Macromarketing: Past, Present, and Possible Future
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What is This?
In this article, we offer an overview of macromarketing from the mid-1960s to the present. Based on this overview, we describe examples of the system elements that have been of interest in researching marketing systems (including those that relate to the environment and the components, attributes, and outcomes of marketing systems). Next, we consider where the field stands today and discuss twelve challenges in macromarketing that compose a possible scenario for future research. Finally, we note the scenario’s links to intellectual and normative traditions in the field, its potential relevance for macromarketing scholarship, and its limitations.

Keywords: systems; competition; markets; ethics; justice; development; global; environment; quality of life; history

MACROMARKETING: THE MID-1960S

Can marketing facilitate economic growth in developing economies? Is marketing compatible with central or state planning? What is the role of advertising in corporate or economic growth? How might consumers become better informed? Do the poor pay more? How are buying decisions made? Are there universals in the comparisons of domestic marketing systems? How should the balance between central and local control be identified in the operations of multinational firms? How is it best to model the interaction between company and environment? How does an innovation diffuse through a community, and how could this process be influenced by marketing initiatives? How do the institutions of marketing grow and change over time? Does distribution cost too much? What are the likely consequences of the emergence and growth of contractually integrated channels? How do public policy initiatives impact the workings of a competitive marketing system?

This long list of questions were just some of those addressed in the proceedings of the fiftieth anniversary of the International Symposium of Marketing and Allied Disciplines, held in Washington, D.C., by the American Marketing Association in September 1965. The focus of the anniversary conference was on marketing and economic development and featured commissioned commemorative articles from distinguished scholars. Speakers included Walt Rostow, Hans Thorelli, Marshall Goldman, Reavis Cox, Alan Andreasen, Philip Kotler, Jay Forrester, Stan Hollander, David Revzan, Neil Borden, Theodore Beckman, James Heskett, and William Lazer. Revisiting these questions after the lapse of forty years, one is struck by the emphasis on issues that today would be labeled macromarketing, by the status of the scholars who were contributing (some still active), and by the progress or lack of it that has been achieved in finding answers.

Common to each of the questions considered in the 1965 anniversary symposium was a recognition that an appropriate response would turn on an understanding of the workings of a marketing system at some level of aggregation. Rostow (1965) highlighted the role of marketing in establishing “necessary and sufficient conditions for an agricultural revolution.” Slater (1965) focused on the development of food marketing systems in Latin America. Thorelli (1965) was concerned with communication in a marketing system, arguing that this is “the most essential aspect of the marketing process.” Cox (1965) was searching for universals in his study of comparative marketing systems. Forrester (1965) explored the modeling of market and company interactions in a systems context. King (1965) discussed the fashion adoption process and the role of the innovator. Hollander (1965) explored change in the evolution of grocery pricing, and McCammon (1965) looked at the emergence of contractually integrated channels in the context of vertical marketing systems.

Despite the interest in the concept of a marketing system, it is difficult to find a clear statement of just what was in mind. Perhaps the simplest definition came from the work of the LAMP Project at Michigan State University, where Harrison et al. (1974) saw the marketing system as “a primary
mechanism for coordinating production, distribution and consumption activities.” Fisk (1967), in his trailblazing work on marketing systems, argued for a general systems approach to the study of marketing systems, focusing on the “movement or flow of information, goods, and ownership, money, and the risks incident to all these flows.” Mattson (1969, 12) took a similar view, suggesting that the purpose of a marketing system was to “create and maintain flows between the producing and consuming systems.” As Jones and Shaw (2002) note, interest in the study of marketing systems at that time owed much to Alderson’s (1965) functionalism, with attention focused on such questions as why society requires a marketing system? how the system operates? environmental and institutional factors affecting marketing, and the boundaries between marketing and other social institutions.

In addition to these studies of national marketing systems, other scholars were exploring channel systems. As McCammon and Little (1965) noted, very little was then known about the “institutional mechanism that moves goods from points of production to points of use.” Revzan (1961) and others sought to classify the different channel systems in ways that produced greater homogeneity in each classification. Alderson (1965) argued from a functionalist perspective for a model of the channel as an organized behavior system. Forrester (1965), Balderston (1962), Amstutz (1970), and others were exploring the application of simulation methodologies to better understand the dynamics of channel behavior. Economists such as Stigler (1951) and Coase (1937, 1988) were working with models explaining channel evolution, while others were developing concepts of channel conflict and power, initiated in part by the work of Palamountain (1955).

Paralleling this work on developed economies, a team of marketing scholars at Michigan State University led by Charles Slater was completing detailed fieldwork in Latin America (leading to the LAMP reports, summarized in Harrison et al 1974), studying food marketing systems. While the immediate aim was to find ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of food distribution, the empirical studies provided a foundation for further theoretical and empirical modeling of marketing systems (Griggs 1970, Slater et al. 1979).

It was clear from the research being published that the study of marketing systems could be undertaken at differing levels of aggregation (national, regional, or local) or by industry or commodity group, by type of economy (e.g., Goldman [1963] on the marketing structure of the Soviet Union), by stage of development (e.g., Hirsch [1961] on the North Indian sugar industry), or by specific subsystems (e.g., retail, wholesale, vertical systems). It could and did involve varying levels of abstraction, ranging from the pioneering theoretical work of Alderson (1965) on organized behavior systems to the detailed simulations of Balderston (1962). Different approaches to methodology were also used, including the historical study of institutional change (Shapiro and Doody [1968] on the history of American marketing), the construction of formal equilibrium seeking models (e.g., the Richartz [1970] application of game theory to vertical market structures), the econometric work of Preston (1968), the ethnographic studies of Dewey (1962) and her colleagues at Cornell, and the careful empirical analyses of Breyer (1934), Bucklin (1972), Vaile et al. (1952), Cox et al. (1965), and many others.

These streams of research led to the publication of several seminal studies in the mid-1960s. Cox, Alderson, and Shapiro (1964) edited Theory in Marketing: Second Series, in which a number of distinguished scholars from marketing and cognate fields considered the design of marketing theory, marketing agencies, and marketing channels. Perhaps the most important and immediately influential writer at the time, however, was Wroe Alderson, whose last work, Dynamic Marketing Behavior, was published shortly after his death in 1965. In the final chapter, Alderson set down a research agenda for functionalism that is today a continuing challenge to marketing scholars.

Drawing on the work of Vaile, Grether and Cox (1952), Reavis Cox (1965), together with Goodman and Fichandler (Cox, Goodman, and Fichandler 1965), published a detailed study of the national macromarketing system for the United States. This work attempted to answer two important questions: “How large a part does distribution play in a highly developed economy? How effectively does it perform the functions allotted to it in the American way of life?”

This interest in marketing systems was not restricted to the United States. At the Stockholm School of Economics, Mattson (1969) and his colleagues were actively exploring integration and efficiency in the development of marketing systems. In the United Kingdom, Hall, Knapp and Winsten (1961) were studying distribution systems in both the United Kingdom and the United States. In Australia, Briggs and Smyth (1967) published a study of grocery distribution. In 1965, Yoshihiro Tajima published a detailed analysis of how goods were distributed in Japan, later translated into English by Seward (1971). At the FAO in Rome, Abbott (1963, 1968) and his colleagues were grappling with specific design issues in attempting to raise productivity in food marketing systems in developing countries.

The emphasis in the mid-1960s on macromarketing issues was in one sense a culmination of work over many years in the functional, commodity, and institutional approaches to marketing. Within a few years, however, scholarly priorities in the United States had shifted away from a concern with macro issues toward the new horizons opening up in the study of managerial marketing—not only in a business context but in the wider context of social and institutional interaction where a marketing orientation could be applied. Looking back some ten years later, Nickels and Hill (1978) noted that, “the focus on micro-marketing over the last eight years or so has tended to obscure macro-marketing issues.”
This was, to say the least, unfortunate for not only did the impetus that existed in the mid-1960s for cross-disciplinary research into macromarketing rapidly dissipate, but it came at a time when in the United States, there was a growing concern about the impact of business decisions on society and the environment. Protest was in the air, driven by the Nader-inspired concerns with product safety and corporate power, by deep-seated worries about human rights, by the environmental messages inspired by Rachel Carson’s work, by Vietnam, and by the many other forces—economic, social, and technological—that were transforming America. Micromarketing and its impacts were a driving force in many of these changes and challenges. As a consequence of the shifts in scholarly interest, however, many of the questions raised in the 1965 symposium and for which answers were urgently needed had to wait.

**MACROMARKETING: THE MID-1970S**

Reavis Cox (1965) was keenly aware of this risk, fearing that “in our enthusiasm for the mathematical and other mechanisms of decision making . . . we may have begun to lose sight of the fact that marketing is not only a very important managerial responsibility but also a social institution of great significance.”

During the intervening years, despite the shift in research priorities, some progress had been made. Bucklin (1970) edited a collection of articles on vertical marketing systems, which included work on the classification of channel structures, power and conflict in channels, distribution system relevance and efficiency in American society, and channel coordination and economic development. He followed this in 1972 with a detailed review of competition and evolution in the distributive trades in America. Griggs (1970) used data from the LAMP studies in Puerto Rico to build and test a systems model evaluating marketing change. Anderson (1970) studied the distribution system for consumer goods in Thailand. Narver and Savitt (1971) published a “neo-classical synthesis of marketing principles” that showed the marketing economy to be susceptible to “rigorous concepts, definitions, relationships and methods of analysis, all of which are often ignored by the more managerially oriented introductory texts.” This was followed by Reed Moyer (1972), who published an introduction to macromarketing that addressed the rising concern felt by consumers as to the social impact of trends in marketing practice. Economists and marketing scholars such as Bauer and Greyser (1967), Preston (1968), and Comanor and Wilson (1976) explored consumer views of advertising, the economic roles of advertising, and the impact of brand advertising on price and competition. Consumerism was an important reality, and consumer information systems were of increasing interest to marketers (cf. Thorelli and Thorelli 1974, 1977). Allvine and Patterson (1972) published a detailed study of the marketing of gasoline in the United States that made a significant contribution to the understanding of the workings of imperfect competition and for a marketing audience, provided a careful analysis of a significant marketing system. Douglas (1975), in an important but little known book, attempted to build a bridge between contemporary economics and the emerging discipline of marketing.

Meanwhile, the LAMP studies at Michigan State University, led by Charles Slater had been completed, providing detailed insights into food marketing systems in Puerto Rico, Recife, La Paz, the Cauca Valley region in Colombia, and Costa Rica. This work was then extended to Africa where Slater et al. (1979), using channel mapping techniques and detailed field survey data, constructed complex computer models to simulate and to study food systems in Lesotho and the transition to majority rule in Rhodesia.

In August 1976, the first annual macromarketing seminar was held at the University of Colorado in Boulder to “bring together scholars who shared an interest in studying marketing from a societal perspective” (White and Slater 1978, 1). The focus of the seminar was on research into distributive processes from a societal perspective. Although this was a priority, the first order of business was to “clarify and identify the boundaries of macromarketing.” This proved unexpectedly elusive and was an ongoing issue in seminars held through the early 1980s.

As Nickels and Hill (1978) note, the disagreements echoed a wider concern felt by many scholars as to the nature of marketing and its application, stemming from the broadening of the marketing concept suggested by Kotler and Levy (1969) and the subsequent rapid growth of interest in social marketing. Was this taking the logic of marketing too far? Despite this concern, the application of marketing logics by nonbusiness entities was attracting increasing interest from scholars—but was it macromarketing? Hunt (1977b) suggested that the study of marketing could be classified into eight cells created by the interaction of the three dichotomies—positive or normative, micro or macro, and profit or nonprofit. This brought social marketing into focus and gave macromarketing a strong potential role. In the 1977 seminar, Hunt (1977b) went on to suggest that “macromarketing refers to the study of (a) marketing systems, (b) the impact and consequences of marketing systems on society, and (c) the impact and consequences of society on marketing systems.” Hunt (1981) restated this view and noted that macromarketing (a) allows for varying levels of aggregation, (b) includes work on social responsibility and economic development, and (c) picks up the impact of differing legal, political, and social value systems (see also Hunt and Burnett 1982).

Although this would seem to include nearly everything that macromarketing scholars wanted to do, the debate continued into the 1980s and to an extent remains unresolved. Macromarketing is what macromarketers do!
From one point of view, the lack of agreement allowed the new field of study to expand quickly, attracting scholars with a wide range of interests. The informality of the seminars and their shift from locations in Boulder to Rhode Island and then across the United States encouraged active debate and drew participants from both developed and developing countries across the world. From another point of view, however, the lack of an agreed-upon focus made it increasingly difficult to see what needed to be done to develop macromarketing as a subdiscipline within the wider field of marketing. An important step toward a resolution of the problem occurred with the first issue of the Journal of Macromarketing in spring 1981 under the editorship of George Fisk, an enthusiastic, committed, and early pioneer in the field. His “An Invitation to Participate in the Affairs of the Journal of Macromarketing” (Fisk, 1981) set out the criteria that would apply to determine if research was indeed macromarketing. His list reflected the approach suggested by Hunt (1977b, 1981) and led to four topics that could serve to initiate discussion. These were (a) marketing as a life supply support provisioning technology, (b) the quality and quantity of life goals served by marketing, (c) marketing as a technology for mobilizing and allocating economic resources, and (d) the societal consequences of marketing in learning societies.

MACROMARKETING: THE MID-1980S

By the early 1980s, a wide range of topics and ideas were under active discussion in both the annual seminar and in the Journal of Macromarketing. A number of themes began to emerge. These included a concern with the philosophical foundations of macromarketing, theoretical and empirical studies of marketing systems, comparative marketing and the role of marketing systems in economic development, insights into the outcomes of marketing systems, and a growing interest in ethical issues arising from marketing activity.

Monieson (1981, 1988) noted the gap between marketing science and marketing practice and argued that, “We should, while we still have the chance, develop an ecletic tradition in macromarketing” (1981, 15). In a second article, Monieson (1988) deplored the growing intellectualization of macromarketing, as he put it, “a world disenchanted.” He commented that “the reification of marketing proceeds relentlessly,” and went on to note, “To be truly a social science, human values have to be incorporated so that the science of macromarketing is conducted by humans in the service of humans” (p. 4). Dholakia (1988) took the argument a little further, observing that there were three tensions to be resolved—between science and conscience, rigor and relevance, and opulence and authenticity. Hunt (1989) took issue with the concerns raised by Monieson and Dholakia, arguing for “reason and rational discourse as a preferred method for making a difference” (p. 9). Monieson (1989) in a spirited rebuttal disagreed with Hunt’s analysis, arguing that as a social science, macromarketing needed something more than “instrumental empirical science” and that the something more was hermeneutics (interpretation) and critical rationalism (criticism). He concluded, “Only then can reenchantment begin” (p. 15). Levin (1991) contributed a philosopher’s addendum to this debate.

The issues raised reflected the emergence during the 1980s of two diverging streams of research—one focused on achieving a critical, holistic, and sometimes radical understanding of the consumption experience of individuals, households and communities; the other focused on building a systematic, often positive, often normative, understanding of the complex systems at the center of marketing theory and practice. The first stream found a clear expression of the central ideas in Firat, Dholakia, and Bagozzi (1987) and the second in Fisk (1986).

The study of marketing systems was an important part of macromarketing in the 1980s and ranged from the abstract (Dowling 1983; Reidenbach and Oliva 1983; Dixon 1984; Layton 1985) to an exploration of the concept of domesticated markets by Redmond (1989) to the empirical work on trade flows of Layton (1981a, 1981b, 1984, 1989) and of Ingene (1983, 1984) on spatial marketing systems to the work on national industry policy explored in a special section of the Journal of Macromarketing in 1987. Paralleling this was a series of articles on comparative marketing systems and the role of marketing in economic development. Both streams had their origins in the early years of macromarketing. In 1981, in a colloquium on comparative marketing, Barksdale and Anderson (1981) set out a research program, and El-Ansary and Liebrenz (1981) explored the use of a multistage modeling approach. In 1985, Kaynak (1985) compared the domestic retailing systems of Canada and Sweden, and Dahlinger and Hilger (1985) contrasted public food marketing in India and Mexico. In a wider setting concerned with the role of marketing systems in economic development, Dixon (1981), Darian (1985), and Kaufman (1987) introduced a historical perspective; several authors contributed valuable surveys of the field, including Cundiff (1982), Wood and Vitell (1986), Kumcu and Firat (1988), Hosley and Wee (1988), and Joy and Ross (1989); and a range of situation- or country-specific studies were reported, including Etgar (1983) on a failure in marketing technology transfer in rice distribution in the Ivory Coast, Dholakia (1984) on family planning in India, Dominguez and Vanmarcke (1987) on market organization and structure in Venezuela, Ortiz-Buonofina (1987) concerned with channel efficiency in Guatemalan retail systems, Kumcu and Kumcu (1987) looking at food retailing systems in Turkey, and Dadzie et al. (1989) on bank savings in Ghana as an example of successful technology transfer. Plattner (1985) provided a survey of contemporary work in economic anthropology that added further depth to the macromarketing studies. Interest in marketing and economic development continued to grow throughout the 1980s, and in 1986, the first of the biannual meetings on marketing and development took place in Istanbul. This had the effect of significantly widening the range of contributors to...
the field, bringing in authors from developing countries, from public agencies, and from cognate disciplines such as economic anthropology.

Marketing systems have intended as well as unintended outcomes and, not surprisingly, both have been the subjects of much research in macromarketing. During the 1980s, important contributions were made to our understanding of these effects. Public policy considerations were at the forefront in Carman’s (1982) concern with private property and channel regulation, Venkatesh and Burger’s (1984) proposal for an integrated theory of consumer regulation, and Harris and Carman’s (1983, 1984, 1986) review of market failures, regulatory responses, and implications for marketing and public policy. Market alienation was discussed by Bearden and Mason (1983), which raised a matter that would become of increasing interest and importance. Equity considerations in the workings of public policy were examined by Crompton and Lamb (1983a, 1983b) and by Dixon (1983). Distributive justice was an important element in Klein’s (1987) use of macromarketing theory to analyze the bishops’ economic letter; which was issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1984. He concluded that, “the humanistic, moral viewpoint proposed is in harmony with a macromarketing perspective, but that it fails to resolve a number of paradoxes facing policymakers” (p. 77). Interest in these and other aspects of public policy led to the establishment of the Journal of Marketing and Public Policy in 1982, a name that was quickly changed to the Journal of Public Policy and Marketing.

From the outset, environmental impact worries attracted macromarketing attention. Fisk (1981) in his opening statement of Journal of Macromarketing policy highlighted the “quality and quantity of life goals served by marketing” (p. 2) as one of the important areas where work was needed. The trade-offs implicit in the pursuit of higher living standards and improved quality of life were important and attracted increasing attention. Barnes (1982) focused on recycling, and Antil (1984) and Leigh et al. (1988) focused on socially responsible consumption. Changing patterns of consumption were the subject of an article by Firat and Dholakia (1982) and a later discussion of the consumer dream in the United States by Dholakia and Levy (1987). In the related field of consumer satisfaction-dissatisfaction studies, conference proceedings were published from 1977 through 1985 and followed by a Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior from 1988.

The last of the major macromarketing themes identified earlier as emerging in the 1980s centered on the ethical issues raised by marketing system choices and outcomes. Dixon (1982) drew attention to the ethical system implicit in the eighteenth-century view of the market mechanism acting to transform private choice into public interest. He noted that “the market system operates in conjunction with an ethical system, each derived from inherent motives” (p. 45). Laczniak (1983) discussed three ethical frameworks that could be of help in addressing ethical issues in marketing practice. Hunt and Vitell (1986) went beyond a normative approach to develop a positive theory of marketing ethics that they used to explain some empirical findings. Ferrell et al. (1989) provided a synthesis of ethical decision models in marketing and derived an integrated model that blended individual and organizational factors.

Although the enthusiasm and commitment of many scholars to macromarketing in any of its variants was evident by the end of the 1980s, there was a growing concern that “macromarketing failed to be in the center of the stage of marketing thought” (Sheth 1992, 154; see also Tamilia 1992). Sheth suggested several possible explanations: (1) competing conceptualizations had taken the attention of scholars, (2) macromarketing was seen as “the conscience of marketing practice” and had less appeal in an environment where objectivity and scientific enquiry were seen as desirable, (3) macromarketing was too broad and too institutional (echoes of the marketing past!), (4) possible methodological deficiencies existed, and (5) “lack of a well accepted conceptual framework or theory.” It was the last of these that Sheth thought was the most likely explanation, although all might have contributed to the problem.

**MACROMARKETING: THE MID-1990S**

In an insightful review of research on firms and environments, Davis (2005) noted that the “normal science approach to theory development and testing has been largely abandoned in empirical work in organization theory since the late 1980s” (p. 479). It was becoming increasingly clear at that time that the traditional concept of an organization with clearly defined boundaries containing its members was inadequate. The growth of networked enterprises, the international dispersion of production, and global flows of capital (all based on the new technologies of information and communication) were combining to create new business models that just did not fit the older theoretical frameworks.

These same forces together with a growing awareness of the social, economic, and environmental challenges posed by a global culture of consumption were also reshaping the field of macromarketing in much the same way. The “normal science” stream of research can be seen in Meade and Nason (1991), who proposed a unified theory of macromarketing as “the study of the complex coordination and control processes underpinning growth, evolution and design of exchange systems” (p. 72), suggesting that this would provide a rich conceptual framework in which to unify earlier work and focus empirical research. In the same issue of the Journal of Macromarketing, Dixon (1991); Sybrandy, Pirog, and Turinga (1991); and Layton (1991) added historical and empirical breadth to the modeling of marketing systems. At much the same time, Wilkinson (1990), working with the new insights emerging from the mathematical study of complexity, developed abstract models of channel growth and change.
Interest, however, soon moved away from the formulation of an integrated theory and the study of systems per se and toward a problem-oriented exploration of the wider impact of marketing processes on both developed and developing societies. This led to studies of environmental issues, such as sustainable consumption (Kilbourne et al. 1997) and materials recycling through reverse channels (Fuller et al. 1996), to a consideration of policy-related questions, such as the impact of taxes on interstate mail-order sales (Mittelstaedt and Stassen 1991) and the effect of punitive damages on marketing and public policy (Morgan and Stoltman 1992), to studies of marketing in developing or transitional economies, such as the work of Cordell (1993) in the study of craft cooperatives in a transitional economy and of Shultz (1997) and his colleagues in the redevelopment of war-ravaged economies.

This shift in focus was given added impetus by the growing interest in marketing history. Although historical research had been part of macromarketing from its earliest days and articles from the biannual Conference on Historical Analysis & Research in Marketing had often been published in the Journal of Macromarketing, it was in 1994 that the journal began a regular history section. The articles that appeared in this section ranged from a study of the use of the engineering metaphor in marketing (Scully 1996) to “peddling the bicycle in the 1890s” (Petty 1995) to the role of the Varangian-Rus warrior-merchants in the establishment of the Russian state (Dixon 1998) to a study of department stores as innovations in retail marketing in Wilhelmine, Germany (Coles 1999).

The problem-oriented approach could also be seen in what was perhaps the most important and far reaching development in the 1990s—the rapid growth of interest in understanding the nature and effects of a culture of consumption and in quality-of-life outcomes and measures. Both had roots in the 1980s, found for example in the work of Firat, Dholakia, and Bagozzi (1987) on philosophical and radical thought in marketing and of Dholakia and Levy (1987) on the consumer dream in the United States. Typical of the interest in quality-of-life studies was the work of Sirgy et al. (1991, 1994) on aspects of the health system and of Ahuvia and Friedman (1998) on wealth and well-being. This interest led in 1995 to the establishment of the International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies. The interrelationships between culture and consumption have been of increasing interest not only in macromarketing but also in the cognate fields of economic sociology and economic anthropology. Much of the work that was done in macromarketing in this decade drew on postmodernist thinking, captured in an extended review by Holbrook (1995), well summarized by Venkatesh (1999) and, from 1999 on, published in a new journal titled Consumption, Markets and Culture.

MACROMARKETING IN 2005

Forty years after the American Marketing Association conference in Washington, it is appropriate now to try to put the work of the intervening years into perspective. One approach would be to return to Hunt’s (1981, 8) proposal. He suggests that, “macromarketing refers to the study of (1) marketing systems, (2) the impact and consequence of marketing systems on society, and (3) the impact and consequence of society on marketing systems.”

As Hunt (1981) noted, marketing systems exist at various levels of aggregation. For example, they can be studied in terms of the aggregate marketing system (cf. Wilkie and Moore 1999); regional or product groupings (e.g., peasant markets in Java, food marketing in Northeast Brazil, and secondhand clothing in Zambia; Alexander 1987; Dewey 1962; Hansen 2000); or business ecosystems (e.g., indigenous leather working cluster in West Africa and Hindustan Lever in India; Arnould and Mohr 2005; Prahalad 2005). They may also be examined in terms of historical and current places (e.g., the Renaissance bazaar and open-air markets in Lithuania (Brotton 2002; Hohnen 2003), the evolution of markets over time (e.g., freshwater fisheries in a Chinese community; Wang 2005), or participants (e.g., shoppers in Australia; Kingston 1994). In each case, the focus is on one or more marketing systems—in part or whole—and at varying levels of aggregation. As such, it is the role of the marketing system to accomplish the Aldersonian function of sorting that distinguishes the marketing system from other economic subsystems. This does not exclude product transformation as a significant element or elements in the marketing system; rather, it emphasizes the essential nature of marketing in a marketing system.

The study of a marketing system will often involve careful analysis of one or more of the essential components—the environment of the system, the components of the system, THE system attributes and properties, and the outcomes resulting from system activity. Some examples of the forces or factors that might be considered in each of these categories are set out in Table 1.

In terms of Hunt’s (1977b) definition of macromarketing, studies that focus on outcomes fall into his second category. Those that primarily concern the impacts of environmental (in the broad sense) factors on the working of a marketing system fall into the third category, and those that consider a marketing system and its properties fall into the first category. As an example of the way Table 1 might be used in framing a macromarketing study, consider questions that could be asked about the emergence of cyber markets as marketing systems. System environment issues include scope, participants, governance, rules, and accepted behavior patterns. A focus on components might center on transaction costs, roles played by the participants, nature of their relationships, role of trust, and trading mechanisms such as auctions, flows of information, finance, and risk. A study of system attributes and characteristics could lead to a consideration of the source of value-added trade-offs between cooperation and competition, parallels with peasant marketing systems, and capacity for self-organization. A concern with outcomes might lead to a study of market or trading efficiencies, access issues, relative pricing, distributional effects, potential criminality, externalities, and
### Environment, Initial Conditions, Boundaries, Inputs\(^a\)

| Scope: global, national, regional, local; single product, multiproduct; tangibles, intangibles |
| Location: time, space; fixed, floating; physical attributes |
| Participants: international entities, nations, regions, firms, groups, individuals; motivations, objectives, goals |
| Aggregation: levels (nodes as subsystems), suprasystems |
| Economic development: preindustrial, industrial, postindustrial; static, transitional, modern, postmodern |
| Boundary conditions: open, closed system; imposed, implied |
| Governance: central control, limited/mixed, networks |
| Rules: formal, informal; external, internal; enforcement; property rights; entry, exit |
| Endowment: tangible, intangible resources; physical, financial, knowledge, social capital; technology levels and access |
| Patterns of behavior: traditional or modern marketing practice; traditional or modern customer/consumption patterns; perceptions of marketing and marketing systems |
| Level of technology: low tech, high tech; simple exchange to eBay trading; acceptance level |
| Cultural context: demography, religion, education, social structures, social change, government; impacts on individuals, groups; concern for minorities; history; morality perceptions; values (collective or individual) |
| Incentives: formal, informal |
| Institutional setting: role of government, law, finance, risk, regulatory context |
| Political setting: stability, crisis, revolution, war, recovery; terrorism; degree of predictability |
| Infrastructure: transport, communication |
| Physical environment: benign, changing, challenging; low risk, high risk; risks known, unknown. |
| System environment: stable, changing, turbulent; simple, complex; supportive, competitive, confrontational; predictable, probabilistic, uncertain |

### Components\(^b\)

| Transaction and related costs |
| Nodes: roles (e.g., traders or intermediaries, suppliers, customers) |
| Decision processes: options, choice, information, risk, values/ethics; business models |
| Resource allocation across nodes: tangible, intangible; access options |
| Exchange elements: physical products, services, experiences |
| Linkages: exchange, transactions, transvections; fixed, random; precise, fuzzy; capacity constraints; physical, electronic |
| Relationships: arm’s length, related; trust, guanxi, contractual |
| Activities: sorting, shifting (time, space), assorting, transforming |
| Stakeholders: public, private; employee, consumer |
| Markets: bazaars, auctions; traditional, modern; bargaining, negotiated, fixed price; physical, electronic; real, virtual |
| Subsystems: marketing systems as subsystems; dual, parallel, gray, black; distribution of power; interactions |

### Attributes\(^b\)

| Static/equilibrium attributes |
| Nodes: number, distribution: size, resource/power access, linkages, centratlity, heterogeneity |
| Nodal relationships: nil, arm’s length; competitive, cooperative, associated, controlled |
| Linkage characteristics: fixed, random; cooperation/competition; cohesion/conflict; stability/change |
| Flows through linkages: transfers of information, ownership, possession, risk, finance; volumes, capacity levels; fixed, random; timing; response speeds |
| Nodal location of value added, profit allocations |
| Connectivity: level; thresholds; shortest, longest distance (channel length); small-world measures; dynamics |
| Micro- to macroaggregation: summation, emergence |
| Patterns, clusters, coalitions: existent, emergent |
| Dynamic/adaptive system attributes |
| Stability characteristics: response to small, moderate, large, catastrophic shock |
| Capacity to learn, adapt |
| Environment system linkages |
| Emergent characteristics: stress points, fractures, groupings |
| Shifts over system participants, in resources, capital assets, power |
| Complex adaptive system (CAS) attributes: self-organization, edge of chaos, evolutionary responses, coevolution, power laws |
| Degree of innovation: adaptive, evolutionary, disruptive |

### Outcomes\(^b\)

| Characteristics: static, dynamic; shifts, jumps, discontinuities, mutation, change |
| Economic outcomes: GNP equivalents, flow measures, value added, productivity measures, excess capacity; efficiency (partial, holistic, short term, long term) |
culture change, particularly where remote communities might be involved.

Using Table 1 as a frame of reference takes us back to the question, where does macromarketing stand today? To what extent has the knowledge accumulated over the past forty years or so deepened our understanding of the workings of marketing systems—in differing economic and social settings and at differing levels of aggregation—and enhanced our capacity to suggest design options for policy makers that might remedy outcome deficiencies or alter trade-offs for the benefit of society? While a careful and detailed analysis of the macromarketing literature, along the lines suggested by the Hunt (1977b) definition and summarized in Table 1, is beyond the scope of this article, it is our impression that a great deal has been done addressing outcomes, but relatively little has emerged that looks at the operation of a marketing system (implicitly or explicitly, either directly or as part of an analysis of outcomes or inputs). If our impression of the state of macromarketing research is correct, then perhaps the time is ripe for a reevaluation that draws out the implications of past work for our understanding of marketing systems, identifies the gaps that need to be filled, and considers research priorities that may contribute to an increasingly firm base for policy choices and outcomes.

**FUTURE CHALLENGES IN MACROMARKETING: ONE SCENARIO**

The following discussion concerns a research scenario that focuses on the twelve challenges in Table 2. The scenario is rooted in the macromarketing community’s intellectual and normative traditions, the premise that marketing is a significant social institution, and (such as the diverse questions in the 1965 symposium) a desire to understand the workings of marketing systems at some level of aggregation. The challenges touch on many symposium topics, such as marketing systems and public policy, the environment, institutional factors, risks, and development. They deal with the impact of marketing on society, the impact of society on marketing, and marketing’s life supply role and other possible roles and responsibilities. They concern boundaries between marketing and other social institutions, how well marketing systems serve societal and disadvantaged persons’ needs, growth and change in marketing institutions, and commonalities and differences in marketing systems and environments. They also relate to topics in recent award-winning articles and the Special Issue, relationships and interdependencies among participants and institutions in marketing systems, the interplay of marketing systems and other systems in and across societies, and the overlapping roles of and blurred demarcations of marketing and other (e.g., political and religious) systems (cf. Carman and Domínguez 2001; Hill and Dhanda 2004; Kale 2004; Kilbourne 2004; Mittelstaedt 2002). At the outset, we stress that these challenges comprise only one scenario and acknowledge that no single scenario can include all facets of issues that merit investigation.

In Table 2, we list the challenges under thematic sections in the Journal of Macromarketing: competition and markets, marketing ethics and distributive justice, marketing and development, global policy and environment, and quality of life. This grouping does not exactly mirror macromarketing knowledge and some challenges may overlap sections (Grossbart...
What is the interplay between competition inside and competition outside conventionally defined markets? Macromarketing scholars focus on competition inside markets. They give less attention to out of market competition, which involves marketers’ individual or collective efforts to shape the terms of competition that are affected by groups such as legislative and regulatory bodies, consumer advocacy organizations, trade associations, and professional organizations (Forbes 1982). Terms of competition involve production and composition of goods and services and when, where, and how they are sold, for example, distribution, prices, terms of sale, who can buy or sell them, and relationships and communications among competitors and customers.

Marketers cultivate and use relational resources to affect the terms of competition and to gain advantages for some firms (e.g., industries, value-creating networks of allies, suppliers, distributors, and particular customers; Falkenberg 1996) and to create disadvantages for competitors. Efforts to shape these terms may serve marketers’ interests but not benefit society (Harris and Carman 1983). Arndt (1981) refers to such dysfunctional effects as external perversions of the political and economic control systems. Macromarketing scholars may offer insights on the efforts and resources devoted to shape the terms of competition. They also may examine the short-term incremental effects of out of market competition, its evolving character over time, and its cumulative longer term outcomes across marketing systems and parallel political marketplaces in different societies. Out of market competition raises issues of political economy, political influence, and power (Cornwell and Drennan 2004), which exist in market-based societies and other settings when there are business-government links (Dixon and Polyakov 1997) or private-sector coalitions that evolve into collusive partnerships (Vann and Kumcu 1995). Researchers recognize the importance of political matters on a micro level (e.g., in channels of distribution), but they give less attention to their roles on a macro level (Arndt 1981).

**Noncompetition and markets.** Marketers and public officials try to lessen and avoid competition via varied means such as alliances, mergers, consolidations, acquisitions among competitors, regional- or international-level trade pacts, and marketing agreements. Their initiatives may also include negotiated relationships, coordinated interdependencies among organizations, and other efforts to create domesticated markets (Arndt 1981; Redmond 1989). Often, they do not produce their predicted private or societal benefits.

What implicit or explicit assumptions underlie such efforts? Given the abstractness and complexities of marketing systems, marketers and public officials may have varied and unduly narrow or distorted views about their nature, operations, costs, and effects (Ellis and Pecotich 2002). What perceptions of marketing systems foster private and governmental efforts to avoid competition? How do these views affect these individuals’ expectations about the benefits of
avoiding or reducing competition? Other issues concern actual and perceived effects. Efforts to avoid or reduce competition may have intended or unintended outcomes that marketers and public officials may not detect. How do these initiatives affect the components and attributes of marketing systems and societal interests (see Table 1)? How does an understanding of marketing systems help explain why such efforts succeed or fail to achieve their goals and when noncompetition may serve private and societal interests? How do marketers’ and public officials’ views of marketing systems shape their recognition and evaluation of the outcomes?

**Nature and roles of marketplaces.** Marketplaces are important parts of marketing systems and not merely commercial settings. They may also be social, recreational, cultural, political, civic, and religious places, with varying levels of formality, festiveness, and entertainment. The interplay of marketing and society is partly visible in ongoing, periodic, or temporary marketplaces, such as downtown business areas, shopping malls, trade shows, car boot sales, swap meets, farmers’ markets, and flea markets (cf. Green, Mandhachitara, and Smith 2001; Hohnen 2003; Peñaloza 2000; Pryor and Grossbart 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Sherry 1990).

Their mixes of activities, designs, architectures, and amenities reflect and affect the embeddedness of marketing and community life (cf. Arnold and Fisher 1996). They impact communities’ identities, characters, and social and economic development; goods and services options; tourism; shopping; employment; tax revenues; property values; physical infrastructures; social interaction; civic engagement; and political, religious, cultural, and aesthetic life. The outcomes may be positive if marketplace viability, development, and community life are mutually reinforcing, but they may not seem salutary if they conflict with some marketers’ and consumers’ interests or views. For example, observers note that the changes in some downtown areas in the United States and Europe erode communities’ social and economic foundations and create varied dysfunctional effects (cf. Lewis 1994; Oldenburg 1999; Rohwedder 1993; Shils 1997; Stone 1997).

How are marketing and community life in marketplaces embedded in one another? How does this embeddedness relate to factors in Table 1, such as community environments (e.g., governance, social capital, and patterns of behavior), components and attributes of marketing systems in marketplaces (e.g., nodal relationships, emergent coalitions, and adaptability), and outcomes (e.g., resource allocations and quality-of-life of citizens)? What are marketers’ and consumers’ roles in cocreating the relationships, flows, activities, and meanings in marketplaces (McIntyre and Kale 1988; Peñaloza 2000; Pryor and Grossbart 2005b)? How do marketplaces affect and reflect the fluidity or changing natures of marketers’ and consumers’ roles (Agnew 1994)? How may marketplace viability and community life and development be mutually reinforcing or at odds? What are the public policy implications of these interdependencies and tensions?

**Marketing history.** Historical research offers insights on competition and markets, with knowledge on the contexts in which marketing ideas, institutions, and methods develop and become outmoded, and the competitive character of markets, marketing practices, and factors that shape market conditions (cf. Carsky, Dickinson, and Canedy 1988; Coles 1999; Petty 1995; Rassuli and Holland 1986; Scully 1996). Historical work on out of market competition and noncompetition and markets may expand this knowledge. It may shed light on business-government interdependencies and interactions (cf. Dixon 2001; Kitchell 1995; Porter 1996). It may highlight benefits and destabilizing effects of noncompetition because of business-government alignments (cf. Kaufman 1987). It may show how business or government efforts to shape the terms of competition may alter the marketing system but not yield expected benefits because of countervailing forces (Keep 1994). It also may raise issues about social factors and noncompetitive arrangements among firms. For instance, did such ties emerge when certain groups were subjected to marginalization or segregation? Were they adaptive means to help firms navigate economic detours caused by lack of social acceptance, discrimination, and economic exclusion (Davis 2002)? Did they end, persist, or evolve into other types of ties as periods of discrimination were punctuated by episodes of rapid social change and acceptance (Branchik 2002)?

These matters relate to alternative interpretations of marketing as an economic versus social process (Arnold and Fisher 1996; Ellis and Pecotich 2002). Examples from marketing history and the history of marketing thought suggest that economic and social spheres may be intertwined and inseparable (cf. Hill, Hirschman, and Bauman 1997; Rassuli and Tippins 1997; Shaw 1995). This overlap was noted by some economists but (intentionally or not) was glossed over by economic and marketing theorists who adopted a microanalytic focus (Dixon 1999). In this regard, historians may enlighten us about the interplay and blurred distinctions among marketing, economic, social, political, cultural, religious, recreational, and other facets of life in marketplaces in different societies and time periods (Dixon 1998). Evidence of this interplay is at least as old as accounts of the mixes of such activities at the Greek Olympic Games and Athenian Agora (Dixon 1995).

Arguably, the coexistence and blurredness of these diverse activities imply that marketplaces’ process structures (i.e., patterns of activities over time; Wilkinson 1990) cannot be gauged in only economic or marketing terms. Historical research may help us understand the interplay of marketing systems and other systems inside and outside marketplaces (Meade and Nason 1991). For example, how did the process structures of marketplaces differ in alternative periods and places? How were they linked to communal, regional, and societal life? How did complementary, reinforcing, and conflicting facets of life affect marketplaces’ meanings and structures? What were the outcomes of changes in process
structures? These insights may help us learn about the roles of marketplaces and foster inquiries on how they are affected by factors such as new forms of competition, tourism, globalization, and disintermediation of marketing institutions (cf. Alon 2004; Belk and Costa 1995; Cornwell and Drennan 2004; Mittelstaedt and Stassen 1994).

Marketing Ethics and Distributive Justice

Marketing efficiency and injustice. From a political economy view, marketing-economic efficiency issues should not be divorced from polity, distributive justice, and equity issues (Vann and Kumcu 1995). Marketing’s societal contributions depend on the interplay of marketers’ self-interests, ethics, and public policy (Dixon 1982; Wilkie and Moore 1999). Thus, they may be in doubt if efficiency notions conflict with views of justice, ethics, and morality. Do such discrepancies exist? Can they be resolved? Do marketers and public officials myopically define marketing efficiency so as to omit matters of justice and morality (Crane 2000; Crompton and Lamb 1983a, 1983b; Dixon 1983; Lee and Sirgy 2004; Williams and Murphy 1990)? Can an expanded set of indicia of marketing performance (Andreasen 1982) be developed so that judgments on the efficiencies of marketing activities reflect justice/injustice and socially beneficial/harmful outcomes?

Can more holistic evaluations of efficiency lead to better decisions by firms and public agencies, even if they do not include all immediate or eventual effects? For example, can a quality-of-life marketing approach based on beneficence and nonmaleficence be used for this purpose (Lee and Sirgy 2004)? More generally, can evaluations of efficiencies from institutional reforms in transition economies be expanded to include injustices because of destabilization of the social order, displacement of some employees in the short term, and longer-term gains to society (Carman and Dominguez 2001)? Can less myopic estimates of efficiency be made via methods that involve interaction among constituencies such as pluralistic coalitions (Vann and Kumcu 1995), dialogic idealism (Nill and Shultz 1997), communicative approaches (Nill 2003), and inclusion of varied stakeholders in planning (Shultz, Rahtz, and Speece 2004)? Are some methods more suited to deal with specific types of potential conflicts between efficiency and justice, ethics, and morality?

Moral and ethical issues in assessment of societal risks of marketing. Potential risks of marketing systems are of increasing interest in public policy circles. The salience of different types of risk (e.g., those that are economic, physical, ecological, social, or psychological in nature) depends on the context. For example, they may relate to product safety, transportation, disposal systems, packaging, labeling, advertising, media content, and entertainment. They may concern buying, delivery, and consumption of services or service providers’ credentials. They may involve market dysfunctions and vulnerabilities of subgroups (e.g., children and the elderly; Baker, Gentry, and Rittenburg 2005).

Judgments about such risks affect governmental decisions on marketing systems. Understanding their moral and ethical dimensions is a challenge. How do moral and ethical concerns impact public policy assessments of marketing-related risks and interventions into marketing systems? How do such concerns compare to marketers’ moral reflections (Bone and Corey 1998)? What are the moral and ethical implications when risk assessments involve trade-offs among stakeholders (e.g., consumers and firms) and persons who are already economically, socially, and politically disadvantaged (cf. Hill 2004; Hill and Dhanda 2004; Hunt and Vitell 1986; Lacziak 1983)? What are the ramifications of such risk assessments from the moral and ethical perspectives of academics and philosophers, public policy advisors, consumers, managers, or employees (Crane 2000)?

Biases and omissions, which affect how individuals gauge risks, psychologically respond, and act on the basis of their risk estimates, add to the inevitable complexity and subjectivity in public policy risk assessments. For instance, consumers may be emotionally disadvantaged by the presence or absence of product information (e.g., in terms of so-called worry budgets) but may not act in accordance with their concerns (Baron 2004; Johnson 2004). Do risk-related biases and omissions also affect public policy makers’ evaluations and decisions about marketing? Should public policy interventions into marketing systems reflect consumers’ views despite evidence of consumers’ biases in evaluating and acting on the basis of perceived risks? What are the moral and ethical implications of basing public policy on consumers’ likely behaviors versus their likely psychological responses to risks? What are the ramifications of a public policy emphasis on psychological effects in selective cases (e.g., to avoid creation of anxiety among the elderly)?

Marketing as force for sacrifice and delayed gratification. In what ways and contexts do marketing systems foster sacrifice and delayed gratification? In what respects are these outcomes economically, socially, and culturally beneficial or dysfunctional and in concert or conflict with normative guidelines or ethical precepts (see Table 1)?

Marketing is often depicted (and criticized) as a way to stimulate consumption in the current period or near future, but some observers note that it may also foster desires for and deliver higher standards of living (Cox 1965; Wilkie and Moore 1999). Some components of higher living standards may be costly and consumed over a long period, e.g., housing, durable goods, and continued health care (Dholakia and Levy 1987; Leelakuklthanit, Day, and Walters 1991). To get them, consumers may have to extend their planning horizons, earn more than is needed for current consumption, save, and delay gratification. Marketing may be socially beneficial if it fosters sacrifice and delayed gratification when these tendencies do not exist. In doing so, it may contribute to improved agricultural and business methods, family savings, and responsiveness to incentives for continued productive employment. These
outcomes are consistent with the idea that satisfying demands for material possessions motivates consumers to be industrious income earners (cf. Dröge et al. 1993; Thorelli 1986).

Yet productivity and income effects may not create enhanced consumer satisfaction or sense of well-being (Ahuvia and Friedman 1998). Dysfunctional outcomes may occur if marketing promotes visions of standards of living that are unmet or unattainable (Dholakia and Levy 1987). Consumers may become more absorbed with their own lives, materialistic, selfish, alienated, disenchanted, and less interested in public problems and public goods (Dröge et al. 1993). To pursue their elevated desires, they may become less willing to help other persons or groups, pay taxes for the common good, and consider the welfare of future generations. Hopefully, scholars will investigate these and other possible economic, social, cultural, and ethical consequences of marketing’s influences on sacrifice and delayed gratification.

Marketing history. Historical analyses may reveal how ideas on efficiency and injustice and normative aspects of risk assessments differ within and across societies over time (cf. Arnold and Fisher 1996; Dixon 1981; Kaufman 1987). Marketing literature often neglects or obfuscates these matters. For example, as Dixon (1982) notes, a conventional idea is that marketing often operates in a market-based system in which a self-regulating market mechanism transforms private interests into public interest. Yet works by Adam Smith and his contemporaries, which form the basis for such systems, suggest that a coexistent ethical system is requisite for this outcome. Research may uncover the roots of the conventional view. It may also highlight the tensions between marketing efficiency and injustice and actors’ views on the risks of marketing to society in different contexts.

Arguably, historical work on marketing, consumer desire, and consumption implies that sacrifice and wealth accumulation may be alternatives to and facilitators of consumption and that normative views on marketing, sacrifice, and delayed gratification may depend on personal motives and a society’s economic, technological, and socioenvironmental nature (cf. Dixon 2001; Rassuli and Hollander 1986). These ideas may be refined by studying possible parallels between the cultural meanings of sacrifice and delayed gratification versus consumption objects (Tharp and Scott 1990). For example, consumers’ sacrifices and delayed gratifications may have had varied meanings in different historical contexts, in terms of ancestral and ethnic ties, status communication, relations among groups and collectivities, communal expression, rituals linked to perceived functional needs and obligations; and strivings for transcendence. These insights may inform us about actors’ orientations and bases for their ethical views on sacrifice and delayed gratification. They also may foster work on contemporary meanings, ethical notions, and public policy implications of sacrifice and delayed gratification in different societies.

Marketing and Development/Global Policy and Environment

Marketing as a force for peace and conflict. How do relationships and activities in marketing systems directly and indirectly promote or lessen regional and international cooperation and conflict? Alderson (1965) argues that there is a positive relationship between marketing and international stability, because conflict is less likely if trading nations prosper. Dröge, Calantone, Argrawal, and Mackoy (1993, 34) note the view that consumer culture strengthens trade, thus making war less likely. Shultz et al. (2005) also suggest how marketing systems build bases for peace by enhancing community cohesion, the collective psyche of citizens, bonds among people and groups, global inclusion, sustainable development, technology transfer, and quality of life for inhabitants.

Yet marketing also may be a source of tensions. For instance, trade may be problematic if it includes arms, slaves, sex tourism, endangered or exotic animals, child labor, or environmentally harmful items (Cornwell and Drennan 2004; Shultz 1997). Marketing may also add to, cater to, or highlight disparities or concentrations of wealth and benefits in and among societies (Dixon and Polyakov 1997; Duhaime, McTavish, and Ross 1985; Hill, Hirschman, and Bauman 1997; Hosley and Wee 1988). Moreover, marketers, citizens, or public officials in some nations may object to what they see as the corrupt or abhorrent practices and offerings that marketing activity requires or induces (Alon 2004; Belk and Groves 1999; Eckhardt and Mahi 2004). Marketing may also contribute to consumption, lifestyles, and technology that conflict with local institutions and have undesirable environmental, social, and economic effects (Hill and Dhanda 2004). Tensions may grow because marketing systems’ ecological effects transcend national boundaries (cf. Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997). In addition, the use of media, information technology, and cyberspace may increase the porosity of borders and the diffusion rates of innovations. These effects may foster reterritorialization, deterritorialization, social and political instability, and conflicts in and among groups and nations (Kale 2004).

Are such tensions caused by misapplications of marketing practices (Dadzie, Akaah, and Dunson 1989), misinterpretations of the purposes of marketing systems (Grossbart and Rahtz 2004; Fisk 1981), misalignments of marketing systems with societal contexts and needs (Nason and White 1981), or misunderstandings about the interplay between marketing and society (Mittelstaedt 2002)? Can marketing or social marketing be used to reduce these tensions? Can macromarketing paradigms and marketing systems be adapted to deal with tensions caused by changing societal conditions and strained relationships among nations (Kilbourne 2004; Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997)?
Marketing and institution building and failure in development. Institutions refer to the conditions and rules for interactions (e.g., transactions) and organizational entities in marketing systems (Arndt 1981). Public policies that gloss over the why’s (goals) of development can lead to poorly reasoned pursuits of unfocused economic growth, modernity, global involvement, and new technology that harm these institutions and other facets of society. Seeking growth as an end in itself can cause exploitive expansion and destabilizing distributions of income and wealth (Hosley and Wee 1988). Assuming that modernity is a uniform state or that globalization is a path to a uniform future (versus a complex set of communication, distribution, financial, and other links or flows; Anderson et al. 2003; Kilbourne 2004; Kumcu and Kumcu 1987) can lead to imitation of unsustainable policies. Equating technology with progress, ignoring or assuming requisite skills and knowledge to follow its acquisition, and undermining its ecological, social, and economic costs can foster misguided adoption of innovations (Bonsu 1998; Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997). Development should be seen as a route to goals in varied domains (e.g., work and family) and spheres of life (economic, political, social, educational, consumptive, health, safety, technological, environmental, and organizational; Fisk 1981). These goals can help guide decisions on subordinate matters (e.g., specific priorities, the actors involved, markets and value chain components, and timing and pace of change; Grossbart and Rahtz 2004), complex trade-offs (e.g., quality of life of the destitute in war-ravaged areas; Shultz 1997), and substantive freedoms (agent autonomy, civil rights, cultural integrity, social choice mechanisms, social and distributive justice, gender equality, security, transparency, health, nutrition, education, sustainability, and environmental quality; Cornwell and Drennan 2004; Dixon and Polyakov 1997; Kilbourne 2004).

Gearing development to a nation’s goals demands inclusiveness, clarity, reflexivity, and balance. It requires appreciation of citizens’ involvement and the cultural, social, political, and economic setting (Fisk 1981; Nason and White 1981; Taylor and Omura 1994). It involves grasp of internal and external actors (Dadzie, Akah, and Dunson 1989; Dahab, Gentry, and Sohi 1996) and their needs, competencies, and ties to markets and value chains (Arellano 1994; Bonsu 1998; Cordell 1993; Dahringer 1983). It calls for awareness that the dynamic adaptations (Carman and Dominguez 2001) and institutions that fit a society’s goals and marketing system may not match external models (Curry 2003; Ortiz-Buonofina 1987; Vann and Kumcu 1995). It also entails insight that the timing and pace of change may cause conflicts and impede development (Kaufman 1987).

How can development policy incorporate citizens’ views and be aligned with local life goals and priorities (Fisk 1981; Nason and White 1981; Nill 2003)? How can public officials and citizens cocreate clear goals that are based on a reflexive grasp of the social, environmental, and economic opportunities and costs and the links between present choices and future outcomes? How can they balance tensions of particularism versus universalism, cultural versus economic imperatives, and local versus external models of marketing institutions and practices (Barclay and Smith 2003; Balakrishnan, Duvall and Primeaux 2003; Curry 2003; Sen 1999; Venkatesh 1999)? Arguably, these issues are narrowly treated in macromarketing work on development that stresses distribution and underemphasizes other marketing activities and institutions (Hosley and Wee 1988).

Marketing and adaptive efficiencies of societies and regions. Development and growth are dynamic processes that static economic analyses do not capture. They entail adaptive efficiencies because of absorption (learning and knowledge sharing) and responsiveness (adaptive innovation) that lead a firm, channel, industry, or economic sector to do new things or the same things in new ways (Fisk 1995b; Kumcu and Kumcu 1987).

Research on adaptive system attributes and the adaptiveness of marketing systems (see Table 1) may expand insights on the impact of institutional reforms on adaptive efficiencies of firms and industries in transition economies (Carman and Dominguez 2001). What are the indicators of societies’ and regions’ adaptive capabilities and potential to adapt? Why are some governments, firms, industries, sectors, and so on more able to coevolve and coconstruct adaptive business ecologies than those in other locales (Fisk 1995b; Wilkinson 2003)? For example, arguably, institutional reforms are adaptive innovations. Why do nations or regions differ in their abilities to enact reforms that foster beneficial adaptive efficiencies? How can the absorptive capacities and the responsive capacities in a firm, industry, society, or region be initially evaluated? Following institutional reforms, why do the adaptive efficiencies of firms, industries, channels, and so forth differ? What methods and quantitative and qualitative indicators (Shultz 1997) can be used to estimate their potential to learn, share knowledge, and adaptively innovate?

Adaptive efficiency may also apply to reforms and innovations in matters that are requisite inputs for and consequences of development, such as quality of life, environmental and ecological conditions, and substantive freedoms that are linked to civil rights, gender equity, health, nutrition, and so forth (Cornwell and Drennan 2004; Kilbourne 2004). What are the adaptive efficiencies of societies and regions on such issues? What measures, qualitative indicators, and methods should be used to estimate their absorptive and responsive capacities to learn about, share knowledge, and implement adaptive innovations that enhance quality of life, ecologic quality, and substantive freedoms? What indicators and methods should be used for rapid assessments of adaptive absorption, innovation, and efficiencies over time?

Many risks magnify the salience of these issues in societies and regions with less developed infrastructures, nonfunctioning or unreliable information-gathering agencies and institutions, or war-ravaged environments. It is critical to detect
likely results and modify efforts as soon as possible (Shultz 1997; Shultz et al. 2005). Funds for development and correcting errors are scarce. Political pressures are great. Political time to detect likely outcomes is limited. Initiatives may cause dysfunctional (not beneficial) adaptive changes. Opportunity costs of failed efforts are grave. Delay may create extensive suffering or death. Medical and public health staff in these places face similar problems. They must adapt their methods to quickly assess situations and responses to their actions without the most advanced technology, specialists, and facilities. Likewise, macromarketing metrics, qualitative indicators, and rapid assessment methods that are suited to such places are needed to gauge adaptiveness and likely outcomes of development initiatives.

**Marketing history.** Historical cases clarify how trade between distant places reflected and affected social, economic, and political factors and interdependencies in and among localities and peoples. They also show that peace was not an inevitable result or byproduct of trade. Instead, at different times, trade and combat were both complements and substitutes so that at times, trade did not occur without armed conflict. Past examples also suggest that short-term and long-term effects of trade differed. Sometimes efforts to get and retain trade advantages led to war (cf. Dixon 1998; Shaw 1995). These complexities raise issues about how economic structures, marketing systems, and political systems can generate benefits without conflicts in and among societies (cf. Kaufman 1987). Research in marketing history may reveal other nuances of this interplay.

As Dixon (1982) notes, the marketing field’s ability to deal with matters of development, institutions, and national welfare is limited by its micromarketing bias and collective denial or neglect of a substantial marketing literature from prior centuries. Historical analyses across time periods, societies, and more recently nation-states may reveal institutions’ possible origins, adaptations, and functions as parts of marketing systems and how institutions and development affect and are affected by marketing activity (cf. Carman 1982; Darian 1985). Research on institutions and development in the *Journal of Macromarketing* contrasts with the general neglect of these matters in other marketing journals. It is hoped that more attention to the marketing literature from the past will inform us about how development and its effects were evaluated in prior eras and will enrich our perspectives about development, marketing institutions, environmental factors, and welfare.

**Quality of Life (QOL)**

*Sacrifice, delayed gratification, and QOL.* How do sacrifice and delayed gratification affect QOL? Research suggests that consumer well-being is determined by satisfaction with the acquisition, possession, consumption, maintenance, and disposition of goods and services (Lee, Sirgy, Larsen, and Wright 2002). Yet, arguably, sense of well-being in the consumer life domain may be tied to nonconsumption as well as to current acquisition, possession, and so on. For example, despite prevailing trends, some persons may gain satisfaction by consuming less, simplifying their lives, and conserving resources (Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997). They also may increase their current satisfaction, sense of control, and subjective well-being by delaying gratification to obtain goods and services in the future, such as by saving for costly durables, children’s education, and retirement. Arguably, in some cases, their satisfaction levels may be partly reflected in their views on financial products that they buy to help reach these goals. Yet their subjective well-being also may be elevated by feelings of security and expectations of their own or others’ (e.g., children’s) future acquisition, possession, and consumption. Thus, sacrifice, delayed gratification, and nonconsumption may enhance their QOL.

These consumer tendencies may lead marketers to forsake some short-term goals and to invest in programs with extended planning time horizons, including product research and development, quality control, distribution systems, marketing communication, customer relationship cultivation, and financing. These programs require substantial teamwork and cooperation among many participants over time. If successful, they may enhance the QOL of marketers and consumers by increasing their respective senses of achievement and standards of living (Wilkie and Moore 1999).

Conversely, there may be negative results. For example, consumers may partially compensate for their sacrifice and delayed gratification by becoming more averse to taxes that support the common good and social fabric of society (e.g., public health, education, and physical infrastructures). They also may come to see sacrifice and delayed gratification as part of an insidious cycle of work and spending in pursuit of illusory, limitless, unsustainable consumption lives (Wilkie and Moore 1999). Their resulting frustrations may erode facets of consumers’ subjective well-being (satisfaction with acquisition, possession, consumption, etc.; Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997). These and other potential effects of sacrifice and delayed gratification on QOL merit research attention.

**Quality of dying and death (QODD).** Arguably, QODD issues are among the most critical neglected facets of QOL. They have economic, political, social, familial, psychological, spiritual, and other implications. Their scope and importance are partly indicated by the many varied goods, services and service providers, and fractions of private and public time and funds spent on the later life stages, dying, death, and the deceased in many nations. Examples include drugs, medical and long-term care, counseling, hospice, food, housing, internment and cemetery matters, artifacts (monuments, flags, photos, art, signage, plaques, etc.), and activities (e.g., ceremonies,
parades, and commemorations). What constitutes and affects QODD? How should it be gauged? These issues entail factors that affect ideas on QODD, such as religious and cultural views, the dying/deceased person’s age and history (e.g., long healthy life versus painful extended illness), and circumstances (e.g., peaceful demise, accident, suicide, AIDS, war, genocide, or famine).

How can marketing systems affect and be affected by QODD? Whose QOL do QODD processes impact? What nodes in marketing systems should be studied in QODD research? Others may matter besides those who are usually in QOL studies. That is, they are not limited to focal hospital patients, healthcare consumers (Leeakulthitanit, Day, and Walters 1991), transborder shoppers for medical services, elderly consumers who assess their health care service satisfaction and overall life satisfaction (Sirgy et al. 1991), and others who report their satisfaction with hospital care, community health care, personal health, and life in general (Sirgy, Hansen, and Littlefield 1994). QODD may alter the QOL of family members, friends, and others in a dying person’s social network—persons who decide about and pay for drugs, medical, long-term care, hospice, housing, counseling, funeral, and other services. The stress and emotional toll of care taking and grieving may reduce their perceived well-being in the consumer domain and other life areas. QODD may also affect employees of intermediaries and suppliers of these services, for example, via burnout that erodes service quality, efficiency, and productivity in the marketing system.

**QOL trade-offs among generations.** QOL issues are often framed in terms of individuals, but life may be socially embedded and not isolated. Thus, consumers’ QOL levels and social ties may be related. As Dixon and Polyakov (1997, 52) note, “The quality of one’s life depends, not only on one’s material well-being, but also on that of others.” Ties of household and extended family members are an example. They may all benefit from expenditures for the entire household or extended family (assuming the items enhance QOL) or from public outlays for the general population. Yet, intergenerational trade-offs in QOL may arise if families or governments differentially allocate funds to parents, children, and extended family members in different generations. Asset transfers may also create intergenerational QOL trade-offs, such as if economic migrants or others living in a country send funds across borders to other family members or older persons give assets to prior or future generations. (Trade-offs among husbands and wives, siblings, and citizens in the same generation are beyond the scope of this discussion.)

Many factors may impact the relative concern over intergenerational QOL trade-offs by private and public policy decision makers in different societies. For example, views about citizens’ obligations to the community and future generations may vary (Dr?ge et al. 1993, 42). Disease or war may reduce an older generation’s average life expectancy and make it difficult to meet the needs of the remaining younger or aged populations. There may be problems in simultaneously providing for older generations with increasing average life expectancies and for younger generations, whose economic independence from their families is delayed or made more costly by higher education, training, and technology requirements. Pensioners may be begging in the streets (Dixon and Polyakov 1997). Environmental quality and QOL issues may have multigenerational ramifications (Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997, 18-19). Rising health care and housing costs for older citizens and expanding consumption options for the young may elevate the relevance of intergenerational QOL trade-offs. Dilemmas in balancing current societal preferences versus long-term priorities in public health, infrastructures, and environmental safeguards to benefit younger and future generations may also underscore these trade-offs. Moreover, as these examples imply, marketing systems may affect and be affected by such trade-offs.

How should these trade-offs be gauged? By themselves, elements in consumption adequacy (Hill 2002, 2004), the consumer domain (Lee, Sirgy, Larsen, and Wright 2002), and the commodity discourse (Prothero and Fitchett 2000) are insufficient for these purposes. Scholars argue that QOL includes overall life satisfaction and a livable aesthetic environment (cf. Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997, 5). Reports also indicate that factors besides available funds and consumption affect general QOL and QOL in the consumer domain (Ahuvia and Friedman 1998; Lee, Sirgy, Larsen, and Wright 2002). How do marketing systems affect and adapt to intergenerational trade-offs in QOL? How do intergenerational trade-offs in the consumer domain relate to QOL in other life domains (spiritual, employment, social, etc.)? What theoretical bases should be used to study QOL trade-offs among generations? For example, what roles do the absence or presence of other-centered love (Hill 2002) and love as foundational element for community values and family concern (Fisk 1995a) play in intergenerational trade-offs in QOL?

Work is also needed to gauge the expected and perceived effects of QOL trade-offs among generations. Because of the previously noted complexities, changes in the QOL of respective generations may not perfectly mirror changes in private or public allocations across generations. It also may be difficult for families and governments to predict or judge QOL effects and trade-offs. In this regard, areas for study include: (1) families’ and public officials’ explicit or tacit assumptions about intergenerational QOL trade-offs; (2) how these persons judge the nature of QOL trade-offs and their magnitudes; and (3) how marketing systems contribute and adapt to these expected and perceived trade-offs.

**Marketing history.** Historical analyses may enrich our knowledge about these QOL issues, in at least two ways. First, they may shed light on perspectives in different socio-economic, technological, and cultural contexts. For instance, views about QOL may have differed in societies with varying
political, institutional, and technical climates; individualistic and Western versus collective Eastern orientations; and differing emphases on ancestry and intergenerational relationships and obligations. These investigations may help us understand how expectations about QOL (in relation to sacrifice, delayed gratification, death, dying, and intergenerational trade-offs) affected and were impacted by marketing systems in different historical and societal settings. They may also complement other insights on scholars’, public policy makers’, and consumers’ views on marketing and consumption in these settings (cf. Kaufman 1987; Rassuli and Hollander 1986).

Second, research in the history of marketing thought may shed light on links between views on these QOL issues and ideas about marketing’s role in society. These insights may allow us to examine QOL issues from alternative theoretical perspectives. For instance, research contrasts apologist, social marketing, and reconstructionist paradigms of marketing (Arnold and Fisher 1996) and services-oriented and product-dominated views (Vargo and Morgan 2005). Do these different views suggest alternative notions about the domain and the components of QOL? Are current ideas of QOL and QOL marketing (Lee, Sirgy, Larsen, and Wright 2002; Lee and Sirgy 2004) implicitly based in apologist, managerial, or product-dominated views? Do social marketing, reconstructionist, or services-oriented views of marketing suggest the need to modify and extend ideas about QOL and QOL marketing? What do such changes imply about QOL issues in relation to sacrifice, delayed gratification, death, dying, and intergenerational trade-offs?

THE SCENARIO’S RELEVANCE AND LIMITATIONS

Insights from work in these twelve challenging areas should be relevant to scholars with varied interests. The challenges are grounded in macromarketing’s intellectual and normative traditions and its interests in marketing systems’ multiple roles, responsibilities, and consequences. They deal with the interaction of marketing and society and the workings of marketing systems at different levels of aggregation. These subjects have concerned scholars since the 1965 symposium but, in our view, they have not been sufficiently examined. The challenges also relate to critical topics in the *Journal of Macromarketing*’s thematic sections, recent award-winning articles, and *Special Issue on Globalization*. These topics include relationships and interdependencies in marketing systems, interplay among marketing systems and other systems in and across societies, and overlapping roles of marketing and other systems.

It seems fitting to think about the field’s roots and future on this silver anniversary. We are mindful that we cannot avoid being selective because of limitations of space, our biases, and our abilities to deal with the nuances of the diverse macromarketing literature. We offer our thoughts in a spirit of humility and with the hope that they contribute to constructive discourses on these matters. They are not intended to discourage other interpretations or advocacy of other research priorities. We trust that intellectual pluralism will continue to foster vitality and creativity in the macromarketing community.

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