

# What in the World Is Going On? Some Trends in International Advertising Issues

John F. Sherry, Jr.

**ABSTRACT.** Advertisers grappling with the vagaries of a global marketplace require a perspective that is comprehensive of the issues affecting their craft. The trade press is one information source that is commonly mined by agency researchers seeking to remain current on the international front. This article attempts to transform impressions gained from such casual reading into a more systematic and useful framework for interpreting the global marketplace. Drawing on a content analysis of information presented in the pages of the "International" section of the trade paper *Advertising Age*, a perspective of international marketing is advanced, the utility of that perspective to advertising researchers is explored, and the implications of that perspective for international advertising strategy are examined.

## INTRODUCTION

Advertisers grappling with the vagaries of a global marketplace require a perspective that is comprehensive of the issues affecting their craft. Attempts to determine the degree to which a message should be standardized across culture boundaries or adapted to suit local market conditions, the wisdom of repositioning and relaunching a lethargic local brand rather than introducing an entirely new product into a market, the organizational cultural "fit" of prospective affiliates or joint venture partners

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with the agency eager to expand, and any of the host of other decisions routinely considered by advertisers would be facilitated greatly by a systematic strategic vision. The value of research guided by such a systematic approach would increase dramatically. In this article, the author presents a conceptual framework for interpreting the international marketing scene which appears to be inherent in the collective wisdom of the American advertising community, and discusses the implications of this framework for effective advertising research.

### **PERSPECTIVE**

The trade press is one information source that is commonly mined by agency researchers seeking to remain current on the international front. The impressions gained from such casual reading can be transformed into a systematic, practical framework for interpreting the global marketplace. Assuming the trade press is delivering a quality product to a market composed of vigilant consumers with highly specialized professional needs, and assuming also that an active, timely dialogue occurs between readers and editors such that feedback is used to evaluate and improve service delivery, the press becomes more than just a unique archival record. It is at once a performance and an artifact of what we could call "advertising criticism"; insofar as it describes, justifies, analyzes, and judges the many dimensions of the craft. The press both shapes and reflects the understanding that practitioners have of their profession. Through its pages we can derive the components of a model which seem to be implicit in the heads of practitioners—the native intuition of advertisers—and subject these components to extended investigation.

The barometer of advertising sentiment chosen for this study was *Advertising Age*. Billing itself as an international newspaper of marketing, the publication boasts a twice weekly (Monday and Thursday), paid circulation of 88,675 with subscribers on all continents. In July of 1983, *Advertising Age* (A.A.) inaugurated an "International" section devoted exclusively to coverage of worldwide issues affecting advertisers. The section arose in response to both the editors' evaluation of the growing significance of international marketing, and to readers' requests for additional

international coverage. Articles previously scattered throughout the periodical were drawn together as a unit, making global information more easily accessible to readers. *A.A.* employs freelance correspondents around the world to supply a geographical and topical mix of reports to its readers. As might be predicted, regions such as Europe and Australia are especially well covered, while other regions, such as Black Africa, for instance, are virtually ignored. *A.A.* has received favorable reader response to its "International" section, and regularly receives requests for additional information in the international domain.

The "International" section of *A.A.* contains a number of specific features. Articles treat particular issues in international business. Photographs are frequently used to support copy, and are occasionally employed as discrete, independent features. Graphics are similarly utilized. A column entitled "World News Round-Up," beginning in the front of the periodical is regularly continued and concluded in the "International" section. An irregularly appearing column entitled "Talk of the Town," which features news blurbs from a selected city of the world, and which may contain from fifteen to twenty information items, is also housed in the "International" section. Coverage of global events beyond those reported in the "International" section is quite variable. In addition to these scattered articles, two other conduits are employed by *A.A.* to deliver international news. The first is a feature entitled "Global Gallery," which showcases striking advertising exemplars from around the world. The second is a "Special Report" which may occupy the bulk or the entirety of a particular issue of *A.A.*. In sum, the newspaper devotes a considerable amount of space to international news, and serves as an appropriate touchstone for genuine practitioner concerns. It is the intention of this author to use *Advertising Age* as adage, to distill the collective wisdom of the industry in order to render it more useful.

### **SAMPLE AND METHOD**

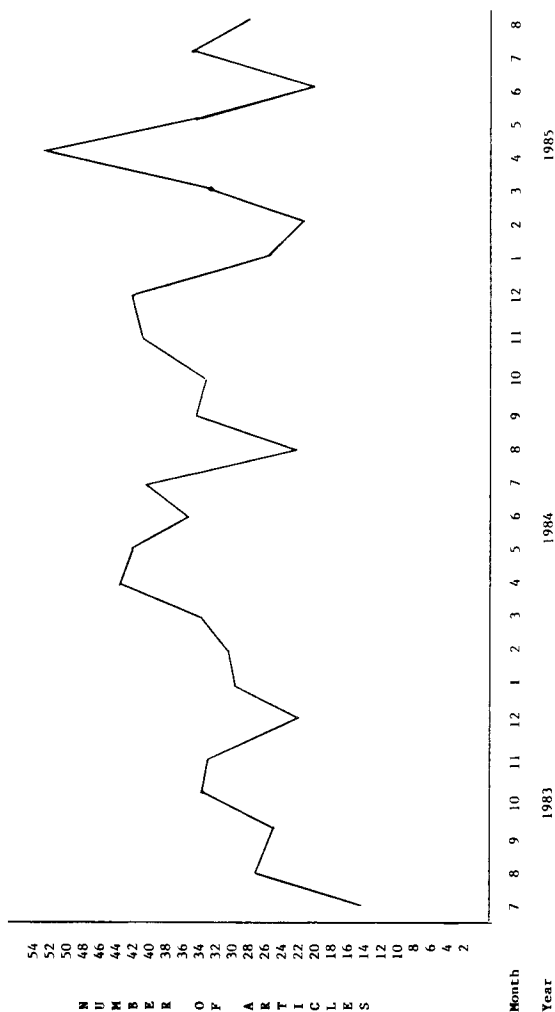
Drawing from the archives of the Needham Harper Worldwide Chicago Information Center, materials from the "International" section of *A.A.* from its inception in July 1983 through August

1985—a span of 123 issues over 26 months—were selected for study. These materials did not include information contained in the features “Global Gallery,” “World News Round-Up” or “Talk of the Town.” With the exception of issues devoted to World Brands, Global Media and Marketing Research, no “Special Reports” editions of *A.A.* were examined. In all, 834 items were examined in the study. The distribution of these items over time is presented in Figure 1. Every effort was made to be exhaustive in culling these items, and the pool of materials is certainly representative of the information contained in the “International” section.

Designing a content analytic approach to answer the question “What in the world is going on?” was predicted on Wells’ (1985) assertion that advertising research is akin to the contemporary anthropology of the western world. Simply stated, the data was approached from an anthropologist perspective, seeking to discover patterns in some social behavior. Using an inductive approach, and guided only by the hypothesis that international advertising issues of interest to professionals could be discerned from the trade press, it was sought to discover how these professionals assessed their world.

The exercise was viewed as an exploratory outing to be triangulated with other methods such as participant observation, depth interviews, collateral reading and consumer experience, all geared toward helping the interpretation of the complex cultural system of advertising. In this endeavor, the author worked in the tradition of the solitary ethnographer. In this process the item was used as the unit of analysis and allowed the categories to emerge as a result of the author’s close reading. By allowing such latitude, it was hoped to capture the critical concerns embedded in the text. No other readers or raters were employed, and the study reflects the author’s bias as a consumer researcher interested both in cross cultural communication and in meaning system. The author’s perspective is further tempered by cultural ecological and phenomenological inclinations. This study does not purport to be exhaustive in its analysis of the issues, but rather descriptive in its coverage of key concerns. In attempting a “thick description” that would reveal patterns, mutually exclusive categories were not constructed. Several categories may be

FIGURE 1  
ARTICLES OVER TIME



DATE

PER MONTH: Mean 32  
Median 31.5  
Mode 34, 35  
Range 15-51  
N: 834 articles over 26 mos in 123 issues  
(6.78 articles/issue)

present in any particular item. An item entitled "European Broadcasting Union Fights Offensive Ads" is one such example.

## CATEGORIES

Six major content categories emerged from the item analysis. These categories include: (a) Environments in which advertisers must operate; (b) Significant actors on the international scene; (c) Activities or behaviors which occupy advertisers; (d) Particular products and services of current interest; (e) Trends afoot in international advertising; (f) Advertising itself in cross-cultural perspective. A seventh category, which was aggregated from particular accounts, and which promises some insight, is titled regions on which advertisers are concentrating.

Each of these categories will be described in detail. Table 1 describes the distribution of these categories over time, and Table 2 presents the distribution of regions over time. In each of these tables, both synchronic and diachronic frequencies are recorded. That is, the percentages of categories and regions both *within* years and *across* years have been calculated.

Once again, it will be emphasized that the data presented is descriptive, and represents the author's reading of concerns exhibited by advertising practitioners. The data is derived from a single source, and ends after midyear 1985. Therefore, trends which were identified may be in part inferential, and the reader is so warned.

### *Environments*

The term "environment" is employed in a restricted sense to refer solely to the geographical scope of operation indicated by an item. Four levels of operation emerge from the articles, and they have been labelled to conform approximately to the academic nomenclature of international business. Ethnocentric refers to an article focusing on a single country (e.g., "Playboy seeks a U.K. license"). Polycentric indicates a two-country scope of operation (e.g., "Levi and Cacharel join forces to sell female sportswear in Germany"). Regiocentric denotes a re-

gional scope, that may encompass an economic grouping (e.g., EEC) or an entire continent (e.g., "P & G plans orange juice launch into Germany, then the rest of Europe"). Finally, the label geocentric was attached to articles exhibiting a global orientation; a firm expanding into several regions, for example, would be so designated (e.g., "Cabbage Patch Kids go global").

One country items have increased steadily and are by far the most common type. Regiocentric items have similarly increased. The polycentric perspective has grown quite slowly. Finally, the global orientation has peaked rapidly, and appears as if it will

TABLE 1  
CATEGORIES OVER TIME

Category	Date								
	1983 (6 mos)			1984			1985 (8 mos)		
	Frequency	$\Sigma$ Syn	$\Sigma$ Dia	Frequency	$\Sigma$ Syn	$\Sigma$ Dia	Frequency	$\Sigma$ Syn	$\Sigma$ Dia
<b>Environment</b>									
Ethnocentric	107	.76	.20	252	.64	.48	167	.70	.32
Polycentric	8	.06	.47	0	.00	.00	9	.04	.53
Regiocentric	18	.13	.14	77	.19	.59	35	.15	.27
Geocentric	7	.05	.07	67	.17	.67	26	.11	.26
<b>Actors</b>									
Corporate	111	.73	.18	357	.76	.57	161	.67	.25
Government	26	.17	.21	65	.14	.51	35	.15	.28
Consumerist	6	.04	.19	18	.04	.58	7	.03	.23
Individual	10	.06	.13	31	.06	.40	37	.15	.47
<b>Activities</b>									
Barriers	41	.27	.35	55	.13	.46	23	.10	.19
Brokerage	13	.09	.31	21	.05	.50	8	.03	.19
Business	27	.18	.16	85	.21	.50	59	.25	.34
Byplay	69	.46	.14	255	.61	.54	151	.62	.32
<b>Products/Services</b>									
Commercial	94	.44	.17	301	.46	.56	146	.47	.27
Social	11	.05	.24	26	.04	.56	9	.03	.20
Traditional	94	.45	.18	296	.45	.55	146	.47	.27
Nontraditional	12	.06	.24	29	.05	.58	9	.03	.18
<b>Trends</b>									
American	5	.21	.30	6	.21	.35	6	.21	.35
Marketing	4	.17	.50	2	.07	.25	2	.07	.25
Lifestyle	6	.25	.273	8	.29	.363	8	.29	.363
Globalization	9	.37	.273	12	.43	.363	12	.43	.363
<b>Advertising</b>									
Controversial	17	.68	.74	3	.16	.13	3	.16	.13
Unusual	4	.16	.154	11	.58	.423	11	.58	.423
Racy	1	.04	.09	5	.26	.455	5	.26	.455
Expensive	3	.12	1.00	0	.00	.00	0	.00	.00

Syn = Synchronic: within same year

Dia = Diachronic: across the years

TABLE 2  
REGIONS OVER TIME

Region	Date								
	1983 (6 mos)			1984			1985 (8 mos)		
	Frequency	% Syn	% Dia	Frequency	% Syn	% Dia	Frequency	% Syn	% Dia
North America	20	.14	.17	65	.17	.56	32	.15	.27
South America	15	.11	.20	35	.09	.47	25	.12	.33
Europe	57	.41	.20	151	.39	.53	77	.36	.27
Africa	7	.05	.29	8	.02	.33	9	.04	.38
Asia	13	.09	.16	47	.12	.57	22	.10	.27
Japan	8	.06	.13	31	.08	.52	21	.10	.35
PRC	0	.00	.00	2	.005	.22	7	.03	.78
Australia/New Zealand	7	.05	.14	29	.08	.57	15	.07	.29
Central America	7	.05	.33	11	.03	.53	3	.01	.14
Mideast	3	.02	.43	2	.005	.285	2	.01	.285
USSR/E. Europe	2	.02	.33	3	.01	.50	1	.01	.17

Syn = Synchronic: within same year

Dia = Diachronic: across the years

either plateau or decline. Several interpretations of this pattern suggest themselves. Marketers still regard the international domain as ancillary to, or as an extension of the domestic domain, and thus treat it either cautiously as an unknown quantity, or by default as an outlet for surplus production. They may gamble or experiment with a single foreign market, but more rarely with two. As a less conservative strategy, some marketers have discovered that enough similarities exist across a number of countries to warrant a regional approach. The rush to globalization witnessed in 1984 seems to have given way to a more studied approach to international marketing, as indicated by the figures regarding the geocentric perspective. Whether marketers have grown skeptical or merely wary of global operations remains to be seen. That the ministrations of global gurus may have been oversold could have serious consequences in the forging of a rational strategic geocentric vision, if backlash against the fever-



ishly sought global hot buttons that have yet to materialize coalesces in the advertising community.

### **Actors**

Significant players in the international environment are labelled actors. Corporate actors include agencies, clients, associations, media, testing services and other business firms. Government actors include any formal legislative, executive or judicial body, no matter what the provenance (e.g., "Ireland considers legislation to ban pirate radio"). Consumerist actors were defined broadly to include any advocate—whether individual or group—of consumers' rights (e.g., "Consumer groups renew attack on Nestle"). Individual actors include consumers, reference figures (Wayne Gretzky), power brokers (Rupert Murdoch) or other solitary figures (Ronald Reagan) featured in an item.

Corporate activity appears to have increased rapidly and then decreased slightly over time. Individual activity has grown steadily over time. Government involvement in advertising issues has also increased steadily. Consumerism appears to have grown moderately and then levelled off over time. Two trends appear to emerge from this pattern. First of all, corporations increasingly must share the international stage with other significant actors. This proliferation of actors should further sensitize us to the utility of the concept of "stakeholder" to international marketing. Secondly, the rise of advocacy in the form of consumerism and government intervention must be recognized. The prominence of advocacy calls attention to the essentially political cast of much marketing activity.

### **Activities**

The behaviors in which various actors engage have been labelled activity. Once again, four kinds of activity emerge from the items. Any behavior which threatens or limits the autonomy of advertisers is labelled a barrier; "U.K. government bans latest EEC political ad" is one such example. Behaviors which facilitate or enhance the autonomy of advertisers are labelled brokerage (e.g., "French government allows F.M. radios to carry ad-

vertising"). The conceptual or technical "doing" of advertising—that is, the activity which leads directly to the product of a finished advertisement—is labelled business. Thus, "Leo Burnett will try for the second time to create to 'Big Idea' for Cathay Pacific," is so labelled. Finally, any strategic or organizational behavior ancillary to, supporting or otherwise impacting the "doing" of advertising is labelled byplay. Byplay is an omnibus term which includes such phenomena as mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, rollouts, pullbacks, piracy, realignments and the like (e.g., "J.W.T. gains South Korean presence").

Barriers to advertising have risen slightly and levelled off over time, while brokerage activities have declined after a brief efflorescence. This pattern may mirror some cross cultural perception that advertising is inherently dangerous and in need of regulation, and further that advertisers have had little luck or inclination toward shaping an environment more favorably disposed to their trade. The steady increase in business items may reflect the industry's growing recognition of the potential for synergy in message design, as well as a basic fascination with the craft of advertising as practiced cross-culturally. Items designated as byplay experienced a sharp increase which has levelled off over time. This pattern echoes the observation that the honeymoon may be over in the rush to globalization. It also dramatizes the intensity of commitment present day marketers may feel to a global marketplace. It is significant to note that *A.A.* devotes far more space to the reporting of corporate activity—i.e., political activity—abetting the craft than it does to advertising or its practice per se.

### ***Products and Services***

This particular category addresses the goods which advertising invests with meaning and attempts to sell. Two dimensions of contrast emerged from the articles. The first dimension concerns the degree to which a good is profit centered; it is bounded by commercial on one pole and social on the other. "P & G gambles on shampoo market in German launch" contrasts with "South Africa promotes smaller family size" in this regard. The second dimension revolves around the degree to which a good is popu-

larly recognized as a good, as opposed to some other entity; it is bounded by traditional on one pole and nontraditional on the other. Judgment as to a good's traditional status was based upon the author's own intuition and upon textural inference. A social good would include products such as birth control, political campaigns, and erotically executed public health campaigns. A non-traditional good would include products such as cities or nations, the American dream, Western values or the art world. Thus, "Parker Pen drops its global plans" contrasts with "Superbowl a hit overseas."

Predictably, commercial and traditional products and services have enjoyed a steady growth over time, and appear to be levelling off. This levelling may coincide with a disillusionment with world brands. Social and noncommercial products and services have experienced strong growth, but are currently in decline. This pattern reflects both the low perceived incentive relative to "profitable" goods advertisers have to promote such items, and also the relative success marketers have enjoyed in converting commodities and other apparently unrelated phenomena into products. There is perhaps some hope that advertising will increasingly address prosocial "nonprofit" issues which affect the life chances of all cultures.

### ***Trends***

Perhaps the most elusive of the categories emerging from this study is the one which has been labelled trends. Any tendencies or patterns observed across market boundaries were designated as trends. Four trends were thus discerned. The imitation of anything perceived as "American" was labelled American (e.g., "Brazilian copycats of U.S. game shows popular"). The diffusion of professional marketing thought or practice (licensing, retailing, etc.) was labelled marketing. "Finns to give on day seminar on western marketing and advertising methods in Moscow to government shop" is such an instance. Lifestyle was categorized as the commercial dimension of a way of living, and might include items such as the implications of demographic change for fast food providers. "Japan is leaving the keeping up with the Saito's ear" is illustrative. Finally, the standardization of any

dimension of life across cultures was labelled globalization. "India opens its doors to the West," and "PRC increases in materialism since 1978; Western products popular" reflect this trend.

Commonalities in lifestyle across markets have increased gradually over time; American trends, a subset of the large lifestyle domain, have similarly increased, but appear to have levelled off recently. That America is the global capital of advertising, and arguably of media journalism, may explain in large part this diffusion of symbolic value. The diffusion of modern marketing theory and practice appears to have lost momentum over time. This loss may be attributable in part to the relative infancy of the discipline, and perhaps as well to the varying demand of local markets. The process of globalization appears to be gradually accelerating, regardless of the impact of either marketing or advertising. Just as the process of diffusion predates the practice of marketing, so also may the globalization process proceed unaided by our professional efforts.

### **Advertising**

For the purposes of this study, advertising is defined as the investing of goods with meaning, and the disseminating of that meaning with intent to sell those goods. *A.A.* contains occasional commentary on the nature of international advertising which is illuminating. International advertising is considered by turns controversial, unusual, racy and expensive. Controversial ads provoke dispute between advertisers, or between advertisers and their publics (e.g., "Brazil bans Calvin Klein Jeans ad"). Unusual advertising involves innovative ads that may challenge conventional wisdom, such as "AIDS target of erotic homosexual ads in Australia." Racy is the epithet attached by *A.A.* to ads which are sexually graphic, explicit or suggestive (e.g., "Sexy ads blossom in Japan"). Finally, expensive ads are those adjudged by advertisers to be more costly than usual (e.g., "Cable TV costly in Japan").

International advertising appears to have begun as a controversial and expensive proposition, when viewed from the perspective of local marketers. Increased expertise, economies of scale, and general habituation may have acted in concert to erode both

the cost and notoriety of most advertising. Conversely, the incidence of racy and unusual ads appears to have increased appreciably. If this increase is attributable to factors other than the *A.A.* editors' featuring of markets enjoying relaxed legal standards and especially talented shops, it may be that the advertising world enfranchises and potentiates the creative process, and that certain primal drives will always be associated with persuasive appeals. The patterns indicate at least that worldwide, advertisers engage in pushing back the boundaries of the conventional and permissible as a matter of routine.

### ***Regions***

The final content category to be considered in this study is the geographic distribution of items over time. This category gives us a rough approximation of the hot spots of international advertising, and indicates which markets are of growing interest to advertisers. In terms of sheer historical significance, one can divide the regions into three tiers. In the first tier, Europe is far and away the most significant region, followed by North America and Asia. The second tier is composed of Latin America, Japan, Australia/New Zealand, and Central America. The third tier, which has been largely neglected by marketers, includes the Peoples Republic of China, the Mideast, and Soviet bloc nations. These tiers correspond very roughly to industrialized nations and their entrepreneurial satellites, recently developed and developing nations, and nations which have been politically inaccessible or unstable. This loose correspondence is one relative gauge of marketers' interest.

A more discriminating interpretation of the pattern would track marketers' interest by country over time. Interest in Central America, and Soviet bloc countries has waned fairly consistently, with Mexico being the one bright spot on the map. This relative disinterest merits further investigation, and suggests that the marketing imagination might somehow be engaged to reach these potential consumers. Interest in North America, Europe, Australia/New Zealand and Asia, which has increased over time, gives indications of levelling off in the present. Issues of linguistic and cultural similarity may explain this plateau in part, as well

as the fact that markets may be quite mature in these countries. Interest in Latin America, Japan, Africa and the Mideast appears to be on the upswing. Several of these markets are large and virtually untapped, others are relatively affluent. The market which appears to be generating the most interest is the PRC, which is in the throes of producing a hybrid capitalist-socialist economy. Not surprisingly, each of these markets can be entered only at significant risk, and will require business firms to redefine their notions of "current expense" versus "investment." Each further requires marketers to adopt a long term perspective.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

Several implications for advertising research emerge from this exploratory study. The implications will be discussed under the very large umbrella constructs of field propositions and native models. Perhaps the most fundamental implication to be drawn from this study, and one which certainly informs the balance of this discussion, is that our concept of the structure and function of advertising research must be broadened. The mere compiling or distilling of information to facilitate client's decisions or creatives' judgments—as daunting a task as it is on the domestic scene—is no longer an optimal or adequate use of a researcher's time. Investing products with meaning appropriate to the market is only one of the awesome tasks facing international advertisers. Researchers must acquire the skills which will permit them to become "differentially contexted" and fluent in cultural analysis. They must be able to discover and create synergies across markets. The assessment of political climates impacting advertising now and in the future will become increasingly complicated, and will demand continuous examination. Similarly, the assessment of organizational culture, with an eye toward international expansion, must be grounded in an even more thorough understanding of cross-cultural behavior. Finally, our very conception of creativity and our understanding of its role in advertising may stand in need of radical revision as one continues to cross cultural boundaries. Advertising researchers should be in the vanguard of a new wave of cross-cultural investigation.

## ***Field Principles***

A short list of principles emerge from the *A.A.* materials. The first set has to do with advertisers' perceptions of the international domain. Advertisers acknowledge that there are numerous countries which are potential markets, that many of these country markets can be consolidated into regions, and that a few of these regions can, on a product by product basis, be further consolidated into a global marketplace. The regiocentric viewpoint may represent a compromise in time between domestic and global marketing. Further, advertisers recognize that their stakeholders or publics are rapidly proliferating, that the climate in which they must operate is largely indifferent or actively hostile to their efforts, and that much of their "business" effort must be geared toward securing goodwill and acceptance. That effort may be drained from traditionally creative pursuits may be an unfortunate outcome. Finally, the reactions of advertisers to the notion of global marketing are worth cataloging. Following an initial period of disinterest in global advertising, a rush to internationalize occurred, in which agencies sought to retain old clients with expanding horizons and to capture new multinational clients. We seem to be experiencing a cooling off period in which advertisers are assuming a more reflective mood. Questions such as "Can we get there from here?" are emerging as agencies adopt a wait and see attitude.

Another set of principles illustrates the hierarchy of interests in the field, as well as emergent interests. Advertisers have dwelled most intensively upon developed markets, have been less ardent in their efforts in developing nations, and have effectively ignored centrally planned economies. These last two country groupings may represent markets of the future, and pose special challenges to the marketing imagination. In a similar vein, we are witnessing a surge of interest in the PRC and in the Southern Hemisphere. These markets are largely impoverished, but have the potential of being transformed into the largest consumer cultures on the planet. This situation poses both technical and ethical challenges to advertisers. Linked to this growing interest in currently impoverished markets is the expansion of our notion of marketing beyond the traditional/commercial realm to the nontra-

ditional/social realm. Advertisers have both the means and the incentive for adopting a creative approach to social problems as well as for diffusing a package of culturally appropriate “basics” to developing markets.

The last principle to be discerned has to do with windows of opportunity. Western trends are relatively popular worldwide. Globalization—broadly interpreted—facilitates the diffusion of lifestyles and bridges many cultural communication barriers. Interestingly enough, Western professional marketing thought and practice have diffused rather slowly across national boundaries. Advertisers committed to this “professional package” would benefit greatly by actively promoting it as they expand. Such promotion assumes that the package be adapted to local realities, which in turn should fuel the process of synergy, which will improve the package further.

### ***Native Models***

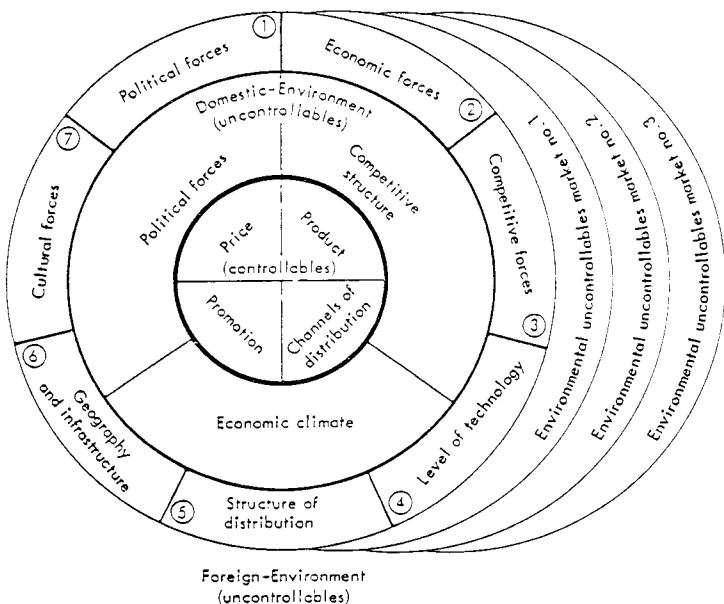
Before describing the model of international advertising that emerges from the study, it may be useful to describe the impression which has been gathered of the contextual dimension of international advertising from reading *A.A.* One can use Cateora's (1983) classic diagram of the international marketing task as a foundation. This diagram is reproduced in Figure 2. This particular model is useful because it describes the prospects for successful global marketing in terms of variables which may or may not be directly manipulated by the marketing manager. Traditionally, the elements of the marketing mix are viewed as controllable factors, which the manager must decide to standardize or adapt in cross-border transactions. Elements over which the manager has little or no control—forces and structures in both domestic and foreign environments—are the parameters within which the manager must decide to maintain or alter the mix. The components of Cateora's model depict the minimum number of features about which we must gather information in order to make an informed decision. They also represent common conceptions of the limits to the marketer's influence. The model provides us with a framework for collecting marketing intelligence, and a world view which shapes the marketing imagination. The use to



which advertisers seem to have put this model is quite interesting.

Envision Cateora's circle as the objective lens of a refracting telescope. In the author's analogy, this large lens is the advertiser's first foreign market, and cross-sections of the tube represent each additional foreign market that the advertiser encounters. Given the state of the art of current research, the advertiser studies markets at a distance by looking through the wrong lens of the telescope, such that new foreign markets are perceived in poor resolution. Further, the advertiser must train this lens on a moving target, in keeping with a client's new interests, the rate of change of social behavior in the market, and his or her own agency's management information system. Given the degree of heterogeneity of cultures with which the advertiser must cope, the telescope threatens to become a kaleidoscope. Such a threat

FIGURE 2\*  
THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETING TASK

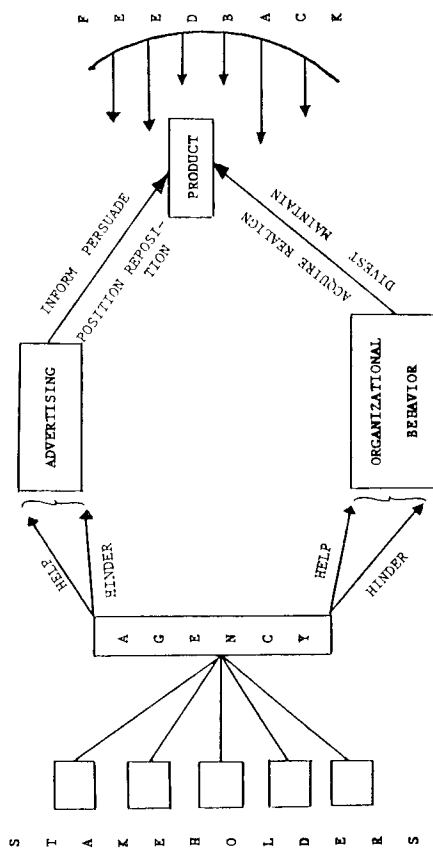


\* From Cateora (1983)

underscores the need for advertisers to acquire the critical skill of pattern discrimination, so that fundamental behaviors can be discerned and compared across markets.

If this is the international advertiser's contextual dilemma, how then does one perceive the enterprise in which one is engaged? The complex model can be reduced, for the purposes of this discussion, to a simple set of components. The model is presented in Figure 3, and purports to be the practitioner's view. A variety of stakeholders—the publics we have described such as consumers, clients, governments, suppliers and competitors—exert influences of varying degrees of intensity upon the advertiser. These influences may either help or hinder the agency in performing its two fundamental tasks. The first task is the accumulation and coordination of the technical expertise essential to successful creative execution: the task which has been described earlier as the “doing” of advertising. The second task is the creation and management of an organizational culture that will permit the “doing” to flourish. The first task involves activities such as informing, persuading, positioning, repositioning and the like. The second involves acquiring, divesting, realigning, maintaining, nurturing and the like. Each task is geared ultimately to the production of a product—whether that product is viewed as the ad or organization which created the ad—that is curiously schizophrenic. The product must be locally appropriate, but have global, potential. Synergy is the term for this product schizophrenia. Global potential may be very direct. Pattern standardization and decentralized, culturally informed backtranslation (the creative reconstruction of the kind practiced at Needham Harper Worldwide) are examples of direct potential. An agency which has charted its own culture and can conduct a rigorous audit of prospective affiliates is another example. Indirect potential refers to the knowledge base that an agency amasses, and the wisdom it acquires by experience, as it operates in each new market. Again, this is synergistic potential. The final component of the model concerns the monitoring and use of feedback resulting from an agency's product introduction. This feedback emanates from each of advertising's publics. Advertising research should mediate each step of the cycle from creation through evaluation.

FIGURE 3  
THE PRACTITIONER'S VIEW OF INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING



## CONCLUSION

This article marks the attempt of one consumer researcher to interpret the domain of international advertising from the perspective of practitioners as reflected in the trade press. The study is clearly exploratory, and requires the triangulation with other methods in order to approximate more closely the practitioner's model. The author has tried to systematize native intuition in order to render it more useful.

Advertisers acknowledge the importance of international marketing, but recognize the limits to current knowledge of globalization. If properly harnessed, *A.A.*'s "International" section could become a useful forum for enhancing that knowledge. Such a forum might treat in far greater detail than the technical "doing" of advertising, becoming in effect an ongoing workshop. The expansion and direction of the section will be impelled by reader response. It is this author's desire that international researchers become a more vocal minority.

## REFERENCES

- Cateora, Philip (1983), *International Marketing*, Homewood, IL., Richard Irwin.  
Wells, William (1985), "The Research Department's Hall of Fame," *Back Stage*, July 26, pp. 18b, 20, 52.

## APPENDIX

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

**ACTIVITIES:** Behaviors employed by actors

**BARRIERS:** Any behavior which inhibits or threatens advertisers' autonomy

**BROKERAGE:** Any behavior which facilitates or enhances advertiser's autonomy

**BUSINESS:** The conceptual/technical "doing" of advertising

**BYPLAY:** Organizational behavior ancillary to or supporting the “doing”

**ACTORS:** Significant players in the international arena

**CORPORATE:** Agencies, clients and other business firms

**GOVERNMENT:** Any formal legislative/executive/judicial body

**CONSUMERIST:** Any advocate of consumers’ rights

**INDIVIDUAL:** A single person

**ADVERTISING:** Investing good with meaning and disseminating that meaning with intent to sell goods

**CONTROVERSIAL:** Provoking dispute between advertisers, and between advertisers and their publics

**UNUSUAL:** Innovative ads that may challenge conventional wisdom

**RACY:** Sexually graphic or explicit or suggestive

**EXPENSIVE:** Recognized as more costly than usual, by advertisers

**ENVIRONMENT:** Scope of operation indicated by item; “orientation” of the item

**ETHNOCENTRIC:** One country focus

**POLYCENTRIC:** Several country focus

**REGIOCENTRIC:** Regional country focus

**GEOCENTRIC:** Global country focus

**PRODUCTS/SERVICES:** The “goods” which advertising invests with meaning and attempts to sell

**COMMERCIAL:** Profit-centered good

**SOCIAL:** Non-profit centered good

**TRADITIONAL:** A good popularly recognized and widely accepted as a good

**NONTRADITIONAL:** An item being transformed into a good

**TRENDS:** Tendencies or patterns observed across market boundaries

**AMERICAN:** The imitation of anything perceived as "American"

**MARKETING:** The diffusion of professional marketing thought and practice

**LIFESTYLE:** The commercial dimension of a common way of living

**GLOBALIZATION:** The standardizing of life across cultures

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