processes and development processes do not stop at a nation's borders. Marketing institutions and processes are crucial to the transmission of economic value from one nation to another. In the terminology of Porter (1985), marketing arrangements link the cross-national "value chains" of various manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors in global markets. Marketing prowess largely determines the size of the total margin spread between the ultimate consumer and the primary producer. The control of marketing institutions and symbols determines how this "value" will be split among marketing channel members. From medieval imperialism to modern-day export-led growth, examples abound of how some nations have accumulated wealth through their marketing linkages with other nations. Because such international linkages are rarely factored into studies of marketing and development, an important set of influences shaping marketing in developing countries is neglected (Dholakia, Dholakia, & Pandya 1986). This is the "linkage gap" in the literature on marketing and development.

These four gaps—what is known and what is not—are summarized in Table 1. The resynthesis of the knowledge on marketing and development in this paper strives to close these gaps by drawing from the diverse literatures on development and marketing. This conceptual synthesis, of course, is but a step in the ongoing project of the social sciences—to understand and to promote development. Discerning the shape, or shapes, such development might assume is the critical task of this ongoing project. The formulation and promotion of a nonethnocentric theory of development, which recognizes the contributions of indigenous models and the particularity of local needs, are major challenges to the marketing imagination.

## II. CONCEPTS OF DEVELOPMENT

### A. Issues and Oversights

The embeddedness of economy in sociocultural reality is often perfunctorily acknowledged in our study of marketplace behavior, but is seldom accorded the thorough examination it deserves. Such ritualistic recognition, and subsequent neglect or inaccurate lumping of macroenvironmental dimensions of marketing into the category of "externality," has profound implications for the theory and practice of economic development. The development planning process is rarely as rational and purposive as visualized by theorists or practitioners (Salisbury 1983). Critics argue that development economics has several fundamental flawed assumptions in its conceptual foundation (Nugent & Yatopoulos 1979), and that it provides a very weak basis for social analysis. The problem stems from a con-

Table 1. Gaps in Knowledge About Marketing and Development

<i>The Gap</i>	<i>What Is Known</i>	<i>What Is Unknown: Description of the Gap</i>
Catalytic Gap	Under certain conditions, marketing catalyzes economic growth processes	What those conditions are, i.e., what gives rise to an overall "developmental ethos"? What is the role of marketing: catalytic, contributory, or counterproductive?
Sociopolitical Gap	Marketing affects and is affected by social and political factors	The nature of these effects
Acculturation Gap	Marketing practices often have to be adapted to the culture of a country	Marketing itself is an important acculturating agent—not much is known about this role of marketing
Linkage Gap	International marketing flows are influenced by political, economic, and social links among nations; also, marketing linkages act as transmission belts of economic value across national boundaries	What these influences are, specifically, and how a developing country gets affected by its marketing linkages to the rest of the world

founding of normative and positive analysis in which sound theories and evaluative criteria of choice behavior are wedded to impoverished insights about how people actually behave and choose collective allocations of so-called public goods (Bates 1983).

Numerous unanticipated consequences arise from this confounding, and often result in the replacement of one kind of human misery by another (Russell 1985). The ineffective use of local knowledge and the failure to consider the wider relevance of every aspect of a social system (Salisbury 1983) hampers development efforts, and may actually prompt well-intentioned efforts to backfire. Russell (1985) provides a telling, though far from exhaustive, inventory of counterproductive results, which includes the following:

- Monopolization of land holdings
- Forced urban migration
- Environmental degradation
- Unemployment
- Erosion of self-determination and inhibition of work ethic
- Creation and maintenance of an ethnocentric elite

- Encouragement of unrealistic economic aspirations
- Social disintegration
- Disruption of horizontal ties within developing nations

Clearly, a reevaluation of development efforts is warranted. The possibility of creating a development package commensurate with cultural readiness and local productivity, with absorbent capacity and indigenous "will"—quite literally the ability of locals to manage strategically the adoption of new ideologies and technologies toward socially constructive ends—must be considered (Russell 1985). An alliance of marketers, behavioral scientists, consumers, and public policy-makers will be required for a productive rethinking of development.

### B. Conceptualizing Development

A tension exists between development as a technical notion involving the mere accretion of cultural or material artifacts and development as the embodiment of a political-ethical orientation arising from a post-Renaissance European interpretation of the phenomenon of "progress" (Preston 1982). Questions such as "What is a proper politico-ethical stance?" (Preston 1982) or "Who decides what benefits are socially desirable, and how is that decision reached?" (Salisbury 1983) are infrequently raised and even more rarely resolved. Yet these questions have profound implications for business firms and nations in an era of globalized markets.

In a masterful explication of world system dynamics in historical, cross-cultural perspective, Wolf (1982) has shown how trade has rendered all conceptions of culture save that as process obsolete. In this processual view, culture is both creative and interpretive, casting and recasting its constituent elements continually as it interacts adaptively with other cultures (Sherry 1986). Trade is one of the earliest and most pervasive forms of intercultural communication and a primary stimulus to change. Marketplace behavior has rendered the boundaries of diverse cultures selectively permeable. Social alignments must be viewed in light of their multiple external connections. The idea systems of which culture is composed contain ideologies. These ideologies structure our perceptions of social systems as grounded in the essence of the universe, so that our *cultural* perceptions become *natural* perceptions. Thus, we view market capitalism and the value orientations underlying it as "normal," and view other socioeconomic systems as deficient, wrongheaded, or otherwise aberrant (Sherry 1987a). In our Euro-American business cultural tradition, the shift from merely using goods as markers to create intelligibility and make stable the categories of culture (Douglas & Isherwood 1979), to the shaping of epistemology and praxis by commodity fetishism (Taussig 1980) has occurred virtually outside of our conscious awareness. The instrumental use of goods as a means of assisting thought is overshadowed by the elevation of goods to ends in themselves: goods become



terminal when the very ways in which we categorize and evaluate become commodified. Consequently, we cling tenaciously to a commodity-based conception of development created in a particular cultural context, and attempt to implement that conception in cultures for which it may not only be inappropriate, but also ultimately dysfunctional.

Three competing conceptions of development are afoot in the world today. The *positivist* approach equates development with growth. Development is viewed as a technical procedure executed by experts, and progress is judged in terms of economic growth. Authoritative intervention is a guiding principle of positivist orthodoxy; economic growth is promoted from the outside through the vehicles of planning and aid (Preston 1982). This approach has been labeled variously "internationalist-modernist," "liberal-diffusionist," and "conventional" (Anderson 1984). The most visible contemporary marketing proponent of the positivist approach is Levitt (1983). In the context of the role of marketing in development, the approach of Drucker (1958), as recently elaborated in the works of Cundiff (1982) and Etemad (1984), exemplifies the positivist approach.

The *radical* approach equates development with ordered social reform, and progress with the securing of reasonable, rational programs of social reform. Radical and critical thinkers such as Frank (1984), Furtado (1964), and Myrdal (1970) have proposed a sociologized economics to mediate between world welfarism (benign, authoritative management in the interest of common good) on the one hand, and dependency (structural inferiority imposed upon the Third World) on the other. The radical approach has been fueled by neoinstitutional social theory, the critique of monetarist modes of explanation, and underdevelopment theory (Preston 1982). This approach has also been labeled "dependency," "world-system," and "power dynamic" (Anderson 1984). It has stressed the sociocultural context of local economies embedded in a world capitalist system, and has maintained that underdevelopment and dependence have arisen as a consequence of the expansion of Western capitalism. Galtung's theory of structural imperialism (Galtung 1971), applied to advertising (Anderson 1984), views marketing as part of a larger development package that fosters dependency.

The *neo-Marxist* approach equates development with the humane allocation of economic surplus. Progress is envisioned as revolutionary change oriented toward the extension of people's democracy. Neo-Marxists view social planning for economic and social rationality as way for the underdeveloped periphery to disengage from the developed core (Amin 1979). The neo-Marxist stream of development studies, developed by scholars such as Baran (1973) and Palma (1978), represents a counterpoint to the Marxist discourse championed by activists; contention between doctrines developed in the "jungle" by revolutionary activists and in the "study" by theorists is severe. Neo-Marxists subject the world capitalist system to a moral critique and maintain that a genuinely autonomous indigenous development must be fostered (Amin 1979; Preston 1982).

Frank (1984) has posited a crisis in the world economic system such that expansion as previously experienced cannot continue. He predicts that a vast, thoroughgoing change will transform the current system, and that so-called developing nations will be faced with two alternate responses. These nations may opt for further integration into the world-system, accepting the positivist view of development by adapting to the changing worldwide division of labor through export promotion. Such newly industrialized countries (NICs) as South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brazil, and Mexico are cited as exemplars of integration. Conversely, nations may pursue a policy of delinking from the world system through national liberation movements and the promotion of self-reliance and socialism. Exemplars of this "rejection" approach include the USSR, Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe. Each of these sociopolitical changes is fraught with difficulty, from Frank's perspective. The former case is not generalizable within the dependency context, since development is constrained by the inability of most nations to imitate the core nations. The latter case requires a revolutionary process, an internal transfer of power, popular participation, technological autonomy and greater external independence to occur if success is to ensue. Moreover, the practical exigencies of development often force nations to bend their avowed ideological goals. In the 1980s, for example, Brazil has been selectively delinking from the world while China has been selectively integrating.

### C. Integrating Conceptions of Development

Assuming that marketing is one of the mechanisms contributing to the differentiation of core from periphery regions in the capitalist world system, it is at once the most potent agent of cultural change and cultural stability at work in the contemporary world (Sherry 1987b). Marketing *reflects* the norms and values of the society in which it is embedded. Because individual consumer behaviors are so highly patterned and repetitive—the existence of segments testifies to this patterning—and because such institutions as advertising continually validate the legitimacy of the philosophy upon which marketing behaviors are predicated, a reinforcing effect occurs. Our social life is integrated, perpetuated, and ultimately validated in part through participation in marketing activities. Conversely, since modern marketing is largely a technology of influence, or a directed intervention strategy, which invests goods with meaning and which attempts to change many of the consumer's patterned behaviors, it can be said to shape the norms and values of the society in which it is embedded (or with which it comes in contact). Certainly marketing practices may accelerate change already emerging in social behavior. The very vocabulary of development itself affirms a bias toward culture change in the direction of a presumably stable hyperindustrial ideal type.

Critics of development as currently practiced view the process as being fueled

by technological ethnocentrism, and have called attention to the value-laden metaphorical language used by development agents—a language which depicts their activity as therapeutic and curative (Bodley 1982). It has been argued further that development practices accelerate the evolution of high-energy cultures whose industrial adaptation is ecologically unstable at the expense of low-energy cultures whose preindustrial adaptation has proven stable for half a million years (Bodley 1982, 1985). Overconsumption, both the defining feature and ultimate threat to industrial culture, is driven in large part by our contemporary marketing philosophies and practices. Just as demarketing and social marketing were conceived in part as corrective measures to domestic marketing excesses, so also are “dedevelopment” and “demodernization” being urged in some quarters (Bodley 1985). “Paraprimitive” solutions combining optimal features of industrial and preindustrial cultures are being advocated in others (Taylor 1972). “Pervasive social transformation” involving a wholesale overhauling of the world system has also been prescribed (Heilbroner 1963).

Clearly, a proposal for humane, equitable, and adaptive development that mediates between utopian and apocalyptic visions of the future is required. If such a proposal is to emerge, a thoughtful engagement of sociological and marketing imaginations must be catalyzed. This engagement must liberate terms like “social” and “cultural” from the residual categories of the economists and treat the sociocultural not as a separate or causally secondary sphere to economics but as “the realm of those crucial institutions in which the ideas we live by are produced and through which they are communicated—and penetrate even the economy” (Worsley 1984, p. 60). Whether to create more “wealth,” to distribute present “wealth” more equitably, or to empower actors to produce, distribute, and consume “wealth” in a culturally appropriate fashion is at issue. At issue as well is the patron–client relationship: if “development” is a product, by whom and for whom should it be designed, implemented, and evaluated?

The challenge to the marketing imagination is awesome. Even as the globalization gospel is mobilizing managers, a widespread rejection of the Western model of development and the “parochial and ethnocentric” philosophical and intellectual traditions underlying it is occurring. The critique (Wiarda 1985) assumes the following shape. The Western model is biased, it assumes a sequencing of stages not replicable around the globe, it was forged in an international context which has been irrevocably altered, it has ignored the tremendous adaptive and catalytic potential of traditional institutions, it has distorted *everyone's* perception of Third World societies, and it has produced numerous negative consequences. Coincident with this rejection of the Western model is the worldwide assertion of indigenous models of development: integral pluralism in India, Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East, tribalism in Africa, organicism and corporatism in Latin America, and Marxist Confucianism in China. While these native forms are currently imperfectly elaborated, they represent attempts to

shape culturally appropriate development policy (Wiarda 1985). Significantly, they remind marketers of the need for a nonethnocentric theory of development, and make it quite clear that marketers must learn to work with a variety of conceptions of “progress” in the international domain.

### III. MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT: CLOSING SOME GAPS

Neither the process of development nor the state called “developed” can be easily captured by simple conceptual frameworks. Yet, there are persistent temptations to simplify matters. Emphasizing the economic and treating the sociocultural as secondary; defining “developed” in terms of hyperindustrial socioeconomic structures; damning the ideologically distasteful (from whichever perspective) version of social organization and change; and other simplifying techniques are constantly used. The failure to understand or effect development is so vexatious for social scientists and policymakers that they prefer to get rid of the problem by pigeonholing developmental issues in concise but wholly inadequate frameworks. Marketing has not escaped this tendency. With very few exceptions, marketing studies equate development with growth and identify marketing as the catalytic agent for growth.

This is unfortunate. Marketing is one discipline that is superbly adaptive, integrative, and pragmatic when it comes to the study of social phenomena. Scholarship in marketing does not hesitate to cross disciplinary boundaries and confront the complexity of social phenomena head-on. This is the case, for example, in the multidisciplinary and integrative conceptualizations of consumer behavior which marketing theorists have developed (e.g., Howard & Sheth 1969). But this is not the case in the literature on marketing and development. The monocentric “catalytic view” prevails, and even this view has gaps as we indicated in Table 1.

In this section, we want to explore the relationships between marketing and development in greater depth, starting with the catalytic view and then exploring marketing as a social change technology, as a cultural process, and as an international mechanism for transfers of economic value. These topics are selected because each has profound implications for how marketing techniques should or should not be used for developmental purposes.

#### A. Marketing As a Catalytic Agent

For marketing to be a catalytic agent for economic growth, a number of psychological, sociocultural, and politico-economic conditions must be met. The causal chains depicted in Figure 1 *may* be activated if the following assumptions can be made:



1. People universally covet a certain set of consumption items.
2. People will engage in productive and trading activities (and not stealing, corruption, etc.) to acquire the resources to obtain the coveted goods.
3. Economic opportunities will expand commensurately to provide job opportunities for everyone seeking productive, income-generating activities.
4. The coveting-producing-acquiring cycle will diffuse in ever-widening circles, starting from the urban middle class and diffusing to the rural periphery.

All these assumptions are highly problematic. This is not to say that marketing- and consumption-driven economic growth processes never occur. But these processes are not as universal or as automatic as the early proponents of marketing-driven growth assumed (e.g., Drucker 1958). In a recent and more careful analysis of the catalytic view, Etemad (1984) makes several important points about the catalytic role of marketing:

1. The set of products which will spur economic growth varies from country to country. Etemad calls these "positively charged goods and services."
2. This positively charged set includes industrial products and processes as well as consumer goods and services.
3. Different segments of the population may respond differently to the positively charged set of products. At one extreme, the highly upwardly-mobile segment, with a strong achievement motivation and potential, will respond promptly to the incentives inherent in the positively charged product set. At the other extreme, a segment of the population may have little desire for achieving higher standards and may prefer *status quo*.
4. The "marketing as catalyst" model works by linking the upwardly mobile segments with the positively charged products. This may, however, result in a further skewing of the distribution of income and social status.
5. The distributional and equity issues raised by such marketing-driven growth are difficult to resolve and call for political and philosophical judgments on the part of development planning and coordinating agencies.

On the whole, Etemad is quite optimistic about the applicability of the "marketing as catalyst" model. We find that this model, despite Etemad's careful elaboration and optimism, continues to pose many problems. First, it is just as likely that a marketing- and consumption-driven society will deteriorate as it is likely to ameliorate. Examples of this abound: the conservative backlash in Iran following the overthrow of the Shah's westernizing regime, the eroding public and business confidence under the Marcos rule in the Philippines, the menacing growth

of drug-trafficking economies in many parts of Latin America, the pervasive corruption and crime attributable to galloping consumption aspirations in many Third World countries. Second, savings seem to play as crucial a role in economic growth as consumption. Most of the rapidly growing developing countries are avid savers. Third, unrestrained consumption can lead to a catastrophic depleting of certain natural resources (Schnaiberg 1980). Fourth, consumption-induced prosperity has its seamy underside, as the following characterization of Japan shows (Jun 1980, p. 59):

In spite of a relatively low level of welfare, middle class consciousness is prevalent among Japanese. One of the reasons for this may be the inundation of consumer durable goods. . . . [O]ne out of two Japanese is not satisfied with basic needs such as housing and food, is in possession of many consumer goods but is irritated by traffic congestion, and is obliged every year to buy new products whose design is little different from last year's model.

Our critique of the marketing's catalytic role, however, is at a more fundamental level than the problematic issues raised above. The catalytic process in a society—the process that focuses all national energies on the task of development—is not unleashed by marketing. The emergence of a "development ethos" in a society is a complex phenomenon, sometimes triggered by cataclysmic events like revolutions and wars (Olson 1982). While the reasons for this are not yet well understood, it is a fact that at certain historical junctures there emerges a pervasive economic psychology which leads the population of a country to believe that tomorrow will be vastly better than yesterday (Gerschenkron 1962). This society-wide attitudinal change is the key to the unleashing of development forces. Marketing processes are but one manifestation, and rarely the cause, of such psychology of confidence. Yet marketing shapes as well as reflects this ethos over time. What are needed, then, are macrocultural studies of marketing as a mirror of the developmental ethos. In the marketing behavior of a populace we will sometimes find an accurate reflection of the economic and social dynamism of the nation. At other times orgiastic marketplace behavior may simply be a distorted reflection of a fractured and declining society. Clearly, assigning a catalytic role to marketing in such situations is unwarranted and dangerous.

## B. Marketing As a Social Change Technology

Research in social marketing strategies has opened up another avenue for marketing to contribute to the process of development (Kotler & Zaltman 1971; Seth & Wright 1974). Development is not just an economic phenomenon. Improvements in social conditions—health, hygiene, nutrition, education, sanitation, family life, etc.—also constitute development. Social marketing techniques appear to be ideally suited to bring about amelioration of social conditions in developing countries (Duhaime, McTavish, & Ross 1985; Martin 1968). The ap-

peal of social marketing techniques is especially great in those impoverished societies where the prospects for immediate economic takeoff are dim. In such cases it is hoped that social marketing will at least deliver some social benefits.

Unfortunately, the promise of social marketing often turns out to be chimerical. Balanced assessments of social marketing programs show that such programs are difficult to design and implement and require sophisticated analysis of the target groups and the delivery systems (Bloom & Novelli 1981; Fox & Kotler 1980). In developing countries, the capability or the will to conduct such sophisticated marketing analysis is often lacking (R. R. Dholakia 1984). Even more problematic is the tendency to build social marketing programs on some highly tenuous assumptions. It is assumed, for example, that since social conditions are the most depressed for the poorest segments of the society, social marketing actions should be targeted at these segments. The poor in developing countries, however, are informed by a strongly grounded rationality. The thinly veiled elitism of social marketing programs, especially those divorced from any program of politico-economic change, is quite transparent to the intended "beneficiaries." The result is that target groups either do not respond to the programs or corrupt the programs to squeeze any possible economic benefits out of them. This has been the case with many family planning programs—one arena where social marketing techniques have been tried on a massive scale (Bhandari 1978; R. R. Dholakia 1984).

In the economic (i.e., catalytic) and social applications of marketing techniques for development purposes, we observe a strange paradox. Typically, the economic marketing techniques—the consumer-products marketing programs—are targeted at the affluent urban upper-middle class. The social marketing programs—family planning, literacy, nutrition, sanitation—are targeted at the impoverished rural segments. The assumption here is that the urban affluent class does not need to be educated about social change and that the catalytic and economic effects of marketing will reach the rural periphery through a trickle-down diffusion process. For development to occur, what is frequently needed is exactly the opposite pattern of marketing applications. For economic goods, there is a need to break the "elite barrier" and reach the rural periphery through mass marketing efforts (Sen Gupta 1975). This is precisely what Sears, Roebuck and Company did when America was a developing country (Chandler 1962). The growth of mass markets in the rural periphery creates a platform that elevates the whole economy to new levels of productivity.

The breaking of the "elite" barrier and the spawning of true mass markets appears to be the sine qua non of the economic development processes observed in the last century. The "old" industrial nations of Europe developed by adopting "growth first, equity later" policies during their long industrialization phase. Income distribution worsened for decades before it started improving. But the history of "recently" industrialized countries—among them United States, the USSR, Japan, China, South Korea, North Korea, Yugoslavia, Taiwan—has

been quite different. Policies that emphasized "equity first, growth later" have characterized the industrialization phase of these countries irrespective of their political systems. In marketing terms, this has meant creation of mass markets through product innovation, basic-need satisfaction, popular pricing strategies, and revolutions in distribution methods. Yet, this simple lesson of political economy continues to elude many public policymakers and marketers. We continue to see the political propping up of oligarchic ruling classes and the marketing of all manners of luxury goods (usually imported) to this hopelessly narrow elite segment. As the discussion here suggests, there is perhaps a very simple answer to the question of what role marketing should play in economic development: create conditions for *mass* demand and *mass* supply of *essential* consumer goods.

In a similar manner, many social marketing programs—especially those pertaining to sanitation, nutrition, and education—need to be directed at the elite. By concentrating limited social marketing resources on the more responsive urban and rural elite, and letting diffusion and multiplier effects have full play, it is likely that a reasonable pace of social change will be achieved.

There are some indications that social marketing efforts in developing as well as developed countries are beginning to be reoriented in this manner. For example:

- A very popular show on Indian TV features a prosperous, educated, urban housewife in Bombay who, in Nader-like fashion, constantly challenges the slothful and unresponsive bureaucrats, schools, business firms, and hospitals of India. This TV show has perhaps become the most successful "social marketing" experiment in consciousness-raising in India today.
- Television commercials for drug abuse prevention campaigns in the U.S. increasingly aim at middle and upper class abusers of alcohol, cocaine, and other drugs.
- Managers of family-planning campaigns in many Third World countries are realizing that pressuring the rural poor—for whom children probably represent an economic asset and a form of social security—is perhaps counterproductive. Instead, campaigns are being redirected at urban middle classes who are much more ready for family planning. More fundamentally, economic and health-system reforms are being undertaken to provide socioeconomic security to the poor.

We expect the success of such efforts—perhaps even their sheer undertaking—to accelerate this reorienting of social marketing interventions.

It is important to note that the *opportunity* to participate in social change programs should be available on mass scale but the *communication* efforts could be targeted at selected opinion-leading elite segments. In marketing terms, this corresponds to a strategy of mass distribution but targeted communication. By sug-



gesting that social marketing programs *may not* pay off when directed at the segments "suffering" the most from a social malaise, we seem to be standing conventional social marketing wisdom on its head. But this is only so because conventional social marketing has unconsciously adopted a flawed elite perspective: the poor "need" social marketing programs because they *appear* to be socially deprived. This is ethnocentrism rearing its demonic head again. In-depth probing of indigenous culture may reveal a strong, grounded rationality in the behavior of the poor (Mamdani 1972) rather than the abject social irrationality assumed by social marketers.

### C. Marketing As an Agent of Cultural Change

A current authoritative bibliographic guide to cross-national tests of theories of economic development (Clark 1982) unaccountably excludes marketing as a subject listing in its indexes. This is a curious omission, given the dynamic tension between stability and change that we posited earlier as marketing's contribution to cultural evolution. In a recent overview of the culture concept in consumer research, Sherry (1986) has advocated adopting D'Andrade's (1984) notion of culture as composed of meaning systems and material flows. This is in keeping with our belief that marketers are continually engaged in creating, sustaining, and recasting meaning as much as in facilitating the exchange of goods. Marketing is a prominent medium of intercultural communication and an important external stimulus to cultural change (Curtin 1984). The birth of consumer culture in eighteenth-century England (McKendrick, Brewer, & Plumb 1982), the transformation of aboriginal American cultures by market capitalism (Harris 1971), and the reconstruction of contemporary Japanese culture by Confucian capitalism (Gibney 1982) are illustrative of such change. The profound cross-cultural impact of the diffusion of such an ostensibly innocuous consumer good as sugar (Mintz 1985)—readily apparent in our own preference for fluoridating water rather than decreasing sucrose consumption (Cohen 1982), dental caries and other disorders be damned—is merely one example among hundreds that illustrates the extent to which marketing is a cultural system.

The impact of marketing upon cultural evolution is multiplex. Culture evolves along specific and general dimensions (Sahlins & Service 1960). Specific evolution, from a phylogenetic perspective, is simply adaptive variation, or descent with modification. General evolution introduces the notion of overall progress, and concerns the progressive emergence of higher stages of life; "higher" is equated simply with increasing complexity and energy utilization. Over time, we have witnessed an increasing heterogeneity of the higher cultural type and a corresponding increase in the homogeneity of culture, as the diversity of cultural types is reduced (Sahlins and Service 1960). Marketing appears to accelerate this evolutionary trend. That is, marketing practices seem to help so-called devel-

oped nations to individuate, and to encourage so-called less-developed countries (LDCs) to emulate. Anderson (1984) has analyzed the advertising industry in Asia to demonstrate this process.

Paradoxically, by the law of cultural dominance (Sahlins & Service 1960), while developed nations spread at the expense of lesser developed ones, the law of evolutionary potential (Sahlins & Service 1960) may impede the narrowly adapted, highly specialized market culture in achieving the next higher stage of cultural development. While it may not be sowing the seeds of its own destruction, globalization may be inhibiting the rise of the kind of trans-market civilization that Toffler (1980) has envisioned as the next stage of cultural evolution. A harbinger of such a potential evolutionary blind alley is the kind of "U-turn anti-internationalism" characteristic of Japanese modernization that Befu (1983) suspects may characterize most contemporary development processes. That is, neonationalism is fostered in the guise of internationalism: as Japan increasingly internationalizes its economy, an increasingly stronger undertow of nationalism is evidenced in the society. Participation in a global economy may entail a perceived threat to cultural integrity or autonomy, resulting in turn in protectionistic sentiment and legislation. In another vein, the ecological instability of the "higher" cultural type mentioned earlier makes such a culture vulnerable to unanticipated changes in physical or social environments. Resource depletion, pollution, geopolitical tension, and demographic change are just a few potential impediments to general evolution.

If we accept the assertion by Douglas and Isherwood (1979) that consumption is ultimately about power, and that consumers are not so much owners of goods as they are operators of periodicity patterns, then the potential cultural impact of marketing-based development strategies is clear. The consumer's overriding objective is to acquire and control information about the changing cultural scene so as to insure inclusion in (or linkage with) "shared civilities." Such civilities are the very stuff of social life and are often predicated on the exchange and ownership of goods. Goods which have the capacity to increase one's personal availability, to free one from periodicity constraints, and permit the performance of more desirable activity, will become necessities over time. Marketing-based development involves empowering consumers to access these shared civilities, thus improving their life chances and the vitality of their culture. Enlightened marketers will realize that many of these shared civilities are highly culture specific and adapt their strategies accordingly. Participation in joint ventures that help accomplish national self-determination goals in addition simply to introducing product into a market is one such adaptation. In this manner, Coca-Cola was able to reestablish its presence in Egypt by assisting in agricultural development. Similarly, simply by encouraging various forms of countertrade such as barter—a practice surely observed at the dawn of trade—marketers could empower consumers in cash-poor economies, create or tap existing markets for specific products, and forge productive linkages between nations.

### D. Marketing As a Mechanism for International Transfer of Economic Value

The international marketing system creates linkages between the most prominent metropolitan centers of the industrialized world and the remotest hinterland of the developing world. In Galtung's terms, it bridges the core of the core and the periphery of the periphery. This is a little understood but crucial way in which marketing affects development.

This marketing bridge, or transmission belt, is quite selective in terms of what flows are permitted or hindered. The flow of economic values (capital, interest payments) is the fastest and the easiest. Consumption culture is also transmitted rapidly but unidirectionally from the core to the periphery. Technology flows are somewhat more difficult. The flows connecting the labor markets of the core and the periphery are mere trickles.

Our focus is on the transfer of economic value. The term economic value or economic surplus refers to the difference between the price paid by the ultimate buyer at one end of a marketing channel and the cost of inputs to the producer at the other end of a marketing channel. Marketing influences this in two ways. First, the price at which something can be sold is partly a function of the product image that marketing is able to create. For example, given two functionally identical automobiles, one Japanese and one Korean, the Japanese car can command a significant premium over the Korean car in most world markets today. This is because brand names like Toyota, Nissan, and Honda are vested with considerable image potency while Korean carmakers are barely known. By virtue of its image-creating ability, marketing influences the absolute size of economic surplus. Products with stronger images can generate greater economic surpluses.

The distribution of the economic surplus is determined, in part, by the power relationships and the political economy of the marketing channel (Stern & Reve 1980). Toyota, because of its strength vis-à-vis its dealer network in North America, can garner a greater share of the price of each car than can Hyundai, the fledgling Korean carmaker struggling to gain a toehold in the North American market. The developmental implications of this should be quite evident. Hyundai will have to share a great part of the channel-system margin with intermediaries such as distributors and dealers. A greater portion of every American dollar spent on a Japanese car flows back to Japan than of every American dollar spent on a Korean car flows back to Korea. And, because of the far stronger market position of the Japanese cars, the aggregate number of American dollars spent on Japanese cars is many times greater than the dollars spent on Korean cars.

This same value transfer logic works in the reverse fashion when American or European firms are marketing their products in Third World countries. If it enters the Indian market, Pepsi can garner a greater share of the Indian soft drink rupee than can Thums-Up (a domestic cola brand in India). Not only that, because of its strong world image and cultural potency, Pepsi can achieve a far greater share

of the Indian cola market than Thums-Up. This makes the globalization strategy recommended by Levitt (1983) eminently appealing to strong world brands endowed with a high potency in the global consumption culture. If such brands are catalytic in expanding the markets and enlarging the economic base of a Third World country, then they may create an *economic* development impact. Quite often, however, the impact of such brands is merely to divert resources from indigenous forms of consumption to global-brand consumption. Unless that country's economic planners are very astute, most of the incremental economic value will flow back to the parent countries of these world brands (Dholakia, Dholakia, & Pandya 1986). Market research can aid planners faced with such situations. Careful image measurement, cultural probing, and economic analysis can provide guidelines that government planners may be able to use in negotiating with the marketers of world brands. Cultural analysis can also aid in making the difficult value judgments about what types of products should be promoted and whether "socially desirable" products (for example, a fruit juice in contrast to a cola) will have the requisite cultural potency to be a marketing success.

## IV. CLOSURES AND THRESHOLDS

We have organized much of the discussion in this paper around the four gaps in the existing knowledge about marketing and development. By offering conceptualizations of development which are broader and more multidisciplinary than those available in marketing, we have attempted to close the gaps in knowledge identified early in the paper. But far from achieving closures we find ourselves at new thresholds of exploration. This is perhaps inevitable in a growing field of knowledge. We will conclude this essay by summarizing the main arguments and outlining future research needs.

### A. Summary and Conclusions

That marketing processes are intimately linked to development processes is simply demonstrated in the specialized literature on marketing and development as well as in the broader social science literature on development. What remains shrouded for the most part is the nature of these links.

Marketing literature has generally espoused the view that marketing is a catalytic agent in the process of economic development. Marketing triggers the growth spiral by presenting attractive goods to coveting consumers who become more productive when driven by their consumption aspirations. From our broader review of development literature, we find this catalytic view of marketing of very limited applicability to contemporary Third World countries and patently flawed if used as a universal policy prescription. The conditions which trigger the developmental ethos in a nation are not yet well understood by social



scientists and policy makers. The little we know suggests that marketing processes, far from being catalytic, seem to get caught up in an overall explosion of economic growth in selected societies at specific times. To the extent marketing does spur economic growth, it seems to do so in societies where burgeoning rural markets are effectively tapped by marketers. In most Third World countries today, this is not the case: marketing efforts remain hopelessly elitist and urban-directed.

The promise of marketing as a social change technology has also dimmed considerably from the euphoric days when social marketing was first proposed as a strategy for planned social change. The failure, once again, seems to lie in the narrowness of marketing and social analysis. Social problems are treated as economic needs. The poor are analyzed as consumers seeking social remedies offered by public agencies. If a deeper exploration of these "social needs" is made, we will often discover behavior that is in no way hidebound and irrational but congruent and rational with the conditions and expectations of the targeted people. Experience of the last several decades clearly shows that social marketing succeeds not as a strategy for social change but as a strategy that follows social change.

With our pervasive entanglement in the consumer culture, it is a bit strange that not much is known about the role of marketing as an acculturating agent. Research in marketing seems so much focused on discovering saleable symbols of consumption that the cultural consequences of consuming such symbols become a mere peripheral issue. For Third World countries, understanding the cultural impact of marketing may hold the very key to their cultural survival. Marketing strategists in global companies are making cultural choices that will intimately affect life patterns in the remotest hamlets of the developing world. Today's imperative is to search for marketing patterns that anchor and nourish the highly adapted "old" cultures of the Third World countries.

Finally, in the contemporary global marketplace where nations deal mostly on commercial terms, and not military ones, the primary vehicle for transmission of economic and cultural values is marketing. We know too little about how the globe-spanning value chains enrich or impoverish various participants, in economic as well as cultural terms. It appears that world brands enjoy a potency that is very difficult to counter or resist. Developing countries face the challenge of bending the powerful global marketing strategies of large multinationals to local needs.

## B. Research Frontiers

It is fairly clear to us that we do *not* need certain kinds of "research." We do not need the simplistic exhortation that equates the adoption of hyperindustrial marketing patterns with progress.

We do need research, however, on almost all aspects linking marketing and development. We particularly need to explore the conditions under which developmental ethos is generated and the role marketing plays in it. We need to understand the targeting strategies of business and social marketers and to find out if myopic market visions are preventing market development from occurring. Marketing as a cultural process needs extensive study in all types of contexts. The role of marketing institutions and strategies in international value chains also needs examination.

Yes, development is an unfinished project and as long as we have our humanity, will remain so.

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