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Intellectualization in Macromarketing: A World Disenchanted

David D. Monieson

The reification of macromarketing proceeds relentlessly as a necessary condition for the development of macromarketing science. But it can become an illusory science relevant unto itself and not to human concerns. 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.

When Wood and Vitell (1986, p. 28) borrowed McNair's definition of marketing, "the creation and delivery of a standard of living," for their review of marketing and economic development literature, Boddewyn (1986, p. 49) commented that the choice was imaginative but odd and imprecise. No doubt Boddewyn has an arguable point, but the resurrection of the McNair definition permits one to recall how it evolved and the consequences thereof.

The genesis of the standard of living definition goes back to the days of Converse and others who were concerned about the costs of distribution and who sought to measure how much of the consumer's dollar was being spent on marketing. A major impetus toward developing more precise measures of distribution costs was the appearance of the first Census of Business of 1929 and the empirical data it contained. At about the same time, the National Bureau of Economic Research and others were nailing down the intricacies of the concepts and measures of national income accounting. The new Census of Business data made the calculation of national income accounts estimates more reliable. This is because the trade expenses data recorded in the census were used in developing the measures of value added in that sector (Monieson 1954). The notion of value added by marketing started to take hold. Such academics as Beckman and Cox and such practitioners as Eggert, Mazur, and Drucker were eloquent advocates of embracing the more positive view that

marketing is a contributor to the production of an economy rather than the negative view that marketing is a significant cost factor in the running of an economy. (See, for example, Beckman 1954; Eggert 1953; Mazur 1953.)

Value added by marketing became a popularly accepted concept in the post-World War II boom era because it fitted in with the reality of that time. Insofar as U.S. businessmen and academics were concerned, the notion of value added by marketing helped to explain and to legitimate the growing profitability of business that spent heavily on marketing activities. It takes money to make money, so if done wisely, effectively, and in conformance with contemporary thought and practice, the larger the marketing budget, the greater will be the bottom-line profit. The value added by marketing concept was embraced because it appeared to work extremely well in the high growth economy of the post-World War II years.

Rationalizations of marketing as a positive business force were expressed in different but appreciative terms by various writers of that time. Drucker stated the major task of a business firm was to create customers, and he advocated that a firm's policies be designed with the marketing perspective primarily in mind. McKittrick (1957) of General Electric fashioned the marketing concept so that it was inextricably tied to company profits. This was all fine and well for a marketing justification of business practice in the 1950s, but it was Hansen (1957) of Harvard who, influenced by Mazur, intellectualized the value added concept one step farther than the others and who therefore merits our attention.

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Paul Mazur was an investment banker at Lehman Brothers. He had already become an acknowledged authority in marketing circles with his development of organization principles for contemporary department stores when he wrote a book in 1953, *The Standards We Raise: The Dynamics of Consumption*. Its main thesis is that the major societal task in the United States is continuously to improve the standard of living. This can only be accomplished if a philosophy of increasing consumption is accepted. Consumption is enhanced if society recognizes and encourages value added by marketing, that is, if society spends more on marketing, not less. The problem is not that distribution costs too much; rather, it does not cost enough!

Hansen was obviously very impressed with Mazur's thesis because he used it as the focal point in developing his definition of marketing. In fact, the very first statement in his excellent book of 1957 is an acknowledgment: "Paul Mazur hit the nail on the head when he defined marketing as the delivery of a standard of living. This definition sacrifices detailed description for feeling tone, but this is no great loss" (Hansen 1957, p. 1). Hansen proceeds to define *marketing* as "the process of discovery and translating customer wants into product and service specifications, and then in turn helping to make it possible for more and more consumers to enjoy more and more of these products and services" (1957, p. 2). McNair expanded on the Mazur definition by including the creation of a standard of living as well as its delivery, and Hansen developed a managerial connotation of the McNair definition. The progressive steps toward Hansen's definition are part of an intellectualization process which made it seem perfectly plausible to aggregate the micro experience of a firm's spending money to make money to the macro concept of standard of living, and vice versa. Borrowing from the sociologists James Coleman and Michael Hannan, this is what Venkatesh and Dholakia (1986) label Type 4 models (micro to macro levels), that is, observing micro phenomena but with inferences drawn on macro phenomena. Type 2 models are the observing of macro phenomena but with inferences drawn from micro phenomena (macro to micro levels). Errors can easily abound in effecting transformation from one level of thinking to the other, given the

great structural and conceptual differences between macro-micro research types. Type 4 situations are susceptible to what Venkatesh and Dholakia (1986, p. 47) call the "atomistic fallacy," and Type 2 situations are susceptible to what they call the "ecological fallacy" (see also Firat and Dholakia 1982, p. 6; and Heede 1981, p. 61). Bits of both fallacies are contained in the Mazur-McNair-Hansen definition, and the consequences of our accepting the thrust of that flawed definition when it was offered to us are immense beyond calculation.

I cannot recall anyone in marketing who did not accept this definition when it was articulated in the 1950s. We did so because it confirmed the reality about us at that time. The standard of living was going up, rising marketing expenditures and increasing profits were positively correlated, and more firms were indeed attempting to discover and translate consumer wants into product and service specifications. But as Boddewyn states, there has to be much more to the creation and delivery of a standard of living than marketing effort. We embraced the definition because we already had accepted the previously cited rationalizations that helped to evolve the standard of living thesis. If Mazur, McNair, and Hansen had not expanded the notion of marketing in this manner, then surely others would have come forth to do the job. It was inevitable that we would have intellectualized a more imperial role of marketing. At that time, the task of creating and delivering a standard of living was very appropriate—and very wrong. First, it was built on an erroneous transfers of micro-macro levels of thinking. Value added is a measure of product and nothing more. Increased spending on distribution does not mean necessarily that more and more people will consume more and more products and services. The right political, economic, social, and market structures, institutions, and policies have to be in place before they might occur. Increasing the propensity to consume may not be the major determinant to a rising standard of living at a given time. Second, it gave a human face to abstraction. The reification of marketing began when we accepted a definition which absurdly insisted on assuming *ultra vires* a complex social responsibility. The field of marketing has not been the same since because the process of intellectualization had demonstratively begun, a process which continues to this day and will continue well into the future.

INTELLECTUALIZATION DEFINED

The word *intellectualization* and the notion behind it come from Max Weber's speech, "Science as a Vocation," delivered at Munich University in 1918 (Gerth and Mills 1946, pp. 129-156). Intellectualization is the consequence of and the source for the continuous rationalization of society's activities and arrangements. It is the required thought process and mental bias necessary to further an ordered and predictable world. To intellectualize is to employ a systematic cost-benefit type of analysis that abides by the tenets of Western logic. It is what Jacques Ellul (1964, p. vi) calls "technique"; "every intervention of technique is, in effect a reduction of facts, forces, phenomena, means, and instruments to the schema of logic" (Winner 1977, pp. 179-180).

To intellectualize is to embark on a linear kind of thinking; parts fit together, and steps in the process follow one another "in an appropriate and preconceived fashion" (Winner 1977, p. 180). There are teleologic and reductionistic overtones such that one can anticipate where the thought process will lead—often to a *reductio ad absurdum*. Intellectualization is a conceit which dictates that no mysteries of the world are impervious to rationalization and calculation and that ultimately all dark continents can and will be conquered in this manner. Weber contends, however, that intellectualization gains at the price of receding values and value judgments. Borrowing from Schiller, he calls this loss of values a "disenchantment of the world" (Gerth and Mills 1946, p. 155) and with it comes a diminution of the beauty and magic of one's field of study. The restoration of such values is imperative if one is truly and intuitively to understand the essence of one's field of interest (*verstehen*). Behind Polanyi's personal knowledge (1958), Schon's reflectiveness (1983), and Lindblom and Cohen's usable knowledge (1979) are varying attempts to come to grips with the problem of disenchantment in their respective fields. However, the advancement of intellectualization is inexorable; just as it has been in the past in macromarketing, so it is in the present, and so it will be in the future.

The intellectualization of macromarketing is inevitable because in order to be academically respectable macromarketing must be defined as an area of study that is rational and calculable

and one that accommodates itself to scientific investigation. Of course, macromarketing has to be operationally defined and taxonomized so that systematic and scientific research projects can commence and build on one another. Intellectualization begins when whatever subjectivity that exists within the investigator is squeezed out for the sake of unhampered objectivity. The moment there is mainstream agreement that such is the research road that macromarketers must follow, then that is the moment, as Weber would say, when the macromarketing world becomes disenchanting, when "specialists without spirit" take over as investigators "caught in the delusion" of achieving "a level of development never before attained by mankind" (Berman 1982, p. 27). That is the moment when there is general agreement that macromarketing problems are susceptible to resolution through the employment of "technical means and calculation" (Gerth and Mills 1946, p. 139).

Technical rationality will inundate macromarketing issues, and problems will be contrived so that their resolutions abide only by the tenets of technical rationality. A "macromarketing logic" will evolve, fortified by a mathematized rigor emanating from many sorts of conceptual and concomitant electronic breakthroughs in econometric simulations, input-output analysis, general systems theory, complexity theory, or whatever. The research designs predicated on this macromarketing logic could produce dispassionately elegant if not spectacular results, given the objectives of the research designs. The results will provide further validity to the successful macromarketing logic. This circular and mutual reinforcement of macromarketing logic with its science will generate further intellectualization that will legitimate the imperialism of the field's concepts. It will be proclaimed that various domains of political science, institutional economics, macroeconomics, macrosociology, and other "macro" fields will benefit from the employment of macromarketing knowledge and logic. The literature will be replete with hypothesizing and suggested testing of macromarketing technique designed to effect social or economic control or change, redress regional economic disparities, ensure the efficient and faithful execution and delivery of the fiscal and monetary policy of governments, and the like. The golden age of macromarketing will be in full flower.

PRESENT INTELLECTUALIZATION
IN MACROMARKETING:
THE BROADENED MARKETING CONCEPT

The broadening of the marketing concept is intellectualism at work. The process was inevitable because the technical rationality contained in the concept generated its imperial drive. Indeed, if those who successfully have broadened the concept had not been on the scene to do so, sooner or later others would have done so. Simply, it was a concept whose time had come.

Kotler recognized that dynamic force underlying the marketing concept is the technical rationality of "marketing logic":

Yet the application of the logic of marketing to social goals is a natural development and on the whole a promising one (Kotler and Zaltman 1971, p. 3).

Anyone seeking a response in another would benefit from applying marketing logic to the problem. . . . Generic marketing is a logic available to all organizations facing problems of marketing response (Kotler 1972, p. 52).

These ideas lead to the question of whether all organizations can use marketing logic. The hypothesis is presented that all organizations can use marketing logic and it is likely to come into use in the following order of organizations: business concerns first, then service organizations, and finally commonwealth organizations (Kotler 1973, p. 56).

Marketing logic is the application of technique to elicit a desired response from another actor. Marketing logic assumes an imperial character because the actor's conceptual range easily runs the gamut from the individual to organization, from profit to nonprofit, from monetary exchange to any kind of exchange, and from creating demand to regulating the level, timing, and character of demand. Marketing logic, knowing no bounds, reifies to an irrepressible force, overwhelming all human relationships into its mold until all that remains is one's market relationship with oneself. The actor who seeks the response must seek it from within: not merely to market himself (Hirshman 1987) but to do so as a celebrity (*Marketing News*, August 14, 1987, p. 4). Marketing logic is reduced to an absurdity; in its distorted realm people can be products, products can breathe life, and the abstract can be concrete.

Of course, it makes no difference whether the application of marketing technique actually

can accomplish what has been proclaimed. The conceit emanating from the intellectualization process lays out an internalized consistency of step-wise logic which demands that the technique should have this power. It is, as Alasdair MacIntyre says, "a translation of the prophecy of positivistic social science into a social performance" predicated on a set of universal law-like generalizations. The fact that such law-like generalizations do not exist does not prevent the social scientist from laying claim to power based on their presumed existence and their ability to engineer social life. These prophecies of social science produce "not a scientifically managed social control, but a successfully dramatic imitation of such control" (Westbrook 1983, pp. 159-160).

All manifestations of the broadened marketing concept—social marketing, nonprofit marketing, generic marketing, and so on—continue to prosper in the academic literature notwithstanding incessant demonstrations of the concept's lack of authenticity (Arndt 1978; Bloom and Novelli 1981; Capon 1981; Hirshman 1983, 1987; Murphy 1980; Rothschild 1979). The concept has developed a material force of its own and proceeds relentlessly with its "dramatic imitation" of engineering social change and control.

The Scandinavian sociologist, Joachim Israel, refers to a Swedish essay published in 1968, "The Church's Crisis—A Marketing Problem," which states that since the Swedish Church has a "production program which is not suited to present-day consumers," the church is losing market share (Israel 1971, p. 321). This, says Israel, is a view of a Christian commodity for sale, not to people but to "consumers." Such a view reifies social relations so that they become thing-relations—use-value subsumes to exchange-value. As Israel notes, "intelligence, beauty, honesty, tolerance, sympathy, solidarity, warmth, love" are forged into marketable traits, into commodities.

The commercialization of social relations is wrong and should not be condoned, much less encouraged. Yet, we do encourage it by intellectualizing its logical inevitability at the expense of our inherent moral values. There is a domain of social activity which is noneconomic, and self-interest or utility should not set the goals of that domain. This is the thesis of Barry Schwartz of Yale University (1986), and he refers to the

moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (1985) to support his thesis. MacIntyre develops the concept of "practices," or certain forms of complex, cooperative human activities which may be characterized as

- establishing their own standards and are partly defined by those standards
- goal-directed, with a set of "goods" or ends that are internal to the practice itself
- organic, whereby people can change the practice to their own purposes (Schwartz 1986, p. 268).

Social relations such as friendship, marriage, and parenting are practices with complex and long histories. "They are teleological, with ends that continue to evolve" (ibid.). We make commitments to these practices and surely not in the pursuit of economic self-interest. The very process of commercializing these social relations destroys their coherence and distinctiveness (ibid., p. 269), affects the product, so that if doctors are treated as commodities being offered to the consumer, then doctors change in the manner in which they doctor. "There is, in short, a self-fulfilling character to the commercialization of social relations. The more we treat such relations as economic goods, to be produced with care, the more they become economic goods about which we must be careful. The more that an assumption of self-interest, rather than commitment, on the part of others govern social relations, the truer the assumption becomes" (ibid., p. 267). Schwartz refers to this encroachment of increasing economic interests into other domains of life as "economic imperialism." It strips humans of their morality and, ironically, lowers the efficiency of the market economy. This is because economic man in the market requires moral man to be present if the market is to address itself properly to people's needs and wants (ibid., p. 249).

Johan Arndt (1978) anticipated MacIntyre and Schwartz in his aptly titled article, "The Marketing Thinking of Tomorrow." He cautions that by embracing the broadened concept we risk being "dismissed as victims of a megalomaniac marketing supremacy syndrome" (1978, p. 12). He further points out that marketing as an ideology in the Western world is based on a one-dimensional view of consumers which allows

for the notion "that abstract spiritual and social needs may be regarded as material entities (ibid., p. 14). . . . 'Such broadenings' may accelerate the alienation of man in modern society by inducing individuals to view their relationship with one another as *marketing relationships*" (ibid., p. 15). We are on a collision course with our humanistic ideals, and the lines between Mammon, Caesar, and God are disappearing, resulting in what Arndt calls "spiritual pollution."

The recent appearance of a research design that proposes the testing of people as products of exchange should therefore come as no surprise. The author (Hirshman 1987, p. 98) correctly notes that the highly abstracted concept of marketing-as-exchange met with academic acclaim well over a decade ago but that almost no empirical work on the concept has ever been recorded. Indeed, "the idea of applying the marketing-as-exchange notion to political, charitable, and spiritual exchange contexts often has been suggested, but never empirically attempted" (ibid., p. 106). The concept was conceived by an internally driven process of intellectualization with little regard to the adequacy of our science to test it (MacIntyre's "dramatic imitation"). The proposal to test out the concept demonstrates the conundrum facing the marketing researcher: The only way to design the research is to commoditize the subjects being researched. Israel's use-values of "intelligence, beauty, honesty, tolerance, sympathy, solidarity, warmth, love" are forged into Hirshman's marketable traits of "money, love, physical status, educational status, occupational status, intellectual status, entertainment services, ethnic information, personality information, and demographic information." Schwartz's uneasiness about the self-fulfilling character of the commercialization of social relations and Arndt's premonition of furthering the alienation of man in modern society become very real. Concerns are also expressed by Hirshman (1987, pp. 106-107) when she discusses the limitation of marketing-as-exchange research in her paper.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF MACROMARKETING

The intellectualization process and the academic future of marketing are inextricably linked. Intellectualization will always generate a conceptual prowess for the field which its science

can never deliver; the science will develop and flourish, but at the expense of its latent scholarship. The golden age of macromarketing will arrive when reification has so progressed that the sanctity and the importance of the field are held in higher esteem than those who serve it or who are served by it—when the roles of subject and object become confused (Dholakia and Firat 1980, p. 317). In such a world human values become unnecessary emotional baggage unless they, too, can be objectified. Stripped of its humanity, any social science, and most certainly macromarketing, will be forever adrift in its search for its essence. Basic research in macromarketing becomes a non sequitur. Social amelioration, social change, and social responsibility are not the responsibility of a contrived abstraction. Human beings are responsible, using their collective sense of wisdom, ethics, morality, religion, and justice to guide them. We are not fishermen, as Tucker (1974) states, but we are also not marine biologists, because we cannot be intellectually detached. We are humans who have studied concerns for other humans.

If there is a central concept in macromarketing it is probably distributive justice (Monieson 1981, p. 19). Since the subject of distributive justice embraces not only the economic analysis of rights but also ethics, morality, and religion, then macromarketing can only be a science if science can be defined in a manner to permit macromarketing to maintain the human values of its researchers. This transcendence of definition can only be attained when the golden age is succeeded by the authentic age of macromarketing.

THE AUTHENTIC AGE OF MACROMARKETING

Israel, borrowing from Habermas, concludes that sociology has to be a combination of three social science ideals—natural science (positivism), hermeneutics (structuralism), and critical social science. Information, interpretation, and criticism are three types of knowledge essential to sociology, one no less important than the other (Israel 1971, p. 346). We are beginning to note an appreciation in the marketing literature for the hermeneutic ideal (Dholakia and Firat 1980; Hirshman 1986; Ryan and Bristor 1987). Arndt (1978, 1985), Benton (1985), Dholakia and Firat (1980), and Pollay (1986),

among others, have been advocating the development of a critical tradition in marketing. Dholakia and Firat (1980, p. 319) sum it up very well:

It is evident that unless alternate and *critical* philosophical devices—dialectics and negation—are admitted, the project of exploring alternate paradigms cannot even begin. The dialectical method requires *hermeneutic* procedures rather than the descriptive/empiricist procedures of positivism. . . . The concepts of negation, dialogue, historicism, interdependence, premises and assumption structures must inform the practice of research in marketing. . . . The research enterprise in marketing is headed for a state of theoretical and pragmatic irrelevance if its dominant, uncritical mode goes unchallenged.

Those in macromarketing must know, understand, and be critical of the field if its output is to be of service to human beings. The positive science of macromarketing has to be transcended to incorporate our distinctly human values. Dialectic thinking, *verstehen*, and critique have to enter our world if it is to be re-enchanted. De-reification must take place; intellectualization must stop. De-reification can only occur when our comfortable and assumed world disintegrates, “bringing forth doubt and skepticism concerning everything that had previously been taken for granted. In such situations, roles are suddenly revealed as human actions and institutions as humanly produced montages for these actions” (Berger and Pullberg 1965, p. 209). A critical mode, dialectically induced, will lead to a crisis in macromarketing knowledge as “one is confronted with alternative ways of perceiving the world and ordering one’s life within it” (*ibid.*, p. 209).

But the authentic age of macromarketing is not imminent. The process of intellectualization in macromarketing is powerfully alive. The golden age of macromarketing will be with us for a long time to come.

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