Macromarketing Pedagogy:

Empowering Students to Achieve a Sustainable World

Abstract

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are challenging the world to work towards a more sustainable future. Its 17 goals are ambitious, requiring concerted and system-based efforts driven by critical and socially aware thinking. However, marketing education is largely falling short of teaching students to think that way. Given macromarketing's unique perspective on the interactions among markets, marketing, and society, macromarketers are poised to contribute to marketing pedagogy and to commit students to realizing the SDGs. This article first looks back at the previous 40 years of macromarketing pedagogy, before offering contemporary approaches to teaching macromarketing through four illustrative case studies found in an online repository called Pedagogy Place. It then looks forward, setting an aspiring vision for macro-oriented classrooms in the coming years.

Keywords

macromarketing, pedagogy, sustainable development goals, sustainability, marketing systems, technology, Pedagogy Place

Note: Authorship is designated as lead, then alphabetical

Introduction

As the *Journal of Macromarketing* celebrates the completion of its fourth decade, macromarketing and its pedagogy are more relevant than ever before. In past years, Macromarketing & Pedagogy tracks at the annual conference had been few and far between and, when offered, had produced no more than enough papers for a single session. The 44th Annual Macromarketing Conference, held in Cleveland, Ohio in June 2019, fortunately suggested that things had changed. Nine papers offering a variety of ways to teach macromarketing were presented at very well attended sessions. This article builds on that momentum while simultaneously drawing important connections between macromarketing and growing support for and interest in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As early as 1981, in the first issue of this journal, George Fisk's editorial introduction explored the "well-being for all" and equity dimensions of macromarketing (Fisk 1981). In the decades that followed, the macromarketing focus has included marketing and development, distributive justice, quality-of-life, and sustainability. In 2001, Fisk more ambitiously argued the purpose of macromarketing was nothing less than to save the world (Fisk 2001). A few years later, Shultz (2007) maintained that macromarketing "seeks functional mechanisms to enhance marketing processes, to the benefit of the largest number of stakeholders, the world over" (p. 766), an objective strikingly parallel to the global ambition of the SDGs.

The SDGs have created a unifying and urgent force for change. Agreed upon by all UN Member States in 2015, the SDGs bring together 17 interconnected goals with an ambitious deadline of 2030 – now just 10 years away. From calling for more responsible consumption and production to reducing poverty and hunger while promoting health, education, and the natural environment, the SDGs seek to create a more sustainable and equitable world across all domains

of life (UN 2015). These are the exact type of system-level issues with which *Journal of Macromarketing* scholarship has grappled over the last 40 years, and, looking to the next forty years, we have much more to contribute. Indeed, the capstone goal of the SDGs is that of partnerships, where sustainable development requires various actors, including governments, institutions, business, and civil society, to come together to mobilize resources, support capacity building, and align policies (United Nations n.d.).

In light of the SDGs, as well as increasing and interrelated global crises, academics and educational institutions increasingly need to prepare students to think proactively, respond effectively, and bring about positive change. Students must be armed with the ability to address complex situations, to think critically, and to apply system-based approaches. If we are to meet the SDGs by 2030, this ability needs to be honed today, this year, and in the immediate years following. Central to achieving the SDGs is the need to think and act in a systematic way involving multiple stakeholders (Reynolds et al. 2018). Phrased another way, the SDGs need system thinkers that can appreciate, understand, and manage complexity.

Academics in macromarketing are well versed in exploring systemic interactions across the varied domains of life. Indeed, macro scholars, regardless of their school of thought, be it the developmental school or critical school (see Mittelstaedt et al. 2014), have a systemic lens focused at the nexus of marketing and society. This unique perspective provides the valuable knowledge and tools necessary to encourage and equip students to tackle the challenges posed by the SDGs. With the aim of helping current and future marketing academics introduce more macromarketing thought into their marketing classrooms, we have brought together macromarketing scholars from institutions in six countries and from every level of professorship.

We collectively propose macromarketing-oriented teaching methods and practices for use across the full range of marketing courses, while also setting an ambitious trajectory for the future.

Towards this end, we first look back at the development of macromarketing pedagogy, with emphasis on what has previously been published in the *Journal of Macromarketing*. Then, we discuss the nature and scope of an online repository for macromarketing teaching materials, a resource provisionally named Pedagogy Place, now part of the Macromarketing Society website. It includes materials from a number of scholars, including syllabi, slides, case studies, and videos that instructors can integrate into their classes or use as inspiration when developing new courses or modules. We then turn our attention to teaching approaches currently being used in the classroom that are representative of what one will find at Pedagogy Place. We offer four illustrative case studies using diverse subjects and techniques to connect students with urgent global issues reflected in the SDGs. We conclude with an eye to the future: a future where macromarketing becomes a major impetus for, and source of, effective teaching and research related both to the current SDGs and any subsequent iterations.

Macromarketing & Pedagogy

Bibliographies & Reading Lists

The 25th Silver Anniversary issue of the *Journal of Macromarketing* (JMK) appeared in 2006, just thirty years after the first Macromarketing Seminar in Boulder, Colorado. That Silver Anniversary issue was the closest thing to a macromarketing text or reader yet available. The organizational history of the macromarketing sub-discipline up to the same time is discussed at some length by Shapiro (2006a).

The fairly broad topic of Macromarketing & Pedagogy has several different dimensions, one of the most important being recommended reading lists for introducing others to

macromarketing. Since such reading lists rapidly become outdated as new literature appears, their shelf life for classroom use is somewhat limited unless the instructor does their own updating. But, even in retrospect, this material remains academically useful, both in terms of the number and nature of the sub-categories suggested (i.e., marketing systems, distributive justice, marketing and development, etc.) and the fact that it puts on record what the compilers considered the most relevant literature up to that date.

The choice of categories and of articles is subjective, shaped by the academic interests and past experience of the compiler. For more on this subjectivity, see the suggested Ph.D. macromarketing reading list published in the JMK Silver Anniversary issue (Shapiro 2006b). Three years later, Shapiro, Tadajewski, and Shultz (2009a) published what amounted to two very different macromarketing-based reading lists. The first of these was the list of articles selected for "Macromarketing-A Global Focus: Marketing Systems, Societal Development, Equity & Poverty" (2009b), a readings volume they had collectively edited for the Sage Library in Marketing.

No more than 30 percent, or 24 out of 80 articles, in any publication in the Sage Library of Marketing collection could come from the same journal. That requirement was met by drawing upon literature from other disciplines which also dealt, often from a very different perspective, with socioeconomic and other issues also of interest to macromarketing. What eventually appeared in print was an interdisciplinary exploration of key macromarketing concerns. But, because of that 30 percent restriction, several high-quality articles from JMK could not be included. These articles were identified in a second reading list, one that appeared both in the summarizing JMK journal article (Shapiro, Tadajewski, and Shultz 2009a) and in the introduction to the Sage reader.

In 2012, Michael Baker, the founding editor of *Social Business*, a new interdisciplinary journal, urged the various business education sub-disciplines to abandon their own isolated silos and instead collectively support a much-expanded concept of socially responsible business (Baker 2012). In response to that challenge, Shapiro (2012a) presented a reading list that showed what macromarketing researchers could contribute to Baker's proposed joint effort. Eight years would pass before a further updated macromarketing bibliography would be prepared, one included in this 40th Anniversary Ruby issue (deQuero-Navarro, Stanton and Klein, 2021).

Course Outlines & Class Assignments

The Silver Anniversary issue of JMK might also be considered the launch point of Macromarketing 2.0. The significant developments since 2006 include (1) the globalization of macromarketing scholarship as reflected both in subject matter and in the country of origin of contributing JMK authors; (2) the continuous further development of the marketing systems literature by Layton and by others building on his scholarship (e.g., Layton 2015); (3) steadily increasing exploration in both this journal and the annual conferences of different dimensions of marketing and sustainability; (4) scholarly explorations of the many linkages between macromarketing and such kindred marketing sub-disciplines as Social Marketing, Subsistence Marketplace*s,* Transformative Consumer Research, and Consumer Culture Theory; and (5) the introduction of the SDGs in 2015, a development which highlighted the dynamic complexity of the local-to-global challenges facing societies. But perhaps most noteworthy was the growth within macromarketing of an alternative critical marketing school of thought, one with very different governing assumptions than the more positive developmental (or reformist) mindset that shaped almost all that macromarketers had previously done, advocated, or published.

During that same period, a limited number of JMK articles or commentaries raised pedagogical issues or championed particular instructional approaches. The first and, up to now, only JMK special pedagogy section appeared in the June 2008 issue. The nature and scope of its four contributions are highlighted in the introduction to the section (reference dates subsequently added):

"William Kilbourne (2008) examines the importance of studying institutional frameworks, and their integration into an undergraduate marketing course that he developed and taught at Clemson University. David Hunt and Scott Radford [Radford and Hunt 2008a] address the use of cases, philosophical and political readings, and position papers in an undergraduate macromarketing elective titled Marketing, Society, and Government. Stanley Shapiro (2008a) examines the value of an MBA macromarketing course. More specifically, he addresses the techniques used and the viability of teaching this course entirely online. Finally, Robert Mittelstaedt (2008) discusses doctoral macromarketing education, and outlines how traditional marketing topics can be integrated with topics that have often been considered more macro in scope. He describes a seminar that focuses on marketing systems and the interaction with the market and nonmarket environments." (Radford and Hunt 2008b).

Later the same year, Shapiro (2008b) maintained that the time for the once long desired macromarketing textbook had passed. He then provided additional detail on his proposed entirely-online and controversies-based approach to macromarketing education, one which forced students, after they had sampled literature relevant to both sides of the controversy, to take a position on a series of current macromarketing-related public policy issues.

Also that year, Kilbourne and Carlson (2008) conducted rigorous controlled experiments designed to determine if classroom discussion of the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) had any measurable impact on that group of students as compared to an otherwise equivalent control group. The findings revealed that while the attitudes towards the environment of the student group exposed to the DSP discussion changed, their anticipated marketplace behavior did not. More was needed to bridge the attitude-behavior gap**.**

A monograph by Mark Peterson published in 2012 focused on how, using analytical tools and concepts rooted in macromarketing, sustainable enterprises could also be very profitable ones (Peterson 2012a). Peterson (2012b) elaborated on what his volume was intended to achieve.

> *"Sustainable Enterprise: A Macromarketing Approach* is intended to help practitioners develop marketing strategies for the marketplace by tapping into the wisdom accrued by macromarketing scholars. In this way, the book is about managerial macromarketing—macromarketing for sustainable enterprise" (p. 395).

The text was well received by the three other contributors to the section who, in turn, reflected on the value of integrating a critical marketing lens into marketing education (Reppel 2012), showed the linkages between the text and Resource Advantage theory (Hunt 2012), and reviewed how far macromarketing teaching materials had evolved over the preceding forty years (Shapiro 2012b).

Another text published in 2012, Belz and Peattie's *Sustainable Marketing,* also introduces students to macromarketing. Though that topic is not discussed in as much detail as by Peterson, the Belz and Peattie alternative is an entirely acceptable and, especially in today's

world, highly appropriate introductory marketing text. Within that framework, an instructor can elaborate as much as seems appropriate on specific dimensions of macromarketing.

Subsequently, Mittelstaedt et al. (2014) explored the concept of sustainability, presenting it as the megatrend of our time, through two very different lenses. The distinction the authors drew between the two approaches is both concise and striking.

"This article articulates two schools of thought in Macromarketing scholarship, a Developmental School and a Critical School. The former operates from the premise that marketing systems are important parts of the solution to the human condition, while the latter operates from the premise that they are part of the problem" (p. 1).

That such very different approaches have subsequently continued to coexist and interact within a broader macromarketing intellectual and organizational framework is both encouraging and somewhat surprising.

The latest JMK article with a teaching focus was Radford, Hunt and Andrus (2015). After arguing for far more of a macro focus in marketing education, the authors provide a succinct introduction to the concept of experiential learning. They close by providing two detailed case studies of experiential learning projects carried out within a macromarketing context. The first case detailed how students focused on solving marketing problems for non-profit organizations, this requiring them to obtain a deeper understanding of social systems. The other case required students to explore the cause of and provide possible creative solutions to concrete social issues, such as poverty or human trafficking. These experience-based projects developed critical thinking skills and provided an understanding of the various facets of marketing systems.

Together, these steps toward facilitating macromarketing education suggest that much has been attempted, but if we are to adequately prepare the future generation to critically question marketing system factors that reduce well-being (per Fisk's [1981] call), we need to formalize, grow, and sustain macromarketing education. In our view, macromarketing pedagogy includes any and all curricula, learning outcomes, techniques, exercises, assignments, and assessments designed to provide students with a fuller appreciation of the wide range of issues involved in understanding and critically assessing how well markets, marketing, and marketing systems serve as society's provisioning mechanisms. Macromarketing pedagogy prepares students to be both better citizens and better decision makers in all areas affecting well-being.

 We champion macromarketing pedagogy as a way to reframe and broaden the existing, too narrowly focused Business School marketing curricula so as to embrace sustainability, inequalities, distributive justice, and quality of life issues while striving to achieve the SDGs. We further believe macromarketing pedagogy is best integrated, both into the curriculum at large and throughout courses, by heavy reliance on high involvement pedagogical approaches, such as active learning, experiential learning, problem-solving learning, and service learning.

Pedagogy and the 2019 Macromarketing Conference

The 2019 Conference in Cleveland was the first since 2012 that had a distinct teaching or pedagogy track, one described as follows in the official Call for Papers:

> "Each summer true believers in the macromarketing faith from universities all
> over the world gather together at an annual meeting for both spiritual revival and
> intellectual coproduction. They then disperse from whence they came, universities
> at which very little, if any, aspect of macromarketing is taught, either openly or
> covertly. There are many reasons why this is the case but one of them is the

absence of a publicly available "teaching macromarketing" resource from which

those interested can draw, a resource appropriate for use in both the developed

and the developing world. This track has as its objective helping to fill that

serious error of omission."

The response to the Call for Papers was gratifying. Nine papers were accepted for the Pedagogy track. The full texts of these presentations are found in the 2019 Proceedings volume downloadable from the Macromarketing Society website.[1]

The Track also led to networking among those interested in further exchanging ideas on both teaching approaches and appropriate resource material. The end objective of such networking is the development of a continuously updated and collectively generated teaching resource section on the Macromarketing Society's website. The progress made to date in establishing such a resource is spelled out in the following section. After that, we introduce four mini cases that both showcase how macromarketing can be integrated into the classroom, and suggest the kind of material by others that would be welcomed contributions**.**

Pedagogy Place: Its Nature & Scope

A living online portal accompanies this publication. Tentatively called Pedagogy Place,[2] the portal aims to facilitate an exchange of pedagogic ideas and materials about macromarketing and sustainability. Pedagogy Place currently hosts several macromarketing teaching projects covering a wide variety of subjects, including outsourcing, food systems, and waste management. Each project published on Pedagogy Place includes a brief summary, pedagogic rationale, classroom example, reading list, and associated learning materials, with all content and associated teaching materials published under a creative commons license[3] that allows other instructors to share and adapt published content.

Pedagogy Place is a forum that allows macromarketers to connect back to the history of pedagogical efforts, access resources on the current application of macromarketing pedagogy, and to grow and disseminate future pedagogical efforts. Visitors to Pedagogy Place can choose a suitable project by browsing through a list of topics or activities. Current projects cover a variety of macromarketing topics, such as marketing systems, marketing ethics, consumer behavior, and marketing research. Activities for current projects also vary and, so far, include individual written assignments, group projects, and video-based work. Activities are designed to foster a critical engagement with the subject, and some projects also encourage collaborative work, such as around marketing systems thinking.

We hope that Pedagogy Place will develop into an active and inspiring source for macromarketing scholars around the globe. We encourage others both to consider making their own teaching projects available on the portal, and to use the projects already available on Pedagogy Place. We also anticipate that in the not too distant future Pedagogy Place will become a high-traffic, proactive portal of macromarketing teaching material. A first step would be expanded topic lists in related macromarketing areas, such as distributive justice, socioeconomic development, globalization, and health care, accompanied by recommending starter literature for those considering developing pedagogical material in these areas.

Macromarketing & Pedagogy: Contemporary Applications

With the mini-cases below, we illustrate the ways in which macromarketing pedagogy can be undertaken. These cases highlight the ease with which instructors can both introduce and reinforce macromarketing themes, and develop the diverse and immediate capabilities that will contribute to achieving the UN's SDGs. The cases are practical in nature, pointing to specific methods for making students aware of macromarketing and the SDGs, and vary in terms of time

requirements, application, use of technology, and student reflection. They also offer myriad opportunities for adaptation and extension. The cases represent an organic and growing effort to bring macromarketing into the classroom through the SDGs, whether fully dedicated macromarketing courses are feasible or not.

While the domain of macromarketing is fraught with controversy, Nason (1988) argued that macromarketing focuses on the "marketing activities as they relate to society, the understanding of the systems of these activities, and the redesign of the sanction systems within which these activities take place" (p. 3), unlike micromarketing which focuses on organizational issues and objectives. In short, macromarketing focuses on the interests of society, while micromarketing focuses on the interests of the organizations (Nason 1988). In these mini-cases, we seek to encourage students to assess various actors' goals and effects and "their place in the social fabric of society" (Nason 1988, p. 3) to introduce the macro level of analysis. Complementing these mini-cases, future classroom exercises for Pedagogy Place could focus on the role of institutions or the influence of societal values on marketing systems, among many other topics.

Mini-Case 1: Engaging Students in the Reality of Macromarketing: Connecting Sustainability with Economic Objectives

Introduction and Goals

The SDGs will require the melding of societal and environmental considerations with consumer and producer economic activities (Le Blanc 2015). Thus, pedagogical efforts seeking to connect sustainability with marketing strategy must incorporate a wide range of factors beyond traditional micro considerations. Some factors are product or industry specific, where technological or production issues can undermine the achievement of sustainability goals. Other

factors stem from societal rules, national laws, and other norms that guide consumers and producers to new choices**.** The marketing system in which such connections are to be drawn can significantly influence their impact (Miklian 2019).

This project, used in an upper-level undergraduate course in Sustainability Marketing, asks students to blend their micromarketing senses with macromarketing priorities, and produce a conceptual rethinking of common consumer goods. They are not constrained by organizational priorities nor current market practices, but instead seek ideal versions or alternative solutions, keeping socio-ecological priorities in mind. In doing so, students explore technology and competitive pressures that can constrain a firm from pursuing SDG-oriented changes and debate conflicting priorities relevant to achieving SDGs. They engage with limitations imposed from internal and external forces, but ultimately develop a broader appreciation for the reorientation of business strategy that is called for by the SDGs. In particular, this exercise speaks directly to Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG #12), but is relevant to Good Health and Well-Being (#3) and others given the broad array of business impacts that need to be addressed.

Overview of the Exercise

In this (15-week) semester-long activity, students work in teams of three to four persons and have five major steps to accomplish. Early in the term, students first select a generic product (e.g., a toaster) and imagine their ideal version, with no constraints placed. Given 15 to 20 minutes to confer, they excitedly generate extensive lists of features that they would include. The following week, in their same teams, the students utilize a socio-ecological impact matrix (where the rows show impact types, e.g., air pollution, and columns represent stages of the product's material sourcing, creation, use and disposal) to identify where the standard and new 'ideal' versions of their assigned product have their greatest impacts, using their best judgment in

labeling them as 'low', 'medium', or 'high'. This reflection allows students to reconsider (1) what else they believe would be ideal to change to reduce socio-ecological impacts and (2) how their first ideal version might make their impact matrix better or worse.

At about week 6, students begin to challenge the reasonableness threshold for each new product trait. They discuss the micro (e.g., customers and suppliers) and macro (e.g., economic and technological environments) forces that could encourage or derail their ideal changes. A classroom discussion of such opportunities and barriers helps to contrast the situations for different products (e.g., a toaster versus an automobile) and gives the teams more context for their strategy building. By week 12, the students role-play a focus group where their team serves as the marketing researchers, and other students take on roles of the "stay the course", "innovation-loving", and "green warrior" consumer types. Students are able to fine-tune their ideal product further and gather marketing-oriented consumer insights that could help them sell their product to investors.

In week 15, the students develop a five- to eight-minute pitch for their now considerably revised ideal product and present it to a small panel of interested faculty and staff, much like the investor shows on television. The investor panel evaluates the various teams' work and a winner is announced. All students are given a written reflection assignment that asks them to pinpoint major opportunities and threats – based on the overall activity – to any firm attempting to incorporate the SDGs into its strategy.

Outcomes

It is evident in student reflections that the "wicked" problem inherent in many SDG-oriented efforts (MacDonald, Clarke and Huang, 2019) is understood and lamented. At the same time, in both their final pitches and their reflections, students find innovative and creative ways to

improve their products while keeping SDGs in mind. It is also evident throughout the activity that students feel an urgency to act, fostered by other course topics as well as a comparison with other teams' products. The students become less tolerant of 'status quo' thinking, an important precursor to achieving SDGs and to innovation more generally. This activity has been an ungraded assignment to date, yet student enthusiasm for both the highs and lows of their task is evident, lending further weight to its effectiveness in engaging students in the process.

Mini-Case 2: Macro-Level Teaching of Consumer Behavior (CB) through Social Marketing

Introduction and Goals

The potential success of the SDGs is largely dependent on aggregate consumer behaviors – a topic about which macromarketers have much to offer. However, CB is often taught in a micro and managerial paradigm, where the focus is on internal and external influences on consumers, and individuals and groups are the units of analysis. Much less attention is given to the macro-level outcomes for societal welfare (with the exception of a brief "consumer and social well-being" section sometimes included). This macro level is a focus for both macromarketing and the SDGs. A social marketing-based project is one approach to relating CB with sustainable development.

Through the eyes of a macromarketer, CB is a topic rife with possibilities for a higher level of analysis. "The word macromarketing implies that we care about the consequences of large marketing systems on large social issues" (Fisk 1981, p. 3). The individuals, groups, and processes of CB are, of course, important components of marketing systems, with enormous bearing on the attainment of the SDGs. Many of macromarketing's major themes, such as externalities and their impacts, quality-of-life, sustainability, and consumption (Shapiro 2012a) are, at least in part, results of the aggregate behaviors of consumers. Therefore, CB has a macro-

level impact on SDGs such as Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG #11) and Climate Action (SDG #13), among others.

Social marketing is one bridge for applying the principles and skills taught in CB to larger social issues. Social marketing is "the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society" (Andreasen 1995, p. 7). This definition includes the influencing of behavior of target audiences (squarely in the domain of CB) and societal welfare (a major concern of macromarketing and the SDGs). Social marketing is a macromarketing concern when it addresses the effects of different actors on "the social fabric of society" (Nason 1988, p. 3), as this exercise aims to do.

Overview of the Exercise

The core of the upper-level undergraduate CB course is a term project in which students collect data and complete a social marketing plan to address a social issue. This social marketing project has many similarities to the experiential learning projects described by Radford, Hunt, and Andrus (2015). The project focuses on influencing consumer behavior towards supporting one of the SDGs. The techniques that students typically learn to stimulate the purchase of more fast-fashion, plastic water bottles, or cigarettes can be useful to promote responsible consumption, sustainable cities, and good health and well-being.

This macro approach to teaching CB begins by asking students to write a personal introduction, including what societal issues most concern them, which becomes a starting point for brainstorming a project topic. From the first day of class to the last, the instructor likewise discusses social issues of personal concern, drawing in a macromarketing perspective. Each

course topic is explored from a managerial, a consumer, and a societal point of view. This trains students to see the tensions between paradigms and develop systems-level thinking skills. These course components raise students' level of thinking from each specific topic to the societal and macro system level with the goal of being better citizens.

In teams, students begin by collecting secondary data to understand the scope of the social issue and past approaches to it (e.g., Shapiro 2008a). They collect primary consumer data through in-depth interviews, observations, or surveys. Based on the analysis of the data, they reflect on the biggest challenges to changing behavior related to the social issue. The teams then create and present a social marketing plan, including specific marketing strategy recommendations, as if they had been hired by the local or national government as consultants.

Outcomes

This approach has been successfully employed for several semesters. The students appear more invested in the data collection and recommendations because they select the social issue they most care about. The personal interviews conducted stretch students to understand the complexity of the underlying reasons for the socially destructive behaviors and to appreciate the multi-faceted reasons why the problems persist. The final presentations attract greater class interest because the topics are of broad significance.

Students have also demonstrated the ability to apply the lessons to urgent current events. In one semester the course was offered, there were two deaths on campus within a two-week span. These tragedies evoked deep sadness and outrage. Two separate groups of students from the class formed voluntarily to use the same systems-level thinking and analysis skills to confront the systemic societal problems of mental illness and physical safety. Their actions

exemplify the training of citizens able to grapple with issues of societal welfare rather than just micro-level questions like product placement or recall of brands.

Mini-Case 3: A Controversy-Based Approach to Marketing and Technology

Introduction and Goals

The SDG of Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure (SDG #9) specifically focuses on technological development, including infrastructure, manufacturing, and communications. According to the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, technology is crucial to achieving the SDGs, while at the same time potentially causing challenges, such as societal disruption (United Nations 2018). Marketing practitioners are often at the forefront of integrating new technologies into their activities, changes with widespread implications for a variety of actors. Despite the importance of technology, and its potential threat, marketing often falls short of training students to critically assess the implications of technological change.

To bring macromarketing into the classroom, Shapiro (2008a) suggested that individuals or teams could take and defend a position on a controversial topic. Such an approach offers a teaching platform to both highlight and discuss a variety of contemporary macromarketing topics, one being the introduction of new technologies. This approach was further developed beyond debate to encourage students not only to discuss, but also to seek an agreement on a controversial issue. This approach therefore requires them to consider the perspectives of the various stakeholders present in a marketing system and to work towards an inclusive solution.

The primary purpose of marketing systems is to enhance quality of life (Layton 2014), and macromarketing therefore should consider whether and how specific technologies integrated into marketing systems can contribute to this purpose. Practiced systems thinkers are arguably better equipped to understand varied system actors and their relationships and identify critical

points to support change and innovation (Meadows 2008). However, actors often have ideas that do not align. Further, stakeholder relationships are often viewed dyadically, such as between firms and customers (Hill 2010), and students anecdotally are not immune to this tendency. A controversy-based approach, which goes beyond the traditional consumer-company dyad, is a way forward.

Overview of the Exercise

Controversies exist "when one person's ideas, information, conclusion, theories, or opinions are incompatible with those of another person, and the two seek to reach an agreement (Johnson and Johnson 1979)" (as cited in Johnson and Johnson 1994, p. 238). This goal of reaching an agreement makes controversy different from a debate, where, in the latter, consensus is not sought and an ultimate winner from the two opposing sides is eventually selected. A controversy-based approach therefore requires students to understand and systematically navigate interconnections and opposing stakeholder viewpoints.

Understanding the effect of technology in marketing is an area that could benefit from such an approach. New technologies abound, including drones, blockchain/cryptocurrencies, smart homes, self-driving cars, robots, and artificial intelligence, among many others. Such new technologies are often fraught with controversy, as illustrated here regarding virtual reality (VR). VR is the computer generation of three-dimensional spaces that provides real-time immersion and interactivity. It is used for marketing promotions (Boyd and Koles 2019), with organizations such as All Nippon Airways, NASA, and TopShop all utilizing VR in their promotional activities. VR has clear upsides, such as the ability to show products or deliver services to consumers virtually, which could prove to be a boon, for example, for underserved areas.

However, there are also downsides. Researchers have found that VR can cause adverse physiological symptoms in children in as little as 20 minutes (Yamada-Rice et al. 2017), and a gender effect has been reported, with women reportedly experiencing more nausea than men, this perhaps due to differing depth perception (Boyd 2014). Media reports abound about other negative implications of VR, including legal and privacy issues, concerns about violent activities, and cyber-addiction, among others.

Fostering a controversy perspective in the classroom involves first assigning contrasting viewpoints to teams and then having team members research specific roles (such as differing stakeholders) within that group. A simple contrasting viewpoint posed to students to foster controversy around these new technologies could be "Marketing organizations should [not] use virtual reality." While this question alone results in spirited discussions, instructors can propose more nuanced controversies, such as narrowing in on specific companies, contexts, and/or target markets. Each layer of specificity demands more from students in terms of becoming 'experts' on the topic, including requiring more detailed secondary (or primary) data collection.

Students first need to identify the important stakeholders involved. They will likely suggest that technology companies, lawmakers, investors, suppliers, customers, consumers, media, the environment, and other stakeholders are involved. Those enrolled then select or are assigned a stakeholder role and consider the benefits and drawbacks of using the technology in marketing from the perspective of their stakeholder group. The instructor suggests students get as specific as possible regarding the (potential) benefits and the harms, supported by research.

Students then need to share and discuss their contrasting viewpoints, seeking to synthesize opposing positions. Whether the process spans one or more sessions, the instructor should encourage movement towards consensus as it unfolds (Johnson and Johnson 1994). Even

if an ultimate consensus is not achieved (due to time constraints), the process of identifying, researching, and seeking to understand different perspectives generates an ability to work towards solutions. This approach therefore follows a stated macromarketing role of solving problems (e.g., Wooliscroft et al. 2017).

Outcomes

A controversy-based approach enhances the classroom experience, most notably by supporting learning, promoting creation of and openness to novel ideas (Johnson et al. 2006), developing the ability to manage conflict cooperatively (Tjosvold 2008), facilitating the search for and integration of opposing information, and appreciating complexity (Johnson and Johnson 1994). As controversies can support innovation and marketing in organizations (Tjosvold 2008), students who are able to navigate a controversy in a constructive way may have an edge in the workforce, while also contributing to more positive outcomes in society as informed citizens. To achieve the SDGs, students need to be collaborative and solution-based, aspects supported by a controversy-based approach.

Mini-Case 4: Two Marketing Research Tools for Marketing Systems Teaching

Introduction and Goals

Each individual SDG challenges marketing scholars, practitioners and students alike to critically reflect upon marketing systems as a basis for systemic change, sustainable innovation and societal transformation. We live our daily lives in a complex world of interconnected marketing systems. We create and continually shape these systems and in turn, these systems design our behaviors. The objective should be to shape and reshape marketing systems to tackle behaviorally driven inequalities, improve quality of life, and transition to low carbon circular economies that are ethical, sustainable, and responsible for all humans and the planet. Marketing

students are best prepared for lifelong learning, for informed citizenship and careers if they understand the complexities, dynamics, and non-linear nature of marketing systems.

Group model-building (GMB) and causal loop diagrams (CLDs) are two useful techniques for understanding the dynamics of a marketing provisioning system and how to shape them. The first, GMB, is a collective decision-making method within system science and involves the development of shared mental models of a problem and the consensual unravelling of the underlying causes of that problem to support strategic and policy decision-making (Bérard 2010). The method is characterized by the use of collaborative, open, and participatory methodologies of system analysis, collective learning, and consensus-reaching in the process of system-modelling. The second technique, CLDs, are "maps showing the causal links among variables with arrows from a cause to an effect" (p. 102), with an indication of hypothesized relationships between variables (Sterman 2000). The feedback reflects the interrelationships between the recurring trends and patterns of the stakeholder actions and reactions over time that generate the systemic nature of a system (Ricigliano 2016; Sterman 2000).

Both techniques form an essential part of a macromarketing service learning pedagogy where the integration of experience with learning, and *not* merely the *addition* of experience to learning, is central to the development of a macromarketing systems dynamics perspective. This is achieved, in part, through a group social marketing plan, for a client with an SDG issue at a local level (e.g., nature-based activities in a city). The plan consists of three phases:

1: Listen to the Marketing System – problem definition and formative research

2: Learn about the Dynamics of the Marketing System – GMB and CLD research

3: Leverage the Marketing System – co-design an integrated multi-level strategy.

Overview of the Exercise

The social marketing students form GMB teams of three to four students at the beginning of the course. To support GMB, the students undergo personality profiling to understand how they individually work in teams. They learn about and discuss marketing systems literature, such as Layton's MAS theory (2015) and Peterson's Sustainable Enterprise (2012), to provide a theoretical foundation. GMB suits the purposes of macromarketing pedagogy allowing for a group and collective 'we/us' perspective to emerge from the individual 'I/me' views of the world. The iterative GMB work provides a much richer understanding as to the collective system behavior and dynamics. The GMB teams are able to explain the observed and sometimes counterintuitive contradictions between the networks and stakeholders in the marketing system. Finally, through GMB processes, it is possible to identify the dominant feedback loops that explain observed system behaviors and structures. These constitute the core dynamics of a marketing system where "some of the key dynamics are taking place… and system stories are more intuitive" (Oliva and Mojtahedzadeh 2004, p.157).

Each GMB group then engages in a series of steps to complete their CLD work for the client's context, in this case Healthy Ireland, a government-led organization established to improve the health and wellbeing of the Irish population. This begins with a conventional literature review, in-depth expert interviews, and/or a survey to generate a list of singular barriers and enablers at work in the marketing system. Next, the GMB group conducts paired comparison work to create a list of MAS-informed barrier and enabler themes. Students then develop single causal loops qualitatively with computer software packages, white boards, sticky notes, and pens. Each causal loop is checked for its theoretical basis and a narrative is developed (Figure 1). The individual loops are coherently blended by the GMB team into one qualitative systems dynamic

map to create a picture and story about the focal problem. During the clustering of the individual

loops, the system's dominant behavior is identified (Figure 2). The images shown are examples

only, as each is built organically from the case-specific analysis and its inherent macromarketing

themes.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

Outcomes

For all students, this is their first opportunity to obtain a systemic or holistic picture of a

marketing system they are living in. For most, it is also their first introduction to how marketing

and marketing systems relate to the SDGs**.** For the instructor, the course is a pioneering

opportunity in a Business School to introduce students to a fully-fledged macromarketing course

with a reading list with materials from, for example, Shapiro (2012a), Peterson (2012), Layton

(2007, 2009, 2011, and 2015), Kennedy (2017), and Hastings and Domegan (2018).

For the client, and their SDG focus, according to Fiona Donovan, National Coordinator

of Healthy Ireland Cities and Counties,

"this partnership has been mutually beneficial with students exposed to current societal

issues, but more importantly, Healthy Ireland gaining insight and knowledge to inform

thinking, in particular the need and skill to 'hold' many issues and perspectives at the

same time to progress to find solutions."

Macromarketing & Pedagogy: The Future

Macromarketers around the world are actively responding to local-to-global challenges and

developments in macromarketing theory, and scholars are increasingly seeking ways to integrate

these societal issues into their classrooms. A macromarketing pedagogy is emerging in recent

years and we expect this trend to accelerate further over the next 10 years led by the SDGs as a unifying force. As organizations shift towards being more sustainable, and more academics embrace the SDGs in their research and teaching, we will likely see an increase in the demand for a pedagogy characterized by critical and systems thinking, one that incorporates approaches to learning based on experiences, enquiry, and problem-solving. The benefits go beyond their managerial positions to embrace questions of citizenship, justice, equality, stewardship and quality of life.

Macromarketing has an essential role in establishing such a pedagogy. Rather than focusing on individual agency and a world predicated by linear causality, macromarketing dares to wade into the messiness. It accounts for a world shaped by dynamic complexity, where collective agency both impacts and is impacted by the context of that action. The study of collectives such as a small group of social entrepreneurs, a shopping center, or a wider national-level market all require moving beyond the buyer-seller dyads highlighted in micromarketing classes. Supranational organizations, including the UN, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the World Health Organization recognize this need for systems-based thinking. It is our collective responsibility to prepare both business undergraduates and higher-level students to play their part in building a sustainable future for all.

Macromarketing Pedagogy for a More Sustainable World

At present, the current trend seems to involve the addition of macromarketing perspectives and approaches into existing courses. Some instructors are even doing this covertly. While this is an admirable start, the objective should be full macromarketing courses – ones proudly titled as such – being offered within business schools and part of multidisciplinary offerings. Macromarketing courses and programs must be clearly and deeply related to current SDGs and

those goals that may follow from them post-2030. Only then can we ensure that a macromarketing pedagogy as illustrated in this article aligns with a higher quality of life and a fairer and more just world. Such courses should cover introductions to macromarketing as well as more advanced topics and provide a deep understanding of marketing systems and the social matrix within which they are embedded. Macromarketing education belongs in business programs, but also in the array of multidisciplinary degree programs aiming to develop skilled professionals with global mindsets toward solving environmental or health challenges.

Macromarketing scholars should recognize that they are not alone in embracing the SDGs. Progress is possible if macromarketers identify barriers built between disciplines and actively work to surmount them. Online courses, including massive open online courses (MOOCs) are yet another avenue for bringing together scholars from different disciplines across the globe, therefore fitting within the SDGs' global scope.

To support such endeavors, instructors will need to identify, create, and use supporting materials, including appropriate textbooks, reading lists, articles, case studies, software, and associated coursework. With Pedagogy Place, macromarketers now have access to an online platform to facilitate the distribution of these materials. However, for this platform to prosper and to create a robust macromarketing pedagogy, macromarketing scholars all over the world must explore and contribute additional pedagogy-related topics.

Conclusion

Macromarketing has an essential role to play in creating a better world. To meet the needs of today, of JMK's 50th Anniversary, and beyond, we must adjust our teaching to both account for and equip our students to deal with the messy and dynamic complexity that is inherent in all markets. This need is not only a practical demand, but an ethical responsibility. We thus call

upon other macromarketers to further develop their own materials, engage with macromarketing

teaching, and advocate for greater support of macromarketing education**.**

Endnotes

(1) http://society.macromarketing.org/proceedings/2019/.
(2) http://pedagogy.macromarketing.org/
(3) The current license used for new projects is the creative commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0
International (CC BY-SA 4.0) license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/.

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