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The Dynamics of the Local and the Global: Implications for Marketing and Development

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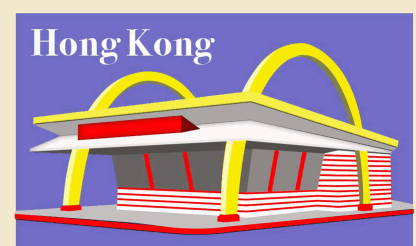
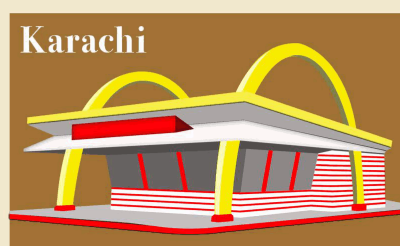
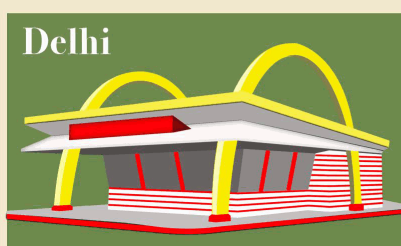
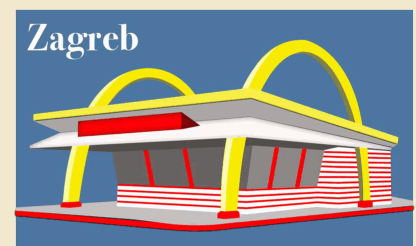
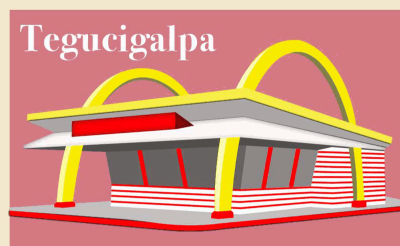
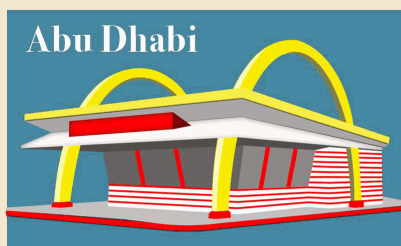
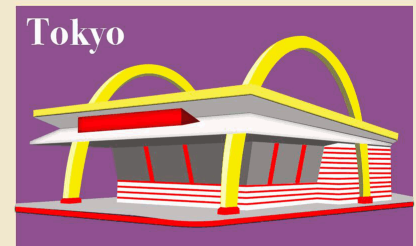
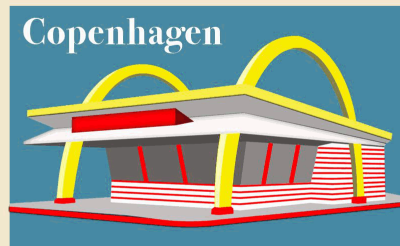
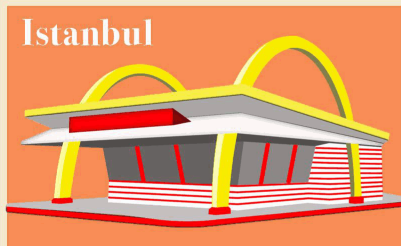
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Markets, Globalization & Development Review



The Dynamics of the Local and the Global: Implications for Marketing and Development

A. Fuat Firat

Abstract

Globalization's contemporary omnipresence has resulted in an emphasis on the conflicts between the local and the global. This emphasis has blurred our ability to have insights that may be gained by recognizing that the local and the global are interdependent and cannot exist without each other. This paper explores the initial insights from such recognition regarding local identities, cultural development, and modern marketing's shortcomings in aiding development. Preliminary conclusions as to how a new conceptualization of marketing can be instrumental in enrichment of meaningful and substantive human lives through constructing redefinitions of development and marketing based on these insights are presented.

Keywords

Local, Global, Globalization, Marketing, Markets, Development

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The Dynamics of the Local and the Global: Implications for Marketing and Development

Introduction

Globalization has been deemed to be an inevitable force (Friedman 2000; Pieterse 2000; Waters 1995). Many see this force to be in conflict with local interests (Barber 1996; Jameson and Miyoshi 1998; Martin and Schumann 1997). Consequently, globalization is often considered to be a negative, imperialistic force, killing local identities, forcing uniformity of culture and experience, and destroying independent self-determination (Danaher and Burbach 2000). At the same time, globalization is sometimes seen as a positive force, helping economic growth in poorer parts of the world, bringing peoples of the world closer, and increasing knowledge and understanding of each other among nations (Fukuyama 1993; Huntington 1997). Most positive reactions seem to be coming from international bodies that further the goals of businesses and governments, along with the global corporations and governments themselves. The negative reactions tend to come from a loose coalition of citizens who seem most concerned with the destruction of local life modes and traditions, impoverishment of sectors that cannot merge into the global economy, and cultural imperialism, as well as from some labor organizations. In all cases, the debates tend to focus around the dynamic of the local-global relations.

The intensity of the global-local dynamic has been felt in actions that have materialized around the meetings of some of the most prominent international bodies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization (Danaher and Burbach 2000; Thomas 2000). These actions are clearly seeking a different direction in globalization, one that expands beyond economic success and growth concerns and recognizes the cultural, organizational, and social diversity and needs of local communities that are “integrated” into the global system with little care for the often devastating effects of the required transformations, or simply left out to disintegrate under the pressures of globalism (Belk 2003). The reactions range from passive resistance to armed struggles.

The forces of globalization rest on the economic successes of the modern order that has fomented globalization, and propose it as the most, indeed, the only, rational alternative for development, while increasingly recognizing the need for some changes in global policies and governance. Many local orders are rejecting the push toward globalization by depicting

it in terms of colonization and aggressive destruction of local values and traditions. On the other hand, more recent voices from the local communities tend to be increasingly advocating an accommodation of different orders instead of either/or options.

Interdependence of the Local and the Global

Whether globalization is negative or positive, however, the local and the global have almost always been depicted as opposing and in conflict with each other. In fact, the local and the global are interdependent and cannot exist without each other. The local is necessarily always in relation to (an) *other*. Without the presence of the other, there can be no cognition of the local – all would be one and the same. Without the other, there is no possibility of a (re)cognition of the global, because it is a multiplicity of the local(s) that enables the presence of the global. Thus, the local and the global require each other. In effect, that which does not contain a multiplicity of locals is not global – it is simply provincial.

Recognition of the local always necessitated the presence of something larger – at least the presence of two local(itie)s. A multiplicity of the locals enables the presence of the global. Recognition of the global necessitates the presence of the local. Conversely, presence of the global is required for the (re)cognition of the local.

This impossibility of the presence of one without the other is largely forgotten in contemporary discourse on the local and the global. As already indicated, the local and the global are often positioned as competing or opposing territories/spaces. Therefore, the complex interdependence between the local and the global is left undiscovered. Such discourse distorts and clouds our ability to have greater insight into the plights and possibilities that cultures face.

Formation of Identities

The local recognizes its “localness” and develops self-consciousness as a local through its reflection in the global. In the contemporary “globalized” world, the identity of the local is reflected (back) to it by the global. Then, the local embellishes the identity it is reflected. Indeed, as in the case of individual identity (Gallup 1985; Lacan 1977), for local cultural identities to form, presence of the other that enables one to distinguish itself as an entity separate from others is required (Friedman 1994; King 1997). The other – which in the case of the contemporary globalized world is primarily the global – plays the role of the reflecting mirror, both making one (the local culture) recognize its distinction as a separate entity and providing it with the anchors for realizing aspects of its distinctness, indeed, its identity.

For example, the French realize their identity by recognizing the differences that distinguish them from all others. The dimensions that define the qualities along which differences are recognized, however, are largely determined by the global standards, which, then, reflect to the French how they are perceived by others. The French, then constitute their own conception of French (cultural) identity on the basis of reacting to the images they perceive as reflected in the global, in terms of agreements or disagreements with these images. Through these reactions, which, of course, may be different from different segments of French society, thus highly complex, and counter-reactions to these reactions from the global, complex and dynamic French identities arise(s). This identity formation is, because of its nature, always in flux, never conclusive, that is, in a state of continual construction.

The Nature of Contemporary Globalization

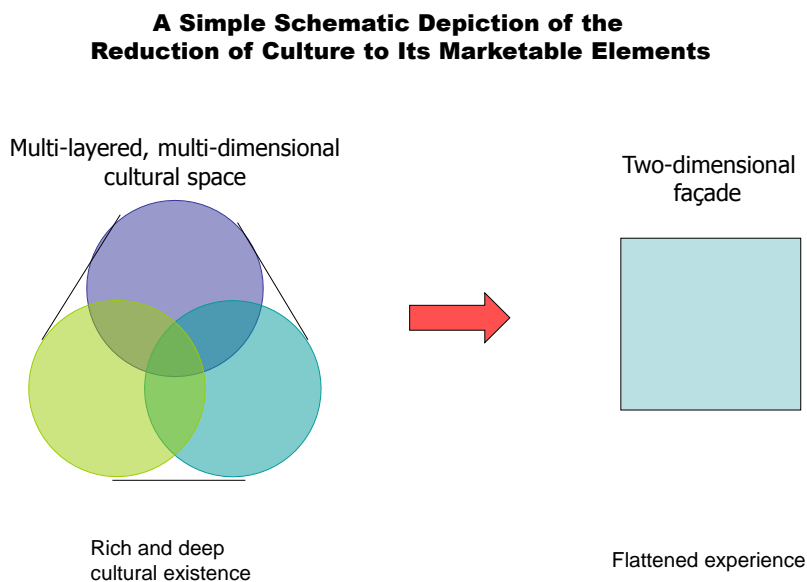
While this process of identity formation applies under the contemporary modern conditions of globalization, it has taken a special form. Global media and global communications systems have enabled, and made desirable, access to a multiplicity of cultures from many locals. Thus, today, the global emerges as a mosaic of multiple locals in many localities – a phenomenon that has been called the globalization of fragmentation (Firat 1997). In all major metropolises across the world one can find representations from many locals. Whether one is in San Francisco, USA, Bangkok, Thailand, Istanbul, Turkey, or Paris, France, along with other metropolises, one can find aspects of Chinese, French, Italian, Indian, American, German, etc., cultures, often clustered in enclaves such as the Chinatown, and one can navigate the experiences of these cultures. The French café, the Indian market, the USA shopping center, and the like, are accessible all around the world (Featherstone 1991; Ger and Belk 1996).

Clearly, these representations of different cultures cannot be said to be “total” representations of the local cultures. Rather, they appear mostly as façades. This is, indeed, a specific character of contemporary globalization. Contemporary globalization exhibits itself primarily as an expansion of markets and of products that find interest in expanding markets. Thus, in contemporary globalization, representations of the locals take marketable, commoditized, commercialized forms. In effect, only the marketized artifacts of local cultures find global representation. The marketization of cultural artifacts is a function and a reflection of the (corporate) market system, which increasingly dominates world politics and conceptions of development. This dominance results in a special emphasis on material economic values in gauging growth, development,

and success of human society in modernity, and local identities increasingly come to be defined by the commercially viable elements or artifacts of cultures. In a global world that is based on the expansion of markets, only the marketable (commercial) dimensions of local identities are afforded global visibility. While, therefore, all cultures that afford marketable qualities find expression in global markets, this expression is only a commercial one. In this sense, no one culture is universal or hegemonic across the world, except the culture of the market. The only universal in contemporary globalization is the hegemony of this market system.

Collapse of cultures to their marketable artifacts, their representation through only this commercial dimension, degrades the multi-dimensional cultural space to a two-dimensional façade (for a schematic representation of this phenomenon, see Figure 1). The texture and textuality that enables immersion into cultures is, thus, lost, at a time when global consumers increasingly seem to seek greater immersion into and navigation of a multiplicity of cultures (Featherstone 1991; Firat 1997).

Figure 1: Cultural Reductionism



Organic versus Commercial Identities

In the complex, multi-dimensional and multi-layered texture and textuality of local cultures, there exist *organic* linkages among the many historical qualities that give birth to each culture's artifacts. In the *commercial* façade imposed through contemporary globalization all such linkages are squashed or collapsed and destroyed. As a response to a tension due to this collapse, an ongoing struggle between the organic and commercial identities arises. This struggle is usually linked to and reflects an identity struggle among segments of the local populations, especially between those segments that act as agents of the global forces and those segments that are either opposing to or left out of "benefiting" from the results of globalization. Local identities are continually informed and shaped by this struggle.

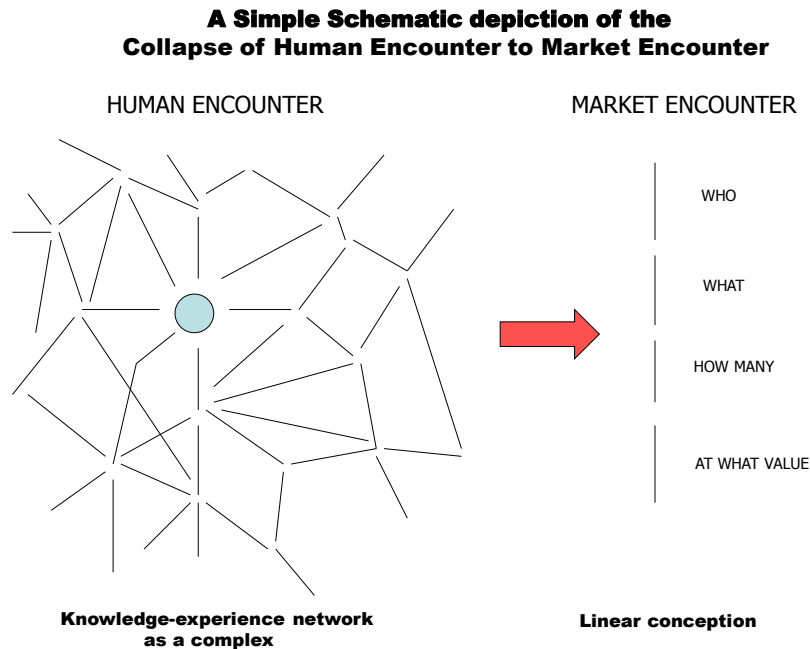
Marketing's Reactions to Identity Struggles

Many in the marketing discipline have reacted to observations of local identity struggles in times of contemporary globalization along the lines of conventional modern economics. The impulse to regress and/or compress the multi-dimensional *human encounter* into a unidimensional *market encounter* (see Figure 2 for a schematic representation), found in modern economics, has carried over to marketing perspectives on development. Specifically, this impulse exhibits itself in paying exclusive attention to one specific facet of value and efficiency. Instead of a complex conception of value embedded in the complexity of life and culture, one particular dimension of value is singled out, extracted, and isolated as the only one that "counts!" In the ideological landscape of market-based global economics, value is defined solely as market exchange value (Barnet and Müller 1974; Ger 1999; Schmookler 1993). Then, this concept of value is glamorized as the only solid criterion of achieving development – now defined as economic growth – and tends to "bulldoze" all other conceptions of value. In effect, a unidimensionalization of human existence – a marketization of life – ensues, long recognized by critics of market cultures (Marcuse 1964).

As depicted in Figure 2, human encounters result in learning, new experiences and knowledge, which enrich and enlarge the *knowledge-experience networks* that exist at both individual and community levels. The concept of the knowledge-experience network used here is similar to the associative networks or the schema and the scripts in knowledge processes. That is, each new human encounter may cause an evocation of relationships, connections, links to what is already experienced and known by the individual or community, triggering rearrangements,

expansions, questioning, meaning (re)orientations and, thus, enrichment of what is in the knowledge or experience pool of the community or the individual. Yet, when viewed simply as a market encounter, this richness of the human encounter is reduced to point to an outcome along only one dimension of this complex knowledge-experience network.

Figure 2: Human and Market Encounters



This point may be better illustrated by an example. Take a simple human encounter that could occur between two parties. To contextualize this human encounter in familiar grounds, let's say that it takes place at a local marketplace. While this encounter is at a marketplace, and the purpose originally leading to it may be a desire for a material "market" transaction, the outcomes are still much more complex than simply an economic transaction. Imagine the thoughts that may be running through each party's mind following the encounter. Here is a representation of the local party's reaction:

... What a thing to wear, those shorts! Their funny skinny legs showing like that. Don't they have any idea of what people will think? But, then, who cares. I wonder if I am being too rigid. They must be comfortable on a hot day like this. It is a kind of freedom to just do what feels comfortable and not buy into "the way." I wonder how I would feel if I wore some shorts to work tomorrow. Maybe it

will be a statement others will notice. The story they told about Afghanistan. I never thought of Afghanistan that way before. I have to tell this to S., my granddaughter. What she was telling me about her teacher's depiction of Afghanistan seems to have a different side to it. Must be nice to witness it firsthand. The way they were bickering about what to get. What a waste of time. So inefficient. There might be a play to it all, though. The way they were flirting with each other in public too. Maybe it is all a part of it. How would my spouse react if I acted like this? There might be a tension. Would this tension translate into a more exciting sex life? Who was it? Was it Omar Khayyam who wrote... I need to re-read those verses. He knew then, and look how much we have learned to put limitations on ourselves now. I am glad they did not buy what they were considering. And at that price too! There is something to be said about the way they were a team. The way they seemed to steal those "secret" touches of their arms and legs. Wonder what sex would be like if ...

And a representation of the other party's reaction:

... What a waste, standing around talking and talking. And for what – a 57 cent trinket! But that laugh I got when I suggested a quarter of the price asked for and he made that face – priceless! Never seen a face like that in my life. Maybe I have to stop and smell the roses more often. Rush, rush, rush. If I had laughed like that in my country at someone's face, they would have killed me. Well, maybe not killed, but no kindness would be received. Funny how he reacted. I wonder how such laughter is interpreted here. Who was it, Foucault or Heidegger, no Nietzsche... Well, I have to brush up on my reading. The laughter, what a relief. Maybe there is something to be said about taking the time. I always wondered about the way that cashier at the supermarket wore her vest. Should I ask her, hit up a conversation? How will that be interpreted? Buy and get out, that's the way! The way the man appeared from behind the curtain at the shop. Was that wonderment in his eyes? And what kind eyes. The way he offered the tea. What was he thinking? The way he held the tea glass. Is it the tradition? Does it have a meaning? I have to tell J. about this encounter. Her theory of social interaction; is it vindicated? The slowness of life, the deliberateness of movement. I wonder what sex would be like if ...

Admittedly, both of these excerpts are greatly truncated representations from a highly complex and much larger network of evocations. As is observed, the simple, short human encounter at the marketplace has led both parties to question and rethink their received knowledge-experience networks, provoking additions to and potential enlargement of, therefore, the enrichment of each network, and, thus, each life. This enrichment of knowledge-experience network is development in human terms, what arguably ought to “count,” rather than the truncated sense(lessness) of economic value accumulation. These are very valuable results, when the totality of human existence is concerned and considered.

What, however, is the typical modern marketing lesson that is often drawn from such an encounter? It is something like this:

Bad marketing! Inefficient. No purpose. Nothing was bought or sold. No money changed hands. The local economy did not get the benefit of value added from the 57 cent transaction.

This simple example illustrates how much is lost and missed when the human encounter is reduced to a market encounter. It should be no surprise that so many people are so disenchanted by a world where such reductionism dominates life and the valuations of development, accomplishment, and happiness in life. Multi-dimensionality of existence is crushed into unidimensionality, and the complex meaning and excitement of human life experiences are condensed to market transactions.

Unfortunately, modern marketing and marketing scholars who have adopted the market encounter worldview have contributed to this global disenchantment of life. Making economic (market exchange) value the only criterion of development and good life has caused much to be lost in human existence and has constructed images and, thus, experiences of poverty where much cultural and social richness exists. Marketing scholars who have, with good intentions, hoped to contribute to global development, reduction of misery, and dispersion of discrimination and broad inequalities among world populations and segments have been disheartened by insistent problems along these lines despite technological breakthroughs and promises of economic growth.

It is now clear, by any method of calculation, that as long as the single criterion definition of development (i.e., economic growth) continues to be used, certain regions and nations of the world will never catch up relatively with others, even when they accomplish great gains in absolute terms. That is, a constant substantive difference in levels of *economic* development will remain, thus perpetuating perceptions and conceptions

of (relative) poverty. Such a defeating result of modern progress would not be the consequence of a lack of development, but rather of the monolithic construction of how development is detected or measured. That is, poverty is in our measure of development, not in our diverse and complex ways of living.

Modern Globalization, the Market, and Marketing

For radical improvements to marketing's ability to help people and communities across the world at this time of globalization, truly original conceptualizations and theorizing is necessary. Because the issues that can inform and determine global relief of problems that hinder efforts for development, justice, and harmony are cultural issues that require cultural solutions, redefinitions and reconstructions of principles and orientations will have to be dealt at the cultural level. Modern thought, in its attempts to rationalize and make modern interventions upon nature (Angus 1989) – or the universe in general – efficient, has partitioned culture into domains, most specifically, the political, social, and the economic, employing distinct principles (democracy, civility, and value maximization, respectively) to maximize the rationalization and efficiency in each domain. This partitioning of the cultural human existence, and each domain losing touch with the other, has also unidimensionalized observations and studies of the human condition. Consequently, solutions to problems proposed from each domain have, therefore, always fallen short due to the omission of connections among the different dimensions of human existence. This condition has especially intensified as one of the domains, the economic, and its key institution, the market, have gained primacy over others, as also the neoliberal ideology has become more dominant (Harvey 2007).

Often, the market, as it has been idealized and constituted in modern economics and in modern societies, and the marketplaces of traditional and contemporary times have been all considered under the construct of 'market' (Peñaloza and Venkatesh 2006). This, while at times helpful in recognizing the possible alternative organizations of relations and transactions among people, also clouds some significant differences between 'the market' of modernity, and marketplaces, such as the agora or the bazaar. While the modern market is singularly constructed around the idea of exchange of values, and also, for example, different from other forms of transactions found in human history, such as redistribution and reciprocity (Polanyi 1957), marketplaces have been and are constructed around cultural relations. Bazaars and the agoras, for example, were less about economic exchanges and more public arenas where social, educational, political, kinship, etc., interactions occurred.

It is, therefore, necessary that, despite some similarities, a distinction be made between ‘the market’ and marketplaces. The market, being an institution with its norms and principles, for example, the necessity of equivalence of the values exchanged for efficient allocation of economic resources, has proved to have substantial resilience to withstand and coopt resistance and counter-market movements and ideologies (Kozinets 2002). The market is known to thrive on resistance and coopt forms proposed by resistance by emptying these forms of their original contents (Firat 2001). Consequently, hopes that the market will provide a space for resistance or ‘consumer-citizenship’ (Arnould 2007) are often doomed to failure within cultures dominated by the market. For any hope for continuity, spaces separate from the market have to be constructed (Thompson and Coşkuner-Ballı 2007), yet often they also eventually become coopted by the market.

Modern marketing, in its micro, managerial orientation was, understandably, a response to the need for organizing a field of knowledge and practice to further human and organizational capabilities in order to achieve goals that were inherent to the modern project and order. Yet, this largely economist (and often highly individualistically psychological) orientation in modern marketing has fallen into the same trap discussed above of articulating a unidimensional, therefore, otherwise blindsided view and understanding of the human experience in the universe.

Modernity began with the becoming prevalent of the idea that human beings could control and determine their own destiny by controlling nature – which existed in the material conditions of the universe – through an objective understanding of its underlying order by using science and, then, developing scientific technologies that would afford them power over nature’s forces (Angus 1989). Thus, modern culture flourished with an emphasis on the project of building a grand future for humanity, and the foundation of this grand future was to be in surrounding human beings with products of their own making – for example, well engineered houses, medicines, etc. – in order to mediate and buffer nature’s impositions upon humans, thus, eventually taking control over from nature. Building toward this grand future, therefore, meant that more and more people needed to be supplied with more and more products of scientific technologies, often also interpreted in terms of providing greater comfort and convenience for people. Modern marketing, then, in its micro, managerial orientation, was conceptualized as the provision and making accessible of products to people (now conceived as consumers) that they “needed” in order to increase and improve their control over their own lives.

As this materialistically, economistically single-minded conception of how human beings can improve their lives by surrounding themselves with more and more products of their own making proves flawed and deficient, it falls upon marketing scholars who are more holistically oriented to develop frameworks and concepts that will try to overcome the deficiencies. There is widespread disenchantment across the world among those who lack and even those who have ample material affluence as witnessed in polls or in popular literature (Martin and Schumann 1997; Pieterse 2001; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997). The causes for this disenchantment are sometimes blamed on faulty application of the reigning concepts and frameworks – for example, economic growth advocates in “developing” countries often express that many of their products are excluded from free trade because of protectionist policies of “developed” countries. Often, however, there is a tacit recognition of the paucity of the principles and criteria (frameworks and concepts) that guide our valuations of what constitutes meaningful life. This prevalent sentiment is most forcefully expressed today in the popular movements against the policies of world development institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, as mentioned earlier in this paper. This expression is felt to such a degree that it has caused transformations within the thinking and discourses of these institutions themselves (Thomas 2000; Wallach and Sforza 1999). Clearly, a different world is sought by many.

Conclusions

As it should be no surprise that disenchantment occurs when multi-dimensionality of life is reduced to a single façade, it should also be no surprise that people seek a different world when development and progress are defined simply in terms of a market encounter, reducing the richness of the human encounter to a single dimension. New and insightful definitions of development and, accordingly, of marketing are required if disciplinary fields wish to be of service to humanity’s (re)enchantment.

The discussions above may point to a beginning in this endeavor. Definition of development must capture the depth and complexity of this phenomenon, refusing to collapse the richness of human existence to one or a few of its aspects. A first attempt at appreciating the complexity and richness may begin with the knowledge-experience network alluded to earlier. Using this idea, development can be defined as *the enrichment of life in terms of increasing or improving the complexity of knowledge-experience networks that inform life, that is, human actions, thoughts, and meanings*. We can say, then, that development has occurred if an

individual's or a community's knowledge-experience network is enlarged, thus becoming more complex. This means that individuals in a developed community are able to comprehend and experience a greater, broader spectrum of existence rather than be limited to less. Only a very limited part of this existence has to do with products and market exchange. Much involves other dimensions of the human encounter, such as the ability to experience and appreciate "other" ways of living, relating, being, and communicating. We can say, that is, the two parties in the simple example of an encounter earlier related have experienced development because the encounter – despite the failure of the market transaction to occur – has laid the foundation for the expansion (thus, becoming more complex) of each party's knowledge-experience network, providing for each the ability to comprehend, live, and relate to a greater set of ways of being. That is, each party's life has been enriched. As these individuals have experienced development, we can say that a community that allows and enables such enrichment is also more developed.

Marketing, then, if not simply conceptualized as a tool of modern market expansion, but an institution of human development in the sense defined above, can be defined as *the design and facilitation of processes that empower individuals who, through their communities, seek to achieve development*. This definition frees marketing from its modern limitations and its singular linkages to the market, and allows it to contribute to the enrichment and enchantment of human lives.

Marketing scholars can begin from these simple origins and work on enlarging and enriching the frameworks and concepts to participate in the creation of a different world. The challenge the marketing scholars face is this: Shall we find, as a community of scholars, the strength and the creativity to construct knowledge that will so empower humanity, and liberate us from the shackles of received, dated definitions and principles? After all, a different world that is sought will begin when we begin to find our different concepts and constructs.

To accomplish this historic task, marketing scholars have to conduct research into discovering the key elements that contribute (have historically contributed) to transformation and construction of modes or organizations of life, then theorize how these key elements can be re-conceptualized in order to allow and facilitate designs of new organizations of human lives. In their book *Empire*, Hardt and Negri (2000), illustrate an example of how systemic transformations have taken place across history. They show how differing ideologies and classes or interest coalitions that promote these ideologies struggle through "constituting" stages until a certain set of institutionalizations are

“constituted” and begin to normalize the rules that guide relations, interactions, and contemplations among and of members of the society. These institutionalizations, then, tend to foster a certain organizing principle that permeates the reasoning people employ to execute their actions as well as a human subjectivity that facilitates the type of agency represented by such actions (Firat and Dholakia 2016). We need to focus attention on these institutionalizations, organizing principles, and subjectivities, and any other key elements research discovers, to promote a deeper understanding of the human condition in order to formulate new vocabularies that represent and realize transformations and new orders of human experience.

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