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The Discourses of Marketing and Development: Towards “Critical Transformative Marketing Research”

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Abstract

In order to understand the connection between development, marketing and Transformative Consumer Research, with its attendant interest in promoting human wellbeing, this paper begins by charting the links between U.S. “exceptionalism”, “Manifest Destiny” and modernisation theory, demonstrating the confluence of U.S. perspectives and experiences in articulations and understandings of the contributions of marketing practice and consumer research to society. Our narrative subsequently engages with the rise of social marketing (1960s-) and finally Transformative Consumer Research (2006-). We move beyond calls for an appreciation of paradigm plurality (Mick *et al.*, 2012a) to encourage TCR scholars to adopt a multiple paradigmatic approach as part of a three pronged strategy that encompasses an initial “provisional moral agnosticism” (Zelizer, 2010). As part of this stance, we argue that scholars should value the insights provided by multiple paradigms, turning each paradigmatic lens sequentially on to the issue of the relationship between marketing, development and consumer wellbeing. After having scrutinised these issues using multiple perspectives, scholars can then decide whether to pursue TCR-led activism. The final strategy that we identify is termed “Critical Intolerance” (Marcuse, 1965).

Keywords: Critical Transformative Marketing Research; Transformative Consumer Research; Critical Marketing; Neoliberalism.

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Introduction

“...many people around the world are in grave danger. Academic discourse is irrelevant to them if it is not accompanied by activism.”

(Natkiewicz, 2013, p. 13)

The relationship between marketing and development has merited a large amount of discussion (Dixon, 1981; Shapiro & Doody, 1967). Marketers often paint themselves at the vanguard of efforts to socialise and develop the markets and people served by their products and services (Appelbaum, 2000). The effects of marketing interventions, that is, product and service development oriented to the needs of populations who were previously deprived, living at levels of subsistence in the global economy, are interpreted differently depending on the perspective brought to bear on the topic. Pragmatic feminists, for example, are less concerned with the expansion of markets than they are with persistent, unequal gender relations (e.g. Dolan & Scott, 2009; Scott *et al.*, 2012). Postcolonial theorists take a more geopolitical and racially sensitive position, often interpreting the practices of marketers in a less positive light than those who subscribe to managerialist approaches undergirded by a neoliberal constellation of values (Bonsu, 2009).

Whatever perspective we adopt it would be wise not to rush to judgement about the linkage between marketing and development. Not everyone wants to escape the reach of the market, and many welcome its benefits (Arnould, 2007; Ger 1997). Accepting this, yet being unwilling to act as an uncritical supporter of policies systematically de-regulating capitalist markets, this paper aims to engage with these discussions to deepen the activist agenda that underwrites Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) (e.g. Wansink, 2012).

This project is thus multi-disciplinary in orientation. Fundamentally, it is focused on rethinking the genealogy of marketing and development as a result of ideas generated during a stream at the recent TCR conference which aimed to examine the idea of “developing markets”. Given that TCR operates within the context of markets, the relationship between marketing and development must be unpacked because it provides the contextual framing for a discussion of efforts aimed at engaging in transforming consumers’ lives. As such we historically trace the relationship between marketing and development. This narrative is largely unacknowledged within the TCR literature.

Moreover, while it is true that TCR emerged from the efforts of scholars disenchanted with the direction of consumer research, social marketing has been considered the forefront of marketing endeavours to impact in a positive way on populations around the world. For Dholakia and Sherry (1987) it is a key point of contact in discussions on the relationship between marketing, development and human wellbeing. It continues to be cited as a source of inspiration for TCR papers (e.g. Martin *et al.*, 2013; Pechmann *et al.*, 2011) and arguably is easily conflated with TCR (Wansink, 2012, p. 67). Yet within the context of marketing, development and consumer wellbeing, we find it problematic for its functionalist, logical empiricist perspective and elision of power relations.

Our narrative thus challenges current disciplinary discourse and identity. We believe that TCR needs to firmly differentiate itself from social marketing. We explicate the problems we see in this discourse, outline three routes for TCR scholars to pursue, guided by a faith in the virtues of paradigmatic pluralism and the benefits of multiple paradigm research. We argue that this novel research strategy can provide us with “competing insights within a single analysis” (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 519). In spite of the value of this strategy, Hudson and Ozanne point out that the process of doing so has yet to be detailed at the philosophical level. As is explained, multiple paradigm research involves scholars using

two or more paradigms to scrutinise the relationship between development and consumer practice. It therefore complements other calls recently in the TCR literature which advocate the use of multiple disciplinary teams (e.g. Crockett *et al.*, 2013; Ozanne & Fischer, 2012). We propose that using multiple paradigms enables scholars to explore the relationship between development and consumer practice in greater depth (Bradshaw-Camball & Murray, 1991) than is possible with one paradigm alone (Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Lewis & Kelemen, 2002).

With these comments in mind, let us begin by returning to the history of marketing. We will first make an argument that marketing discourse exhibits a worldview that is tied to deep cultural discourses that dominate American politics, especially foreign policies: American exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny. These discourses helped shape the ideological relationship of marketing and development. This has significant implications for the future of TCR. From this historical analysis we explore how TCR can rethink its agenda along multi-paradigmatic and activist-oriented lines.

American Exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny

Historically the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world has been viewed through the twin prisms of “American exceptionalism” and “Manifest Destiny” (Applbaum, 2004; Coles, 2002). “Manifest Destiny” is the conceptualisation of an outward facing worldview to complement inward facing exceptionalism; it involves the belief that the U.S. should actively spread its core values throughout the world (Hanhimäki, 2003). This concept enables American politicians, scholars and business people to extend their respective domains to contexts and cultures they believe need their help.

The history of American exceptionalism is somewhat contested. While for Madsen (1998), it is rooted in the seventeenth century idealisation of America as a beacon of religious

freedom, for Wrobel (1999) it is rooted in the war of independence and the fostering of the republican political system. These ideas were further refined by one of the founding fathers of the United States, Benjamin Franklin, for whom exceptionalism refracted an Enlightenment ethos. This held that the social world is understandable through the exercise of reason in the interest of ensuring the rational functioning of political and social institutions (Madsen, 1998).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, a number of large corporations sought to expand their presence across the globe. These included the food manufacturer, Heinz, the agricultural machinery producer, McCormick, and the Singer Manufacturing Company, a producer of sewing machines. These organisations were enrolled in a strategy of “informal imperialism” (Domosh, 2006), imperialism based not on military might and force subduing other nations, but the promotion of U.S. goods and services as an essential part of a “civilising mission” (Domosh, 2006). In contrast to later periods, the advertising and communications of companies in this period had a tendency to reflect racist views about other cultures and populations. The idea that corporations could help “civilise” non-U.S. populations was underpinned by a belief that markets were malleable, in that they could be expanded via advertising campaigns promoting the fruits of U.S. industrial know-how (Domosh, 2006; Strasser, 1989). Accompanying this belief was a prevalent view that subjectivity could be moulded by advertising, promotions and sales techniques which refracted these companies’ “civilising mission” (e.g. Coffin, 1994), helping lead nations and people to fully embrace modern industrial methods and consumption practices privileged in the United States. International Harvester’s (i.e. McCormick’s) advertising was explicit about how their products transformed and tamed foreign lands, “bringing civilisation” and “shaping foreigners into Americans or at least American consumer subjects” (Domosh, 2006, p. 98). What Domosh means is that advertising and trade promotion materials depicted non-U.S.

ways of life as slowly coming to mirror the American way of life (cf. Trentmann, 2005, p. 12).

Notwithstanding the above exemplars, most companies during the first half of the twentieth century were not concerned with exposing the rest of the world to American values through products and services. This changed when marketing, public relations and the culture industries (Adorno, 1989) began to play a prominent role in disseminating and supporting the values that underwrote exceptionalist ideology. To spread its value system required a number of “conditions of possibility” that were not fully present until the mid-century. The idea that the world could be shaped in an American mould was rendered possible in the post Second World War era, the period we label “market-driven modernisation.” Financial muscle, political ambition and fear of a worldwide depression and geopolitical subservience helped crystallise the interdependency of nations (Hanhimäki, 2003). A vast new industrial infrastructure that was a product of the war effort as well as opportunities abroad led many companies and scholars to look at the international environment in a new light.

A balance of payments deficit, the growing size of the European Common Market, all signalled that America had to engage with those outside its borders, and had a duty to do so (Hagler, 1961). As President Truman stated in the aftermath of WWII:

“We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas...The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on concepts of democratic fair dealing...Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge.”

(Truman in McCarthy, 2007, p. 4)

It is at this point that development discourse became prominent, enabling the world to be parsed into “developed” and “underdeveloped” regions, with all the legitimacy this provided for intervention from outside of sovereign borders.

Market-Driven Modernisation

To operationalise the market-driven modernisation process, the 1944 Bretton Woods agreement to protect, stabilise and extend international trade was key (Peek, 2009). This conference established the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, now more commonly known as the World Bank (Peek, 2009). These institutions, in turn, shaped the global economy via their commitment to neoliberal axiological tenets – deregulation, privatisation, trade liberalisation, and a reduced role for state actors in the economy (Harvey, 2006) – which impact on corporate activities and, as we will see, patterns the role of social marketing in development initiatives (e.g. Ger, 1997, p.115).

Linked to the Bretton Woods agenda, the Marshall Plan was intended to help countries that had suffered from the war restart their economies and restructure the global marketplace in America’s favour. There were various reasons underpinning this loan strategy: firstly, U.S. support for democracy and limited state involvement in the marketplace was one of the intellectual exports to those countries seeking U.S. financial assistance (Stanley, 1963).

Secondly, a growing number of former colonies, including Latin America, India and Pakistan (Alger, 1972; Latham, 1998) were evaluating the ideological systems vying for their support in the Cold War context. There was no guarantee that former colonies would self-associate with U.S. economic values and thus “contain” the spread of Soviet influence (Grant,

1979). To help pattern country choice processes, administrators devoted resources to those nations committed to following the path set by American scientific, industrial, technical, human relations and marketing methods (Kieser, 2004). This is not to suggest these values were adopted wholesale throughout the world; far from it (Hilton, 2007a, 2007b; Veenis, 2011). But efforts were made across different spheres and disciplines – science, industrial-manufacturing and educational support and provision – to promote a vision of what the world could become (see also Plehwe, 2009, pp. 25-26). A key epistemological framework underwriting this ontology was modernisation theory which interlocks with the idea of America as a benchmark.

Modernisation Theory, Social Engineering and Channelling

Modernisation theory was based on the idea that scholars could produce objective analyses of the international environment and this theoretical orientation had performative effects throughout the world, supported by government, philanthropic foundations and academics until it was replaced by an institutionally strengthened neoliberalism² (McCarthy, 2007; Plehwe, 2009). It was characterised by amnesia which ignored the fact that the under-development of former colonies was a function of imperialist and colonial policy. A more subtle ethnocentrism in the guise of American and European benevolent assistance replaced the racist rhetoric that accompanied colonialism (Domosh, 2006; McClintock, 1995; McCarthy, 2007).

² Using the term neoliberalism in the singular when it is frequently ambiguously defined (Mirowski, 2009) and the result of very complicated processes of emergence and country-specific points of divergence is less desirable than we would like. The emergence of the term can be traced to the early 1920s (Plehwe, 2009, p. 10) and it appears more frequently in the 1930s, gaining adherents through the course of its institutional sedimentation by the Mont Pèlerin Society and the University of Chicago. It should not be assumed that neoliberalism is an American product, since its refinement is the work of an international community of scholars, business people, journalists and others (Plehwe, 2009; Van Horn & Mirowski, 2009).

Walt Rostow, as one of the most prominent modernisation theorists (Engerman & Unger, 2009), considered marketing an important transformational agent in a world marked by vast inequality (Rostow, 1960/1967, 1965). In developing benchmarks against which to evaluate other societies, material consumption was the index used. And any society, it was argued, could be transformed into a fully modernised economy, characterised by the “age of mass consumption” (Rostow, 1960/1967).

For Rostow, the path of development was linear, and he offered a functionalist and positivistic vision of natural and social worlds that were amenable to control and modification for the good of humanity (Westad, 2000). While there were dissenting voices that questioned the empirical realism of these ideas (e.g. Bauer, 1958, p. 134), scholars and practitioners were not immune to the “technocratic optimism” of the time (Engerman & Unger, 2009). In a statement that reflects epistemological universalism and his view of marketing as a motor of development, Drucker (1958, p. 259) writes, “marketing... has developed general concepts, that is, theories that explain a multitude of phenomena in simple statements... In marketing, therefore, we already possess a learnable and teachable approach to this basic and central problem not only of the “underdeveloped” countries but of all countries.”

Within these debates, the metaphors of “channelling” and “social engineering” are frequently explicit³ (e.g. Dichter, 1947, 1960; Packard, 1957/1960) – values that continue to

³ It should be noted that social engineering and social marketing type practices have a much longer history than we underscore in this section and in table one. For example, Keirle (2013) highlights anti-cigarette social marketing communications in the 1880s, whereas Stole (2013) points to social marketing interventions in the First World War. Similarly Westbrook (1980) underlines the presence of social engineering concepts in Stuart Chase’s work of the 1920s. Schwarzkopf (2009) details the use of advertising communications as a form of social engineering from 1912, noting the emergence of the term “customer engineering” in 1932. Finally, Tadajewski (2013) documents the political axiology underpinning Ernest Dichter’s variant of motivation research which aimed to direct consumer attention to satisfying their desires along capitalist lines. Arguably, these attempts to mould individual and community

be articulated in TCR circles today (e.g. Wansink, 2012). Products, services, ideas and skills were a means of channelling the international environment in a direction congruent with geopolitical desires and often wedded on the U.S. side with a particular conception of progress. In this context, “progress” connoted subscription to an individualistic achievement orientation (Hoover, 1957). Business people were expected to channel the “aspirations and strivings” of non U.S. citizens “along sound and constructive lines” (Hoover, 1957, p. 28). This channelling was furthered by the marketing discipline. The expansion of marketing practice was depicted as offering the world “civilization”, “progress”, consumer choice and helping avoid totalitarianism (Drucker, 1958; Nadesan, 2008). At a semiotic level, consumption was linked to the freedom to define a sense of self not available to those having to purchase the mass produced, ill-fitting products turned out by Soviet production-oriented industry (cf. Alderson *et al.*, 1955; Tadajewski, 2009).

Marketing was thus positioned as central to the expansion of markets and with ensuring world peace: “men who are interested in marketing... Their impact on the prospects for peace is perhaps greater than that of any other segment of our society. Their responsibility in contributing to international good will, and ultimately to world peace is equally as great, and it cannot be delegated to anyone else” (Gavin, 1965, p. 29).

This image of marketing and the vision of consumerism, competitive individualism and the ethics of promoting an American inflected ideology did not go uncontested (Boulding, 1959; Kluckhohn, 1958). Even so, for those within the thought-community of the Harvard Business School (HBS), business needed to play a prominent role in contesting communism by highlighting its socially responsible credentials. Within the “developing” world, the word “capitalism” still conjured up images of colonialism, economic injustice and

behaviour assumed much greater prominence during the period of market driven modernisation that we explicate.

tyranny. As one of the contributors to a 1957 conference at HBS reflected, “What is the world’s opinion and judgment of capitalism and American democracy? Sad to relate, capitalism is often considered, even today, as one and the same with colonialism and human exploitation. If I found one place where this attitude persists, I found hundreds: in Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Formosa, Burma, Siam; it is even prevalent all over Europe” (Miller *et al.*, 1957, p. 291). Unsuccessful attempts were made to rehabilitate capitalism by rebranding it “service capitalism” (Miller *et al.*, 1957). Marketing suffered from a similar legitimacy crisis, as students and other stakeholders viewed the links between the discipline and the “military-industrial-complex” as problematic (Andreasen *et al.*, 2012; Kassirjian & Goodstein, 2010). Social marketing was central to efforts to improve the image of marketing and its practices (Kotler, 2005; Shaw & Jones, 2005).

The Broadening Movement and Legitimation Tactics

A critical examination of the connections between marketing, development and geopolitics should encourage us to think differently about the expansion of marketing concepts and tools in the 1960s and 1970s and their connection to human wellbeing. Put simply, social marketing was consistent in epistemological and political terms with a declining modernisation theory and an ascendant neoliberalism. As the “social conscience” of our discipline (Andreasen *et al.*, 2012), it was well placed to respond to criticism of marketing ethics, and was commensurate with the aims of academics and external audiences such as the World Bank, USAID and philanthropic groups to solve the problems of the Third World.

Social marketing takes inspiration from mainstream marketing theory – exchange perspectives and relationship marketing – and uses these to devise “efficient” methods of encouraging product use (e.g. condoms, mosquito nets) and behavioural change (Andreasen, 1994) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) around the world have widely employed

social marketing methods. But it is the issue of poverty and health that forms the bridge between social marketing, development and transformational impacts around the world (Cairns *et al.*, 2011). It also makes social marketing a biopolitical project, in which economically oriented, ideologically inflected and instrumental criteria are used to determine policy-decisions that were previously outside of market-based calculations (Buchanan *et al.*, 1994; Chorev, 2013).

The Neoliberal Co-optation of Social Marketing

The concept of biopolitics emerges out of Foucault's reflections on the role of power in the management of the human body and its collective relation to political-economic vitality. Schematically, from the seventeenth century power has been used not only to inculcate fear (i.e. repressively), but as a means to monitor, control and mobilise people to render them useful for institutional and economic purposes (i.e. productively) (Foucault, 1977/1991, 1978/1991).

The logic of health as a contributor to economic vitality links social marketing to the biopolitical agenda of macro-level institutions (Pfeiffer, 2004). People need to be healthy in order to work, earn the income to improve their individual and familial life-chances, and contribute to the economic (GDP) vitality of their country-of-residence. This is the neoliberal inflexion found in the World Bank's prioritisation of economics and cost effectiveness throughout their decision-making regarding development assistance to requesting nations (Chorev, 2013). The same can be increasingly said about the World Health Organisation. This focus on cost-effectiveness and ease of evaluation thus skews the attention of international actors capable of enacting a field-shaping role. Issues of equality and actual need do not figure as highly as we might otherwise expect in policy-decisions.

While there is some attention to the causes of poverty and poor health in the deliberations that underline the need for social marketing activities, a curiously apolitical account is often provided, removing the colonial and geopolitical origins of the problems that now confront these nations and are exacerbated by neoliberal policies (e.g. Cairns *et al.*, 2011, p. 331). As is obvious, the roll-back of public services necessitated by debt service obligations has led to serious restrictions in health care provision. This is one of the principal reasons why social marketing “has become an increasingly popular framework for facilitating behaviour change in the developing world” (Cairns *et al.*, 2011, p. 332). The opening up of economies to the global market, combined with the cut backs in state support for the needy, has not led to the economic performance gains forecasted. This affects those at the lowest levels of income. As we shall see, having had their behaviour patterned from a distance by macro-institutions, structural marginalisation continues courtesy of social marketing programmes.

Pseudo-participation and Social Marketing

Cairns et al (2011) sketch out the relationship between social marketing and its target audience for interventions. A customer focus is apparently manifested in its “user-centred approach to planning, delivery and evaluation, drawing on the principles of exchange theory, supported by marketing tools such as insight research, segmentation, and competition analysis” (Cairns *et al.*, 2011, p. 333). This sounds reasonable. However, by drawing upon exchange theory (Cairns *et al.*, 2011) or relationship marketing (Hastings, 2003) they downplay the power relations inherent in the market for products or social ideas (Willmott, 1998), promoting instead an ideology of consumer choice and freedom, which is used, in turn, to justify market systems. This is a problem because the structural boundaries emplaced around consumer agency render these “choices” constricted.

The requirements, choices and needs of the ultimate consumer are not at the centre of social marketing interventions. This differentiates social marketing starkly from Transformative Consumer Research strategies based on participatory action research or other methods. In the first instance, the government of the country concerned has abdicated a degree of budgetary control to placate the ideological interests of the World Bank and IMF. These two organisations have been concerned with opening up the world to capitalist market structures, ushering in an era of “market fundamentalism” (Chorev, 2013). In terms of health care, this desire to open developing economies to private operators means the needs of citizens are effectively ignored. While there may be some government input into the issues or products being offered, the extent to which we can understand this as a process characterised by “choice” is debatable (e.g. Nustad, 2001). As Cairns et al put it,

“Foreign aid is the most common source of funding for social marketing interventions in developing countries. The donor as the benefactor is inevitably a highly influential stakeholder...Decisions on methods, priorities, timelines and evaluation measures are also determined by the donors. Decisions on foreign aid will be guided by donors’ own rationale and strategies for international development spending as well as shared international goals.”

(Cairns *et al.*, 2011, p. 334)

So, the benefactor’s ability to shape the “preferences and priorities for human development” should not be underplayed (Cairns *et al.*, 2011, p. 335). After all, as Dholakia (1984) revealed regarding the marketing of family planning in India, there has historically been a product- (Dholakia, 1984) or sales (Luthra, 1991) logic guiding these programmes. In the case she describes, there was a complete neglect of moral reflection regarding the use of an incentivised fertility treatment, which targeted participants when the annual crop had failed and they were facing severe hardships. Offering rewards – financial, food, products –

without providing information about the ramifications of the treatment (vasectomy) can be considered an example of the exploitation of circumstance. Exacerbating this, the value of the intervention was determined solely in terms of how many people were treated. This use of quantitative measures of success is instrumental and ethically void, prioritising “goal achievement over goal evaluation” (Dholakia, 1984, p. 58).

Connecting and extending these analyses in a study of condom social marketing, Pfeiffer (2004) points out how the ascendancy of social marketing is tied to structural adjustment. He makes a case that it reflects a neoliberal set of values, including the epistemological priority of the individual (Goldberg, 1995; Szmigin *et al.*, 2011) rather than attending to systemic mechanisms like the capitalist system, and fails to practice what it preaches. In his study, social marketers failed to engage in stakeholder dialogue with the local community, alienated the people being targeted, utilised dubious self-evaluation measures to determine efficacy, and in short, worked against the possible widespread utilisation of condoms.

So, where we see institutional actors adopting the lexicon of participatory approaches (e.g. Cairns *et al.*, 2011, p. 340), we believe these are more accurately labelled “pseudo-participatory” and thus far removed from the axiology of TCR. At most, participation is limited to helping translate the campaigns already formulated as a result of “benefactor” funding into the local language and dialect. They are pseudo-participatory in a broader sense in that what people receive through social marketing interventions is a thinly veiled form of socialisation into the logic of market-based exchange systems that privileges the market as a provisioning agent. In doing so it downplays the role of the state in social resource management (e.g. Cairns *et al.*, 2011, p. 335) by making people pay a nominal fee for something (e.g. condoms) they could have received for free from their governments. Rather than customer orientation, then, we see customer displacement, where the target of the

intervention recedes into the background and prominence is accorded to the needs and desires of the funding agency. Again, this displacement of the consumer is fundamentally in contrast to the centrality of the consumer in TCR studies (e.g. Mick *et al.*, 2012a, 2012b, p. 16; Ozanne & Fischer, 2012, p. 91).

While we do not doubt the affirmative intent behind the broadening movement, this was in equal measure an ideologically inflected strategy that aimed to legitimate marketing in the face of criticism, and this shift was – unbeknownst to authors at the time – consistent with the needs of neoliberalism.

Post- and Alternative Development: “Alternatives to Development”

The certainty that accompanied the pronouncements of modernisation theorists – Rostow – or the neoliberals – Hayek, the Mont Pèlerin Society, Friedman and the Chicago School (Plehwe, 2009; Van Horn & Mirowski, 2009) – has been seriously undermined by the failures of neoliberalism (Klein, 2007; Peet, 2009). We offer a similar evaluation of social marketing, pointing out that the foundational axiology of its practice does not sit comfortably with empirical research conducted in “developing” nations. Nor should TCR be tempted to mimic social marketing’s benefactor model.

Whilst neoliberal views on development still have considerable power, alternative discourses are circulating. Within macromarketing, for example, scholars have been attentive to the problems accompanying economic development from the debates around ecological marketing in the 1970s, green and environmental marketing in the 1980s and 1990s, through to sustainable consumption, sustainable marketing (Kilbourne *et al.*, 1997; Mitchell *et al.*, 2010) and green commodity discourse more recently (Prothero *et al.*, 2010).

Some argue that we occupy a “post development” or “alternative development” era.

The former arose out of poststructuralist interrogations of the primacy of economics in development to cleave space for other visions of human existence derived from local cultural exemplars (Escobar, 2006). The latter is aligned with social movement efforts to rethink development at a grassroots level (Dinsenstein & Deneulin, 2012). These have, in turn, been further contested by those who articulate “the pursuit of the good life as an alternative *to* development” (Dinsenstein & Deneulin, 2012, p. 587; emphasis in original).

What these have in common are processes of ontological denaturalisation (Fournier & Grey, 2000) or defatalisation (Bourdieu, 1998). Both terms refer to the recognition of the historical contingency and power relations that sustain the present capitalist order.

Registering historical contingency means becoming aware of the fact that since these institutions were the products of human activity, they can therefore be rethought along more equitable and ethically just lines. We believe that the activities of TCR actors have a major role to play in fostering further change, transforming our conceptual architecture and producing a more socially legitimate other world.

The Future of TCR?

Having been critical of previous movements and their understanding of the relationship between marketing and development, we now turn to our affirmative vision, where we sketch out how TCR might advance its research agenda. In the first instance, we have framed this paper as a contribution to “Critical Transformative Marketing Research”. Our reasoning is straightforward. Given the commitment of TCR to consumer wellbeing, we should register the boundaries inherent in this label. By focusing on transformative activities for consumers, we neglect the many other actors involved in marketing work who experience negative and ill-treatment in the marketplace (Cochoy, 2010). Such impacts should not pass unacknowledged by scholars who aim to improve human wellbeing.

Accepting this, it would appear logical to expand the number of communities we assist, improving their wellbeing by identifying, problematising and providing solutions where appropriate (e.g. Wright, 2011). Such a commitment is timely given how far the actuality of marketing, retailing and selling practice deviates from the poorly contextualised representations of marketing work we find in many textbooks and journal articles. People working in such environments are the subject of criticism, abuse, intimidation, and threats of violence from customers (e.g. Daunt & Harris, 2011; Tyler, 2009). “Critical Transformative Market Research” (CTMR), then, would encompass the full range of market actors, including researchers as well as social and environmental systems.

Putting this retitling to one side, in thinking about how TCR⁴ can ask questions about capitalism, the market and consumer practice, we see at least three ways of responding to this which we label “provisional moral agnosticism” (Zelizer, 2010), TCR-led activism (Askegaard & Scott, 2013; Wansink, 2012) and “Critical Intolerance” (Marcuse, 1965).

[INSERT TABLE ONE ABOUT HERE]

Provisional Moral Agnosticism

In examining how capitalism, the market, and marketing affect human wellbeing “provisional moral agnosticism” (Zelizer, 2010, p. 287) might be a place to start. This means reserving judgment – as far as possible given pre-existing paradigmatic commitments (Arndt, 1985) – when approaching a key topic or research question, but also with reserving the right to

⁴ We refrain from juxtaposing the proposed label against the original of TCR throughout the rest of the paper to avoid distracting from the ideas and arguments in play.

become critical and activist should it be required. Linda Scott's work with colleagues in the "pragmatist feminist" vein (Scott *et al.*, 2012) comes close to the agnosticism that could underwrite a first movement in a TCR project, where there is interest in learning and subsequently in making judgment calls about practices and intersectional structural constraints that delimit life opportunities for the people we engage with and seek to understand (Gopaldas, 2013).

Clearly, scholars cannot avoid being constrained by their paradigmatic worldview. Generally speaking, each of us subscribes to a paradigm that we use to make sense of our research. This can lead to unproductive disagreement, rather than rapprochement. As we found during the TCR conference, we sometimes disagreed in strong terms due to paradigmatic differences. Recognising this as a potential problem for future productive dialogue, we deemed it useful to outline a strategy for accommodating paradigmatic plurality, difference and the tensions this creates, so that debate becomes productive rather than destructive. Returning to the work of Thomas Kuhn (1977, 1983) it was clear that he had misgivings about his early postulation of a strong incommensurability thesis. This, at its most basic, argued that researchers cannot appreciate the work of those from different paradigm communities. His later work, by contrast, deflates this idea, arguing that learning a scientific vocabulary, concepts and theories is similar to learning new everyday languages. People can learn new languages and shift backwards and forwards between them. In the same way, people who are schooled in one paradigm can learn other scientific languages.

What Kuhn's shifting position means for this paper is that the philosophical pathway is open for multiple paradigm analysis (Hassard, 1990), that is, where a Transformative researcher shifts between paradigms in either a sequential or parallel movement in order to comprehend additional perspectives courtesy of the application of varied paradigmatic lens. The following discussion thus expands the argument of Mick et al (2012b) for TCR scholars

to be welcoming of paradigmatic pluralism and Crockett et al (2013) who call for interdisciplinary teams to study topics of interest to TCR, by encouraging scholars to adopt multiple paradigms in a single analysis.

Multiple Paradigm Research

We seek to advocate that TCR pursues a multiple paradigmatic agenda in both research and teaching practice. This discussion will remain mostly at the philosophical level with tentative reference to how this could inform debates around the relationship between marketing, development and consumer wellbeing. This discussion is hypothetical in nature for the simple reason that there are no exemplar multi-paradigm studies on the topic we consider (sampling was taken from an interdisciplinary range of sources). However we produce an example that can serve to illuminate how each paradigm: logical empiricist, interpretive, radical humanist/critical theory and radical structuralism can contest and complement each other.

[INSERT TABLE TWO HERE]

Multiple paradigm research entails scholars embedding themselves in the traditions of diverse paradigms. There are three principle strategies that can be adopted: multiparadigm reviews whereby a literature review is produced based on the insights available from multiple paradigms (Kelemen & Hassard, 2003; Lewis & Kelemen, 2002). This can be used to cast multiple theoretical traditions on to the topic of interest or provide a multi-perspective account for student discussion, thereby keying into current educational theory which stresses epistemological pluralism and discussion (Grey *et al.*, 1996). The second approach is multiple paradigm research, whereby researchers use multiple paradigms to *empirically*

generate “distinct explanations of phenomena; contestable and provisional representations dependent upon a researcher’s choice of lens” (Lewis & Kelemen, 2002, p. 263). Parallel studies hold these perspectives at a distance (e.g. Hassard, 1993); sequential studies can negotiate paradigmatic boundaries, using the insights of two paradigms to cross-fertilise the subsequent theory that is produced (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). The third approach is called metaparadigm theory building (Lewis & Grimes, 1999). This is where all the available perspectives are used to inform a study that adopts each paradigmatic perspective in turn or at the same time.

[INSERT TABLE THREE HERE]

In the hypothetical study we explicate, we adopt a sequential multiparadigm review strategy proposing that turning each paradigm lens on to the issue of marketing, development and human wellbeing reveals different facets of this relationship, offering varying levels of depth of analysis (e.g. Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991, p. 284, 344, 345; Gioia & Pitre, 1990, p. 589; Lewis & Kelemen, 2002, p. 266, 269; Schultz & Hatch, 1996, p. 541). Sequential studies require the researcher to become conversant with the assumptions, theories and concepts in play, and learn to think and write in a manner consistent with the paradigm concerned. Having worked their way through each paradigm in turn, the insights can either be kept separate or juxtaposed to highlight similarities and tensions between the accounts. For the sake of exposition, we keep the analyses largely separate.

What is common to each of these three forms of multiple paradigm analysis is the assumption that by exploring alternative paradigms we move beyond paradigmatic “provincialism” (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Lewis & Grimes, 1999), that is, where we become so focused on one perspective that we forget that each paradigm works both as a sensitising tool, yet also means we ignore potentially salient aspects of a given issue. By incorporating

multiple paradigms we broaden our understanding of the complex relationships being explored; and are better placed to judge complementary points or divergences across paradigmatic lens and thereby potentially produce “multi-dimensional theory” (Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Lewis & Kelemen, 2002).

[INSERT TABLE FOUR HERE]

An Example of a Sequential Multiple Paradigm Review

Given page limitations, we focus on a relatively simple example of how moving between multiple paradigmatic perspectives can help us build up a multi-dimensional perspective on the relationship between marketing, development and human wellbeing. Specifically we engage with each paradigm in sequential fashion, shifting from logical empiricism, on to interpretivism, then radical humanism (i.e. critical theory) and finally radical structuralism, paying more attention to those paradigms that are less widely utilised in consumer research. Each paradigm adds additional levels of depth and layers “of meaning” to the analysis and provides “a potentially frame breaking experience [and]...may help theorists gain an appreciation of possible knowledge and reduce their commitment to a favored and provincial point of view” (Lewis & Grimes, 1999, p. 687, 686). This strategy involves “bracketing” the other paradigmatic lens in play, sketching out the literature available in each paradigmatic tradition (Gioia & Pitre, 1990; Lewis & Grimes, 1999).

In terms of how it has been read into consumer research, logical empiricism generally refers to a research strategy that is ontologically realist, epistemologically positivist and seeks law-like generalisations. Generally this type of research aims to produce managerially useful

insights that aim to predict consumer behaviour in order to better control it (e.g. Wood & Vitell, 1986). As Arndt (1985, p. 16) explains, this paradigm conceptualises the social world as “essentially...harmonious and conflict free”. This means such research generally aims to explain the social world as it is, assuming that the status quo (i.e. the continuing economic development of the planet and the growth of consumerism) is comparatively unproblematic (see Wood & Vitell, 1986). Given its belief in objectivity and methodological commitments to lab experiments, questionnaires, and large scale surveys (Wansink, 2012) research based on this paradigm draws from the existing literature to develop hypotheses which are subsequently tested against the empirical world and falsified or verified, with the intention of producing generalisable theory which can inform the roll out of marketing practice throughout the world (Wood & Vitell, 1986).

For other thought communities such as the critical theorists, logical empiricist scholarship is problematic because it fails to probe the existing organisation of society at a deep enough level, preferring instead to generate superficial analyses of phenomena of interest to only one powerful group in society (e.g. managers or behavioural engineers). Moreover, it is alleged that it is incremental scholarship, involving the manipulation of a small number of variables, rather than radically transformative (Dholakia, 2009). It neglects the experiences of those subject to managerial or social marketing type interventions and fails to explore the impact of development on populations who do not have the literacy skills of the predominantly middle class audiences that form the sampling populations for much logical empiricist consumer research. In addition, there is generally limited concern for the institutionalised politics of development processes.

Broadly speaking all the research conducted and subsumed under the label of modernisation theory is aligned with this paradigm, its claims of generalisability and the idea that the path of development undertaken by the United States is the correct path for others to

follow. It is therefore ahistorical and ignores economic and cultural specificity (e.g. Joy & Ross, 1989). This strategy is consequently functionalist in that it is oriented towards systems maintenance, that is, with the perpetuation of capitalist and neoliberal relations. As Dholakia and Sherry explain,

“The *positivist* approach equates development with growth. Development is viewed as a technical procedure executed by experts, and progress is judged in terms of economic growth. Authoritative intervention is a guiding principle of positivist orthodoxy; economic growth is promoted from the outside through the vehicles of planning and aid.”

(Dholakia & Sherry, 1987, p. 126; emphasis in original)

We would go further than this and suggest that it is a Western model of the development process that aims to maintain the ideological hegemony of Western economic doctrines that cannot lead to similar pathways to economic growth envisaged by Walt Rostow nor would it be environmentally feasible to do so given the resource depletion that is a concomitant of development processes. Adopting this paradigm means exploring processes of consensus generation, that is, with trying to understand the consensus around a historically specific set of economic doctrines – neoliberalism. This is where attention stops: attention is not directed towards conflict or the provision of thick descriptions of how neoliberalism is affecting many parts of the world in detrimental ways, impacting negatively on consumer wellbeing (Bradshaw-Camball & Murray, 1991).

However, we should be clear that what is not recognised in studies that take a logical empiricist perspective on development is how misleading their conception of this paradigm actually is. In the hands of the founding figures of logical empiricism, this was a much more critical school of thought. As numerous historians and philosophers of science have argued, the axiological commitments of logical empiricism did take a more analytical turn during the

McCarthyite era because it was dangerous to be espousing a political philosophy that deviated from the mainstream in the United States. Reflecting this, the ahistorical, apolitical version of logical empiricism that we inherited is not consistent with the work of early logical empiricist thinkers whose commitments were aligned with socialism (see McCumber, 1996, 2001; Reisch, 2005).

Early work by Otto Neurath, a founding father of this paradigm, was undergirded by “critical optimism” (Kinross, 1984), it was pluralistic epistemologically, physicalist in ontological terms (i.e. concerned with physical reality), with all claims to knowledge subject to debate, contestation and inflected by politics (e.g. Ibarra & Mormann, 2003; Reisch, 1997, 1998). Importantly, the activities of this important scholar, underscore that there is no reason why this body of research cannot be used to forward progressive social policies against the market-based modernisation agendas that are reworked by neoliberalism. Neurath produced research explicitly intended to help people make sense of the economic system in which they were embedded. He produced visual educational materials to help those without a high level of education to understand economic statistics – a strategy not that far removed from the visual mapping methods documented by Ozanne and Fischer (2012). Perhaps most importantly, the main axiological principle guiding his research was its contribution to “human happiness” (Kinross, 1984).

What this means is that the incommensurability thesis is substantially deflated between those who pursue a logical empiricist agenda and those of more radical social change philosophies like critical theory. Some interpreters of Neurath’s work make the case that he was a more effective change agent than prominent figures in the critical theory movement (e.g. Kinross, 1984). It is only a lack of knowledge of the history of this paradigm that prevents greater rapprochement between these intellectual communities. Having now explained how logical empiricist scholarship has historically interpreted development and its

connection to human wellbeing, as well as rethinking how it could contribute in future, we turn our attention to interpretive research.

Interpretive Perspectives

A key assumption of the interpretive paradigm is that social reality can be understood by focusing on the lived experience and understandings of particular groups. Ontologically, social reality is constructed and reaffirmed through the activities of individuals. These can be understood through methods that allow the researcher to immerse themselves in the life-world experiences of those they interview. In terms of the relationship between marketing and development, a key benefit of this approach is that it allows scholars to understand how large scale development discourses which have performative effects affect those exposed to their dictates. In other words, it lets researchers explore how the status-quo is affirmed and taken-for-granted.

Interpretive research can tap into deeper structures of capitalism by sensitising researchers to how reality is experienced by consumers and importantly how it is structured by the meanings in circulation at the time. What an interpretive perspective does not *generally* foster is sensitivity to how the processes of lived experience are transformed into structures that constrain human agency. As the “context of context” debates reveal (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011) this strand of research has somewhat neglected wider social structures, focused too much on individual experience of the social world, thereby downplaying important social and political factors that shape social experience.

In short, interpretive research largely fails point to the deep power relations that serve to reproduce the “social construction of reality” (Berger & Luckman, 1967). It *generally* ignores wider social factors that pattern the nature of reality as experienced in preference for a focus on the individual and their beliefs about the world (Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991). It

consequently fails to illuminate the ways that development initiatives reproduce or do not undermine social inequality stressing instead consumer agency. In doing so, it ignores how consumption oriented agency reproduces a social reality that is consistent with the requirements of influential actors (e.g. the IMF, WTO, World Bank) and their associated set of economic doctrines that emphasise a very particular form of capitalist economic development over those that are more socially responsible or consistent with human well-being.

To interrogate structural factors like those of capitalism and neoliberalism requires the use of a paradigmatic lens attuned to such influences, most notably critical theory (aka radical humanism in Burrell and Morgan's (1979/1991) terms).

Radical Humanism (aka Critical Theory)

Critical theory has been explored to a limited degree within marketing and consumer research. Perhaps the best known work has been produced by Murray and Ozanne (1991) and Ozanne and Murray (1995) in their ruminations on the “reflexively defiant consumer”, that is, an individual who is able to reflect critically on their involvement in the marketplace.

Broadly speaking, this scholarship seeks to explore how society is riven with power relations which aim to foster certain forms of being in the world that are functionally useful to those in positions of power. As a counterpoint, radical humanist perspectives seek to redeem the potential for democracy in economic relations, by highlighting how certain groups aim to impose their ideals of the good life on to other groups. The aim of the critical theorists is to make democratic participation in determining a more humane future possible – one where people are not subsumed to the logic of the marketplace or cogs in a gigantic industrial machine (Dholakia & Sherry, 1987).

Critical research seeks to raise the consciousness of consumers in order to emancipate them from unequal or problematic social relations by illuminating how certain structures such as capitalist market relations or marketing practice which claim to benefit the consumer are pursued in order to achieve the profit objectives of the corporation or company concerned. The actual objectives of corporate capitalism (i.e. profit maximisation) are thus hidden behind rhetoric (e.g. customer satisfaction). It is the task of critically oriented scholars to unravel these rhetorical moves, highlighting the extent to which human behaviour is highly patterned and structured (Dholakia & Sherry, 1987).

This paradigm shares a similar orientation to the interpretive paradigm in that attention is devoted to the lived experience of human beings and the idea that people recreate the world through their everyday practices. However, it differs by subjecting these practices to critique because the social world places boundaries on “human experience” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991, p. 281). As Burrell and Morgan write,

“They seek to demonstrate the way in which science, ideology, technology, language and other aspects of the superstructure of modern capitalist social formations are to be understood in relation to the role they play in sustaining and developing the system of power and domination which pervades the totality of this social form [i.e. capitalism]. Their function is to influence the consciousness of people living within it, with a view to eventual emancipation and the pursuit of alternative forms of life.”

(Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991, p. 297)

The key ideas underwriting this perspective tackle the question of why if human life is so alienating (as per Marx) do people not revolt against their oppression? For the critical theorists this required attention to the “superstructure” of society and the “ideological

hegemony” fostered by intersectional, systemic, structural constraints (e.g. economic, educational and health disadvantages) and the culture industries (e.g. music, movies, literature etc.) which provide a consumption oriented distraction that redirected attention away from social change (Saatcioglu & Corus, 2014). A “de-mystified” human psychology is thus key to fomenting social change (Alvesson, 1994). Through ideology critique and the raising of consciousness, people could be motivated to demand social change.

All scholarship aligned with critical theory is committed to human freedom. It points to non-individual factors that influence human lived-experience, that is, the “forcefield” (Murray & Ozanne, 1991) that shapes and delimits our experience of the world. There are some examples of how these relationships can be explored in recent consumer research. Saatcioglu and Corus (2014), for example, provide a “deeper analysis of structural processes” than are seen in interpretive research by focusing on intersectional systemic constraints that limit agency and contribute to a sense of powerlessness among low income consumers (Saatcioglu & Corus, 2014, p. 123). Social theory and philosophy is thus used to interrogate capitalism and the systemic constraints faced by some consumers, tracing the way this economic regime impacts upon “social actors caught up in macroprocesses” (Joy & Ross, 1989, p. 28).

In short, a radical humanist analysis is entirely consistent with TCR’s axiology of helping people live full and satisfied lives in the sense that this paradigm is oriented to emancipation as its ultimate goal.

Radical Structuralism

Radical structuralism takes the commitment that critical theorists exhibit towards social change in a slightly different direction. They are committed to a position that reflects the later

work of Karl Marx and his increasing focus on the material, economic base of society which is ontologically differentiated from critical theory by virtue of its commitment to realism and positivism. In other words, for radical structuralists, the world has a real existence outside of human consciousness and exhibits “patterns and regularities” that can be traced (Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991). These are a product of history, power relations and ideology. They often reflect the values and ideals of a dominant class which, in turn, is well served by the current status quo (i.e. it benefits from extant economic relations, resource control, and the current distribution of property ownership). As a function of historical longevity, these values are frequently taken for granted and rarely subject to criticism. Or if criticism is levelled at them, it is dismissed as an argument proffered by a fringe group.

Radical structuralists consequently displace human agency from their analyses. When it is discussed, it is viewed in deterministic terms, with agency downplayed in the face of historically sedimented institutions and the structuring of economic and cultural systems. As such the focus is on “structures within society” which they propose to subject to critique (Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991). Predominantly, such analyses take a case based approach to explore the contradictions and conflict that permeate society, focusing on a “specific historical event” that reveals the structural conflict between different institutions and peoples or between different classes (Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991, p. 345). Only by highlighting this conflict can social change occur. Böhm and Brei (2008), for example, highlight how processes of development have led to factories being located in the global south where environmental regulations are less strict. This has led to local pollution of water flows, harming populations living near factories. Attempts have been made to justify such activities by way of the employment that is created – a development discourse that is contested by activist oriented local groups – as is the mono-cropping utilised by large corporations which damages the local environment. Through such conflict, attempts are made to reverse or

ameliorate the impact of development and help restore the local environment and improve the quality of life felt by the people exposed to such activities. What this indicates is contestation of macro-development discourses – the “deep structures” of capitalism, colonialism, post-colonialism, neoliberalism (Tauli-Corpuz, 2010) – to “improve life” for those living locally. This can be undertaken by tracing the conduits which promote such discourses whether they are corporations, “foundations, associations, journals”, key figures or academics for hire (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 55).

To read the topic of marketing, development and wellbeing through the radical structuralism lens, we can say that the forcefield that is noted by the critical theorists is reaffirmed by the activities of meta-institutions that aim to structure and pattern the economic system along lines that they, for economic and ideological reasons, deem desirable. By and large it is assumed that the benefits of these activities are not distributed equally and this will ultimately lead to social conflict. While the practices of the activists in the Böhm and Brei (2008) paper did not lead to the violent overthrow of the capitalist system, it nonetheless gives a flavour of the process towards social change that can be associated with the radical change paradigms such as critical theory or radical structuralism.

For a more purist radical structuralist analysis, however, scholarly attention needs to be directed to powerful groups like the World Bank, World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund as well as governments, “political classes” and other influential social classes. Scrutiny has to be levelled at existing legal frameworks that privilege neoliberal economic policies which underscore the expansion of the market into all facets of human existence (Jütten, 2013). The reasoning is simple: all of these factors affect the lived reality of people around the world in ways that create more alienation rather than reduce it (Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991).

As Bourdieu (1998, 2003) remarks about the ascendancy of neoliberalism and the power of institutions like the WTO and IMF, this economic discourse has had dramatic effects around the world. It did not appear from nowhere. It “is not the product of spontaneous generation. It is the result of a prolonged and continual work by an immense intellectual workforce, concentrated and organized in what are effectively enterprises of production, dissemination, and intervention” (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 12). This represents a complex stream of intellectual labours – hence difficult to perceive and therefore “deep structures” – that are undertaken at many steps removed from the lived experience of people around the world. Radical structuralism thus directs our attention to the conflict likely to be witnessed between the dictates of these international bodies and those populations that are affected.

What radical structuralists *perhaps* neglect to fully appreciate is the extent to which the status-quo is impervious to change. The recent financial crisis and the ascendancy of anti-corporate and anti-capitalism groups (e.g. Chomsky, 2012), while seeding elements of social change around the idea that corporate charters should be subject to revoke, have not led to the *widespread* societal change that was anticipated. But what, TCR scholars may be asking, does this paradigm have to do with our focus on human wellbeing? This type of analysis remains at some distance from the recommendations of TCR scholars who assert that the “life world of consumers must be kept in clear focus” (e.g. Mick *et al.*, 2012a, p. 7). Obviously radical structuralists did not keep human beings at the centre of their analyses and major thinkers in this tradition such as Louis Althusser were explicit in downplaying human agency, focusing instead on the “deep hidden structures” that were the real motor of history. He pointed out the influence of the economic base and superstructure on society whose effects we only dimly perceive, as Marx’s comments on commodity fetishism serve to remind us. After all, when we buy a commodity we forget about the labour that went into the production

of it. We may know little about where it was produced or the living and working conditions that the people producing the goods experienced. These are all hidden behind the veil of modern marketing techniques (e.g. Hudson & Hudson, 2003).

Social reality, then, is more complex and less easy to discern than we might think: “social reality, which we as men can only perceive as surface bubbles on a deep, hidden and mysterious pool, is seen as contingent upon a variety of structural interrelationships” (Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991, p. 345). While displacing the subject from the centre of their attention, we would argue that a radical structuralist analysis has much to commend it, since focusing intellectual energies on this macro-level stratum of the social world is important. Responding to the quote from Mick et al above, then, radical structuralists would aver that the “international level” – the level occupied by macro-institutions – is “the level where the fate of individuals and societies is increasingly being decided” (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 17). As should be clear from the section dealing with social marketing, the result of the interventions from institutions which seek to shape the macro-level economic rules that bind governments and influence meso-level economic policy, is steadily increasing poverty, suffering and inequality between rich and poor. These macro-decisions shape social reality as it is experienced, if not fully recognised, by the majority of people on this planet.

While Pierre Bourdieu’s work does not reflect a commitment to radical structuralism, many of his references to macro-institutions do indicate a concern for the stratification of the economic and cultural system in ways that illuminate the arguments that a TCR inspired structuralist analysis might adopt. Bourdieu is committed to social change and seeks to achieve this by delegitimising the macro-institutions that structure society and the economic system. He says this will have to be undertaken by meeting such institutions on their own assumption grounds: economics. Yet, at the same time, he underscores the unwillingness of the political classes to challenge these unelected bodies, as well as the “havoc” caused by the

IMF and related groups in countries targeted for their economic intervention, but holds out hope that “democracy” can triumph over “technocracy” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 26). Social change is not, from this perspective, likely to be easy. After all, neoliberalism as an economic doctrine was not simply accepted on the basis that it was the best economic perspective available. It was promoted through the use of an extensive network of PR agencies, lobbying groups, think tanks and the application of marketing tools and techniques to promote their strategies for development. One way forward in contesting the activities of unaccountable bodies is via forms of discourse analysis which aim to subject development and its claims to improve wellbeing to critical scrutiny. His analysis thus chimes with our call to utilise all the intellectual forces of the above paradigms to push forward their agendas regarding quality of life and human wellbeing in the face of the invocation of the dismal science by the IMF, WTO and so forth.

To summarise, turning each of the above lens on to a particular topic, has the potential to help sensitise us to alternative ways of understanding how consumer wellbeing and agency can be curtailed in various different ways. Moving from a logical empiricist through to an interpretive prism encourages us to focus on the often messy lived experience of social life under neoliberalism, particularly paying attention to how people make sense of a world riven with power relations, yet still cleave space for a rich and varied life.

Shifting from interpretive analysis to a critical theory inspired study would underscore how people are often manipulated by certain dominant interests who use all the available mechanisms of cultural communication to influence the way people live their lives. Revealing these processes of “mystification” (Alvesson, 1994) can consequently help contribute to emancipation. Concluding with the radical structuralist perspective should encourage us to remember that social change is a very difficult task to achieve as it means

contesting the existing organisation of society and the interests of powerful, yet dimly perceived and elusive groups, along with existing legal frameworks and property relations.

Fomenting Social Change

How we achieve social change, then, is an open question. Empirically studying those groups who are in the vanguard of social change efforts should figure prominently. Social movements, grassroots organisations and religious communities who express their solidarity with the poor, have all articulated their own visions of “alternatives to development”. Comprehending how these communities conceptualise their understanding of “progress”, “development” and “profit” can provide us with the intellectual stimulus to rethink marketing, development and human wellbeing beyond a capitalist frame (e.g. Auerbach, 2012). We need to take seriously how these movements conceptualise development, registering the influence of history, along with country- and location specific relations to colonialism, their emplacement within the circuits of capitalism and generate epistemologically sensitive, “ethnoconsumerist” (Venkatesh, 1995) understandings of these alternative social and consumption communities, striving to illuminate how they engage with and undermine neoliberal imperatives. This requires that scholars move away from disciplinary norms which tacitly and sometimes explicitly reward paradigmatic provincialism in theory development and hypothesis testing (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2003; Homburg, 2003; Stremersch & Verhoef, 2005). Indeed, we would go further and emphasise that the problem focus of our discipline is weighed in favour of issues of concern to countries that have followed a path of development largely set by the U.S., World Bank and International Monetary Fund and that tries to resonate with managerial requirements.

Increasingly pluralistic conceptions of development that question “whose development” and seek to know “who benefits from development” spawn and result from new methodologies that seek to include local agents, their priorities and understandings of life conditions and the world in which they live. While these remain marginal within our subject, they are fundamental to our understanding of how development affects the people it is supposed to help. The participatory research paradigm and its companion epistemology, participatory action research, helps to foster the contextual sensitivity we envisage (see also Crockett *et al.*, 2013). The focus on inclusion, lived experiences and local practices, does not, however, exempt the participatory programme from problems. Cook and Kothari (2001) critique this perspective for its persistent colonialist/Orientalist views that minimise the significance of collective loci and distributed forms of power so vital to developing localised understandings of the impacts of multinational corporations, development agencies and other relevant social groups. Moreover, participatory and critical research still funnels local knowledge through Eurocentric categories (Varman & Saha, 2009). As such, we concur with scholars who have called for the production of “contextualised theory” (Murray & Ozanne, 2009) that tries to produce “knowledge constructed from the *other* culture’s point of view” (Venkatesh, 1995, p. 25, italics added).

Through anecdotal, popular and scholarly accounts, we know that local communities have challenged the invocation of development discourses. The detail of these challenges remains sketchy and thus indicates avenues for further research. The “Live Simply” movement in Europe, for instance, is a religious expression of solidarity with those marginalised within the present economic organisation of society (Dinserstein & Deneulin, 2012). This community questions capitalism and its perpetuation of inequality at the expense of human dignity. It “emphasizes solidarity over individualism and material pursuits, respects the environment instead of perpetuating unsustainable consumption, and fosters loving and

caring relationships instead of being part of the rat-race” (Dinsenstein & Deneulin, 2012, p. 593)

Straddling the worlds of alternative practice and academic attempts to re-theorise capitalist economic systems, Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006) and many other writers have demanded greater recognition and acceptance of alternative ways of being. Part of this shared project involves a conceptual reorientation which ranges from “no-growth” to “post-growth” attempts to more equitably share the resources we have (Varey, 2012) or to re-theorise growth as “not based on maximizing consumer goods, but on maximizing values that are important for life. That’s growth, too, just growth in a different direction” (Chomsky, 2012, p. 84).

Central to the arguments of Gibson-Graham is a need for alternative views of the economy which register economic diversity and different forms of market interactions. As examples of how reclaiming the economy might look, they cite locally based social movements like the Migrant Savings for Alternative Investment (MSAI) worker initiative which targets vulnerable Asian workers. This project represents a means of engaging transformation in non-capitalist ways. Accepting non-capitalist activities as both prevalent and viable may foster greater openness to change and thereby enact transformation at the local level, so that transformation which stems from small groups, such as the MSAI savings groups, are led by the poor themselves. There are numerous other examples of these challenges to capitalist economic relations. The World Social Forum or the Global Indigenous Movement, for example, represent other potential partners for TCR efforts and they are building alternative economic systems around socio-political, cultural, environmental justice and indigenous paradigms (e.g. Escárcega, 2013). This is part of their attempt to rethink capitalism and Western narratives about who we are and how we live in

society. We have, in short, only scratched the surface so far in our engagement with activist groups who might offer us insights into furthering the TCR agenda.

TCR-Activism

Rather than respond to the needs of “benefactors”, TCR may want to pursue the role of activist. Echoing the work of Lukacs and Gramsci who link the kind of philosophical theorising undertaken so far with political action (Burrell & Morgan, 1979/1991) we submit that multiple paradigm analysis can inform TCR-led activism. Naturally, activism takes many forms. But an activist is someone critical of the status-quo, who possesses intellectual autonomy (Wacquant, 1993), and is not indebted to a benefactor who can “encourage” research to follow a certain path or to policy-makers who want outcomes commensurate with political ideology (see Daly & Sampson, 2013; Hackley, 2013; O’Shaughnessy, 1996).

We want to encourage scholars to go beyond the agenda articulated by Wansink (2012) to form bonds with innumerable groups such as the Occupy movement or the Zapatistas (Chomsky, 2012). Communities aligned with the Zapatistas, for example, have publically criticised “the destructive nature of capitalism...[and express a desire] to create new production and distribution systems” (Dinserstein & Deneulin, 2012, p. 591). Less prominent groups such as those involved with the “Poor People’s Campaign” have vocally challenged social inequality and injustice (Zeese & Flowers, 2013). In addition, there is a great deal to be learned from scholars like Professor Anna Kruzynski, a radical, feminist, community action research specialist who assists activist groups in archiving their endeavours which serve as a point of inspiration for those interested in organising and protesting against injustice (Gottinger, 2013; <http://scpa-eapc.concordia.ca/en/the-scpa-community/faculty/dr-anna-kruzynski/>). Equally pertinent for TCR is the work of Nancy

Scheper-Hughes who has worked for a prolonged period of time tracing the actors, networks and effects of the human organs trade. Kevin Bales should also figure highly as a point of inspiration for his illumination of the persistence of slavery today (e.g. Bales, 1999). The willingness of Professor Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban to critically scrutinise local cultural values with respect to female genital circumcision, using her “abhorrence” of this practice as a stimulus to critical theoretical reflection, signals an alternative role for those interested in making contributions to theory that have “real-world relevance” (Mick *et al.*, 2012b, p. 11).

In terms of our research, one way we might understand our role in studying activist groups, their activities and the effects of the capitalist system more broadly is as a “witness” (Scheper-Hughes, 1995). An activist-oriented “witness” in this context may choose to report the end result of profit-seeking. This can be undertaken publically through journalistic endeavours or via our activities as teachers writing textbooks that highlight the dark-side of marketing and consumer practice. Alternatively, researchers could offer their skills on a pro-bono basis to appropriate NGO’s (Fournier & Smith, 2012).

In a further move away from the “benefactor” position associated with social marketing, we wish to encourage the inculcation of “comradeship” in ethical, epistemological and methodological terms. That is, when we study a group of people that offer up their life-narratives, their difficulties and their pain, we become their “allies” (Nutmiewicz, 2013) – they are not just “co-participants” whose time and narratives we absorb in the pursuit of a publication – they are people we have to repay in some way (e.g. DeBerry-Spence, 2010; Ozanne & Fischer, 2012). As educators we have to understand their needs, interests and desired outcomes, and try to work through the questioning and understanding process with them.

On a slightly different note, encouraging our students to participate in transformative activist projects provides an opportunity to foster empathetic marketing actors who are “allies – rather than bystanders – to marginalized, voiceless, and under-represented people and groups in their community” (Nutmiewicz, 2013, p. 13). From such small scale projects, values are enshrined and hopefully performed later when they leave the university.

But while TCR should be committed to supporting local activities, we must not forget that we can be useful in identifying points of alignment across community and interest groups. There is a tendency in consumer research to point towards the fragmentation of social life (Wacquant, 1996) – witness the rise of postmodernism – and accompanying this to uncritically subscribe to epistemological and methodological individualism (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011). In assisting people to maximise their ability to live a dignified life, we have to appreciate that as activist academics we can make intersectional connections across groups, illuminating points of synergy, rather than encouraging each to pursue their own agenda.

When different groups come together, they manage to undermine an ideology that is so deeply faceted into our subjectivity that we forget its historical contingency: “the ideology to just take care of yourself and forget about everyone else” (Chomsky, 2012, p. 73). Forming bonds of community and solidarity across interest groups and scholarly communities (e.g. Crockett *et al.*, 2013) holds out the promise of denaturalising (Fournier & Grey, 2000) the ontology that we take-for-granted and offers us the opportunity of promoting alternative economies.

Despite an increasing awareness of the potential benefits associated with alternative economies, few would argue that capitalism is in jeopardy of being cast aside, irrespective of the hopes of radical structuralism. Given this, an option open for those who wish to challenge

the most problematic cases of corporate and government practice is to perform Critical Intolerance.

Critical Intolerance

Within our discipline we often hear pleas for intellectual and inter-personal tolerance. Yet, we find it difficult not to agree with Marcuse's (1965) summation of the system of power that operates in even the most liberal-democratic, "progressive" societies. He astutely remarks – like many before – that democratic societies are far removed from the bastions of intellectual and free speech they like to claim. There are vested interests with a great deal of power able to skew the domain of discourse in ways that are simply unhealthy, socially undesirable and should not be tolerated. In strong terms, Marcuse avers that to foster progressive aims we should actually deny tolerance to those who persist in engaging in, for example, rotten trade (Marcuse, 1965).

Preaching intolerance in liberal and democratic societies might violate core political values. However, the idea that we should be intolerant to corporations, denying them the same rights as human-beings, is gaining ground with laws permitting this being revised in light of social activism (Chomsky, 2012). Likewise, intolerance to groups that suffuse universities, schools and cafes with highly calorific foods and sugary drinks could be worthwhile (Klein, 2000), with campaigns mounted against such incursions irrespective of the short-term financial rewards they bring to universities and schools at the sacrifice of the long-term health and wellbeing of students and faculty. This does not seem far removed from Marcuse's sentiment and no doubt there are other ways of manifesting the kinds of Critical Intolerance that sometimes demands to be practiced.

Conclusion

In this paper we have examined the relationship between marketing, development and human wellbeing. As was shown, our discipline and the practices associated with it were firmly enrolled in the expansion and mobilisation of capitalist markets around the world. Clearly, development and modernisation have not bought unalloyed gains. And the pursuit of “business as usual” is not sustainable and cannot be rolled out across the world. Accepting this, the idea that marketing or consumer research scholars should act as “missionaries” for the marketing concept (Clarke & Flaherty, 2003) or view themselves as modern day social engineers (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2003; Wansink, 2012) is something we should seriously question. From our perspective, missionary zeal can make us apologists for a status quo that is no longer justifiable (Hudson & Hudson, 2003; Kilbourne *et al.*, 1997) given the inequitable distribution of the benefits from globalisation and the on-going use of slavery, forced labour and violence (e.g. Bales, 2000; Banerjee & Linstead, 2001) to sustain our standard of living (Banerjee, 2003). Further expanding this system so that it consumes aspects of existence not currently exposed to markets (Hochschild, 2011) does not appear desirable, although such a determination requires a case-by-case analysis along the lines of the three stage process of multi-paradigmatic critical reflection encouraged in this paper.

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