

A PRELIMINARY REPORT ON MARKETING
THEORY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

by

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Abstract

This paper is a review and critique simultaneously of marketing theory and social enterprise marketing. The scope, structure and aims of marketing theory are examined. It is shown that many structural weaknesses of the marketing theory stem from the limitation of its scope and aim to private enterprises. While marketing theory thus remains weak and stultified, the marketing or marketing-like activities of social (non-private) enterprises are performed without adequate theoretical backup. Particular and general forms of social enterprise marketing are examined to assess theoretical requirements of such marketing forms. An approach to the development of a theory of social enterprise marketing - and thereby also the development of a more universal marketing theory - is presented.

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I. THE IMPASSE IN MARKETING THOUGHT

An examination of contemporary marketing discipline from a theoretical standpoint reveals several disconcerting features.

Among them :

1. An ~~ongoing~~ and inconclusive debate on the scientificity of marketing as a discipline
2. A controversy on the proper boundaries of marketing discipline
3. An unbridged chasm between micro-marketing (managerial marketing, enterprise marketing) and macro-marketing (study of distributive and consumptive processes at the level of the society)
4. An essentially static theoretical framework - based on the "marketing mix" - in existence for more than two decades
5. A ~~general~~ lack of competing alternative conceptual frameworks either at the overall discipline level or at a disaggregate level
6. A ~~persistence~~ recurrence of atheoretic and pragmatic tendencies in the discipline characterized by appeals to "stop beating around the bush and talk about practical problems."
7. Despite the spread of marketing concepts and techniques in almost all parts of the world, the continuing characterization of marketing concepts, forms, institutions and processes as "capitalist."

Although seemingly disparate, these tendencies and features are closely related. Together, they reflect the theoretical stagnation and stultification of the marketing discipline although considerable work has been done in terms of "filling in the details"

of the existing framework. Even the bold, new forays to give marketing "broadened", "deepened", "social" and "generic" perspectives have not broken the discipline free from its existing, and in many ways dysfunctional, theoretical mould. ¹

One clue to the theoretical impasse is found in the last feature listed earlier - the continuing characterization of marketing as "capitalist." Like all management-based disciplines, marketing evolved in the ethos of a growing industrial capitalism. Well over two centuries of experience of managing capitalist industrial enterprises had accumulated before the first socialist country made its appearance on the map of the world. The practical problems faced by these capitalist enterprises engendered management thought which eventually evolved into several management disciplines. The beginning of a formal discipline of marketing has been traced to around the turn of the century. Bartels (1970, Chapt. 3) has documented the evolutionary phases of the marketing discipline. Evidence indicates that marketing thought has more or less faithfully responded ² to the evolving needs of private, American, capitalist, industrial enterprise. ³

Industrial enterprises today are, however, not all private and capitalist in form; they have never been exclusively American. A variety of industrial enterprise forms abound in the world today - cooperative, commune, socialist, state-capitalist, worker-managed, etc.

This study tries to explore the ways in which the nearly exclusive emphasis on the private enterprise form has straitjacketed marketing conceptualizations. Not only has the development of marketing theory been stultified, there has not emerged the requisite managerial guidance for the marketing activities of non-private enterprises.

This study approaches the problem from two ends. Firstly, an examination of marketing theory is made to identify its structural weaknesses. Secondly, the nature of the marketing (or marketing-like) activities of social (non-private) enterprises is explored to identify the theoretical requirements of such activities. The choice of the catch-all category of "social" enterprise is deliberate so as to permit an investigation of a variety of non-private enterprise forms and search for specific marketing characteristics as well as universals which cut across these various forms. The two lines of analysis are synthesized to obtain an improved basis for marketing theory and marketing decision-making in social enterprises.

Is Marketing Universal?

This study would make sense only if there is reason enough to believe that marketing or marketing-like activities occur in, and are relevant to, non-private enterprise forms. This question of universality of marketing can be examined from three perspectives :

actual practices of social enterprises, opinion of marketing scholars, and structure of management disciplines.

There is no disputing the fact that marketing as a managerial activity is finding a place in more and more social enterprises. Public sector enterprises of the state-capitalist variety have full-fledged marketing functions, sometimes surpassing in importance the corresponding functions in private enterprises. Enterprises in the socialist countries of USSR and East Europe are rapidly acquiring a marketing outlook. There is, thus, an unmistakable trend of growing "marketing consciousness" in almost all social enterprises.

Marketing scholars who champion the broader view of marketing would have no hesitation in opining that all forms of social enterprises do have a marketing function.⁵ Even the challengers of the broadening movement really dispute the extension of the concept of marketing to non-enterprise forms of organization. There is virtually no disagreement among scholars that whenever economic activity is organized in modern enterprise form - private or social - marketing is an essential function.

The final resolution of the question of the universality of marketing lies not in observed practice or scholarly opinion but in the metascientific structure of the management disciplines.

Marketing activities concern consumption. No branch of management science except marketing covers consumption as its subject matter. Even in the social sciences, the coverage of consumption is piecemeal, sectarian and not oriented to prediction and control of specific consumption phenomena. All this portends that a marketing-like discipline - within the broad umbrella of management science - will be a necessity as long as production and consumption are separated.⁷

It is, then, reasonable to assume that for social enterprises, marketing constitutes a legitimate and continuing managerial activity as well as a relevant discipline of study and research.

II. STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES OF MARKETING THEORY

Even though the primary concern of the marketing discipline has been the improvement of the technology of marketing the products of a business firm, there has been a continuing theoretical examination of the discipline in the last three decades.⁸ The concern, by and large, has been with the form of marketing theory. The substance for marketing theory is believed to exist in ample measure in the documented experiences, lore, conceptualizations, surveys, experiments and models. The formal metatheoretic frameworks - borrowing as they do from the philosophy of science - have surpassed in sophistication the actual theories of marketing available so far.⁹

The Present Status

There is no satisfactory grand or general theory of marketing as yet. Therefore, the present theoretical status of marketing must be evaluated on the basis of the component theories - rather conceptualizations - of marketing at the micro and macro levels.

A multitude of concepts relating to the micro or enterprise level have been developed over the years. In the early years of the growth of marketing thought, the reported experiences of managers and business lore were the main sources of micro level concepts. With continued use, incorporation in business school curricula, and some research effort, most of these concepts have acquired a reas-

enable degree of formalism. There is still, however, some amount of ambiguity and loose usage of concepts. For example, concepts like "product positioning," "brand loyalty" and "segmentation" are likely to be given different operational interpretations by different managers and researchers.

Heuristic models and conceptual frameworks abound in micro level marketing literature. Such models outline in general term the expected responses of the market or the marketing organization to particular policy inputs. Since the relationships expressed in such models are imprecise and usually not empirically validated, the models are pre-theoretic. There does not exist a satisfactory theory of marketing at the firm level. The heuristic models - based usually on cybernetic and systems thinking - are adequate for providing guidelines for decision-making and, therefore there is no strong motivation to evolve a micro theory of marketing.

At the macro level, conceptualizations deal with marketing systems as a whole, the marketing process in abstraction, role of marketing in society, public policy toward marketing, and most importantly, consumer behaviour.¹⁰ Except for consumer behaviour, other conceptualizations are at a very primitive stage - first order generalizations of observed macromarketing phenomena. Consumer behaviour, which is in the process of evolving into a discipline in its own right, has expanded tremendously by borrowing theories

and concepts from behavioural sciences. Consumer behaviour can even boast of attempts at evolving grand theories encompassing its total subject matter.¹¹ Although a well-developed and rapidly growing limb of marketing, consumer behaviour suffers from several theoretical inadequacies such as :

- (i) insufficient integration of different approaches to consumer behaviour
- (ii) emphasis on buyer behaviour to the detriment of other aspects of consumption behaviour
- (iii) emphasis on individual behaviour to the detriment of understanding consumption behaviour of larger social units
- (iv) insufficient conceptual linkage to other behaviours (e.g., trade behaviour) occurring in a macromarketing system

The distinctions between the conceptualizations at the micro and macro levels and the theoretical status of each level are summarised in Table 1. While the overall theoretical inadequacies of the marketing discipline are evident, it would be worthwhile to explore the nature of some of the specific weaknesses and the causes for these.

Some Specific Theoretical Weaknesses

Several disconcerting features of the marketing discipline were mentioned in the beginning of Section I. Some of these would be examined now in greater detail. For purposes of discussion, these features are grouped into four theoretical issues.

Table 1Distinctions Between Micro and Macro Marketing Theories

Feature	Micro Theories	Macro Theories
1. Subject Matter	Enterprise level management	Marketing systems at societal level
2. Objectives	Control of market response to achieve enterprise goals	Description, explanation and prediction of marketing phenomena
3. Nature of Conceptual Frameworks	Cybernetic or systems-based. Very rarely behavioural	Based on psychological, sociological and economic theories
4. Scope of Conceptual Frameworks	Particularistic and situational	Mostly general and <u>universal</u>
5. Degree of Quantification	Some particularistic modelling. No general models.	Very little
6. Present theoretical status	No general theories. Attempt at theories pertaining to particular functions remain largely empiricist. Poor linkage of macro concepts	No general theories except attempts in consumer behaviour literature. Except CB, level of conceptualization is primitive. Poor linkage to micro concepts.

1. The Scientificity Issue: The scientificity or otherwise of the marketing discipline has been debated for over three decades.¹²

Although the specific debate has revolved around the question "Is Marketing a Science?", the broader concerns around this issue encompass the following questions :

- Should marketing be a science (or an art/technology)?
- If marketing should be a science, what criteria of scientificity will it have to satisfy?
- Has marketing achieved the status of science by adequately satisfying the criteria of scientificity?
- (At the other extreme): Should marketing researchers bother their heads about such questions when there are so many practical problems crying for solution?

In the early years, the question of "art vs. science" was important but lately the concern has shifted to the evolution of criteria of scientificity and the application of such criteria to the existing body of marketing knowledge. It would seem, therefore, that the question of "science or not" has been tacitly settled and the attention of the discipline has been focussed on the question of "how scientific is marketing." The progress on the issue of scientificity, however, is not as clear cut as it appears. Firstly, although the criteria for scientificity have been spelled out in considerable detail by a few marketing scholars,¹³ the reality of marketing knowledge does not measure up to even a fraction of the standards set for scientificity.¹⁴ In fact, those writing on metatheoretic and metascientific aspects of marketing are hard

put to find suitable examples from their own field. Secondly, even when lawlike generalizations or theory-like systems of propositions do appear to exist for a particular segment of marketing phenomena, it is highly doubtful if these apparently scientific constructions are applicable to situations other than those obtained in a developed, private-enterprise dominated economic situation.¹⁵ Universality eludes what little "science" exists in marketing. Thirdly, the progress of marketing discipline toward scientificity is obliquely resisted by stressing the "practical" nature of marketing.¹⁶ It cannot be ruled out that the strong (and recurrent) pragmatic streak reflects the desire of the gatekeepers of the discipline to chain the intellectual work to the needs of giant private enterprise systems. For, promoting greater theoretical explorations at this stage may enrich the theoretical framework generally, but would almost certainly detract from the particular needs of monopoly capitalist enterprises.

In sum, then, the road to scientificity for the marketing discipline bristles with many obstacles. At least some of these obstacles stem from a true lack of universality in the marketing discipline. By evolution and by design, the discipline has been particularized to certain contexts. The eventual resolution of the scientificity issue will hinge on the ability of the marketing discipline to transcend its contextual confines.

2. The Boundary Issue : In less than a decade, the boundary of the marketing discipline has been so drastically altered as to lead one scholar to comment on "the identity crisis" in the discipline (Bartels, 1974). As the dust settles after the "broadening" controversy, it would be pertinent to examine what exactly has the move to enlarge the boundaries of marketing accomplished. The broadening movement has been very successful in its main aim - creation of sensitivity about broader application of marketing tools and techniques and legitimation of marketing as a key activity for **nonbusiness** and nonprofit institutions.¹⁷ It is in its very success that certain theoretical drawbacks of the broadening movement are reflected. As Spratlen (1972) has pointed out, the "operational" domain of marketing has been broadened but not its "philosophical" domain. Leaving aside the value question of whether marketing should switch over to a broader (humanist, as Spratlen suggests) philosophy, the operational mode of broadening has had a missionary rather than scientific flavour. Rather than examining the marketing or marketing-like activities of nonbusiness organizations and evolving appropriate conceptual frameworks, the existing managerial framework (with all its historic moorings) has been extended to non-business situations. Existing frameworks have been extended to alien phenomena instead of searching for frameworks to fit the observed phenomena.¹⁸ In the literature pertaining to broadening,

the decks have been stacked to favour the advocated framework and hence the broadening movement partakes of a largely speculative character. Although speculation sometimes plays a role in the development of theory, speculation is not theory.

The broadening movement, therefore, did go "too far" - not in terms of proposing an unreasonable domain for marketing, as Luck (1969) alleged, but in terms of taking the speculative rather than the scientific route. A true broadening of the discipline requires conceptual constructions to be based on observed and reported workings of various institutions which engage in marketing or marketing-like tasks. The attempt to conceptualize social enterprise marketing in Section III of this study makes some progress towards this end.

The Linkage Issue : Marketing conceptualizations at the enterprise or micro level are not linked to the macro level conceptualizations, except in terms of broad ¹⁹ generalities. In many ways, such linkages represent the crux of the problem of developing satisfactory theories of marketing. Effort in the following directions are required.

- (a) Study of the relationship between enterprise and state. For whatever reasons, marketing scholars continue to regard the state as an independent entity: a neutral referee enforcing the rules of the game of the market place and promoting welfare goals in general. Radical thinkers, however, have long demystified the state (whether feudal, capitalist or socialist) as a creation of (and an instrument of) the ruling classes - a fact which liberal thinkers have also belatedly discovered.²¹ Viewed in this perspective, enterprise marketing activities, consumer movements and public policy - all become part of a wider social process which can be subjected to analysis and conceptualization.²²

- (b) Study of the relationship between production and consumption. So far, guided by instrumental concerns, consumer behaviour research has focused its attention on how people buy specific brands. Micro-macro linkages will be highlighted when the focus shifts to how consumption patterns evolve²³ and how consumption and production roles of man reinforce each other.²⁴ Buyer behaviour and the marketing process can then be seen in the overall perspective of how different societies are organized for production and consumption.

The development of micro-macro links can be greatly facilitated by examining marketing in the context of social enterprises. These enterprises are often explicitly and directly linked to state policy: the relationship between macro-level policy and micro-level enterprise functioning is more or less transparent. Also, in certain forms of social enterprises, the productive and consumptive goals of people need to be explicitly reconciled. Such reconciliation provides insights into the generic nature of marketing phenomena.

4. The Framework Issue: At the micro or enterprise level, the theoretical and operational framework is totally dominated by the functional "marketing mix" concepts. As was pointed out earlier, the broadening movement has speculatively extended the marketing mix to all organizational forms, nay, to human behaviour in general. The advocates of "broadening" would readily point out that a "marketing" framework provides a fresh, alternative perspective to areas of human endeavour which have not traditionally fallen within the bailiwick of marketing discipline. The question is : do alternative and competing conceptual frameworks exist to impart a fresh and critical outlook to the core subject matter of the discipline, viz., marketing of goods and services? Without alternative frameworks, and without a critical perspective, the discipline is likely to become flaccid and lose whatever claim to scientificity it has achieved. Social enterprise marketing compels one to look for alternative frameworks because practical enterprise management requires alternative operating concepts. In this sense, the study of social enterprise marketing promises to revitalize theoretical debate and aid theoretical progress in the discipline.

Conclusion

Many of the theoretical inadequacies of marketing discipline are perhaps due to lack of rigour in conceptualizing and empirical testing. These shortcomings will be overcome as the discipline is subject to the normal pressures of conformity to scientific standards. More serious and fundamental causes for theoretical inadequacies can be traced to the chaining of marketing thought to certain objectives, techniques and frameworks. These rigidities stem from the historical evolution of marketing discipline in the twentieth century American milieu resulting in a commitment to capitalist, free-enterprise values and ethic. At this stage of historical development of the world systems the search for universal conceptualizations in marketing must rely heavily on the activities of social enterprises. The study of social enterprise marketing would not be a panacea for the theoretical ills of the discipline. However, it would, in some measure, help overcome the various structural weaknesses of marketing theory outlined in this section.

III. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MARKETING

The term "social enterprise" does not denote a unique organizational form. Rather, it is used as a catch-all category for the various forms of non-private enterprise which have evolved in almost all countries of the world, capitalist as well as socialist. The study of these various forms should reveal those features of marketing theories which are specific to these forms and also help in developing a universal theoretical perspective for the discipline.

The empirical content of the term "social enterprise" would therefore vary spatially as well as temporally. The variability of the term need not be a problem from the point of view of conceptualizing about social enterprise marketing. After all, the whole corpus of marketing knowledge - with its implicit or explicit claim to universality - has been built around large-scale, private capitalist enterprise, a form which is scarcely more than a century old.

Isn't the modern giant private sector corporation also a social enterprise? Some, notably Galbraith (1977), would like to urge that it is: "the most profound tendency of the modern corporation ... is to socialize itself. It takes all power from its owners - disenfranchises the capitalists. It also makes itself socially indispensable" (p. 278). While it is undisputably true that the giant corporations in the West have amassed great power, and that they are social institutions in the generic sense, it is not true that

they have "disenfranchised the capitalist." The private corporation does remain an institution and an instrument of private capital, except that it serves the capitalist class rather than easily identifiable individual capitalists. The term social enterprise, therefore, would exclude the private corporation.

Marketing Activities of Social Enterprises

The search for marketing conceptualizations relevant for social enterprises presupposes that such enterprises do carry on marketing or marketing-like activities. In Section I, several arguments were presented as to why such activities are universal. It may be useful to formalize the concept of marketing activities of social enterprises. Whenever production and consumption are separated, a conscious activity²⁷ has to be carried out to convey goods produced to consumers. This activity, a direct consequence of the division of labour, will be termed marketing. Nearly all social enterprises that exist today engage in such marketing activity and in most of them, it is an important activity.²⁸ The conceptualizations in this section will deal with marketing defined in this (rather conventional) way.

Forms of Social Enterprises

Social enterprises can be classified in many ways. The classificatory dimensions of interest here are those which have distinctive influences on marketing activities. The following dimensions are relevant:

1. The pattern of ownership and control, especially the role of the state as owner and controller.
2. The pattern of management. This refers to the way enterprises are organised for decision making and the nature of decision making processes.
3. The type of operating environment. This refers to whether the (particular) enterprise operates in an environment composed primarily of private enterprises or primarily of social enterprises. This also refers to the overall nature of the society in which the enterprise is located.

These dimensions are relevant because they influence the aims, scope and methods of conducting marketing activities of the enterprises. Table 2 presents an illustrative classification of social enterprises using these dimensions. In the following few paragraphs, the influence of these classificatory variables on marketing practices and conceptualizations is considered.

The Influence of Ownership Pattern

The ownership pattern of an enterprise determines the preference systems impingent on the enterprise. ²⁹ Owing to the greater integration of enterprises with the society, almost all enterprises (private or social) are subject to multiple preference

Table 2

A Classification of Social Enterprises
(selected examples¹)

Ownership/Management pattern ²	Type of operating (competitive) Environment		
	Mostly private sector	Largely public sector ³	Socialist
State/Bureaucratic		Indian Railways	Pre-reform soviet enterprise
State/Professional	Renault (France) Mysore Soaps (India)	Petroleum, steel (India)	Hungarian enterprises
Collective/ ⁴ Professional	Employee-held Companies		
Collective/ collective	Kibbutz enterprises (Israel)		Yugoslav Self-Management ⁵
Cooperative/ ⁶ Professional	Amul Milk Coop. (India)		
Cooperative/ Collective	Israeli Moshav		
Consumer ⁷ Cooperative/Professional			

- Notes: 1. The examples reflect author's judgement.
2. The categories listed are not exhaustive.
3. This refers mainly to situations where whole sectors are nationalized or socialized, e.g. petroleum in India, steel in Britain.
4. In a collective enterprise, the means of production are collectively owned and operated.
5. In the strict juridical sense, the means of production of Yugoslav enterprise are the property of the nation. However, defacto, they operate as collectives. Professional managers are used but in their expert capacity. See Kralj (1976/77).
6. In a cooperative enterprise, the means of production are individually owned and operated but the other business functions - purchasing, financing, accounting, marketing, etc. - are handled by a cooperatively constituted body.
7. Not strictly a "social enterprise." Private consumer capital, cooperatively employed, would qualify as a sort of consumer capitalism. However, in their marketing decision-making processes, consumer cooperatives are quite akin to many social enterprises.

systems. However, in a private enterprise, the overarching and supreme nature of shareholders' preference system is unquestioned. A private corporation may be influenced by the interests of workers, consumers, trade, environmentalists, etc. In case of a conflict of objectives, however, the ultimate arbiter is shareholders' interest. This is not so in a social enterprise. Multiple preference systems impingent on a social enterprise give rise to multiple objectives which cannot always be explicitly prioritized.

In a state owned enterprise, for example, the preference system of the state and the consumers influence the workings of the enterprise. In most such enterprises, another preference system, identifiable with the objectives of the managers, can also be distinguished. Unlike private enterprises, owners' preference system cannot be assumed to have an overarching importance. The owner - the state - is a product of the society and must reflect the dominant values of the society.³⁰ Since it is supposed to mirror the "wider social interest", the state enterprise - unlike the private corporation - cannot treat consumer interest as merely instrumental. As a result of this, state enterprise marketing is characterized among other things, by:

1. Use of multiple, often conflicting, objectives
2. Reliance on broad-based marketing strategies which satisfy these multiple objectives.
3. Use of price, in some cases, as an allocative mechanism.
4. Use of organizational mechanisms (such as marketing divisions) which act as buffers between various preference systems.

5. Use of consultative mechanisms, in some cases, which solicit direct inputs from consumers as well as components interests of the State.

In case of a producers' cooperative, the multiple preference systems are those of the producers themselves and the state (always a regulator and often a financier), the latter also a proxy for consumers' interest. Conflicts of the following type are inherent in the marketing activities of such cooperatives:

1. Conflict between maximizing producers' earnings and (the State's demand of protecting) consumers' interests.
2. Conflicts arising out of product mix and other marketing decisions which do not have a uniform and equitable incidence on all producers.
3. In case of professionally managed cooperatives, conflict between producers' and management's interests on the one hand and management's and consumers' interests on the other hand.

Because of the complex nature of objectives, conventional conceptualization in marketing break down. Such conceptualizations neither help in explaining enterprise behaviour nor in guiding it.

Influence of Management Pattern

The marketing concept as well as concepts in marketing are predicated upon a "professional" pattern of enterprise management. One of the consequences of professionalization is that the management interposes itself between the primary producers (the workers) and the consumers. It arrogates to itself the sole prerogative of interpreting the product of labour to the consumer and the consumer of the product to the labouring producer.

In a professionally managed enterprise, therefore, the organization of the marketing function tends to be centralized, pyramidal, even bureaucratic. This is because the management would like to preserve and strengthen its crucial interface role between consumers and primary producers. Thus, the marketing organization and information system are so designed that only the head of the marketing department is likely to have a complete and comprehensive understanding of the market. At every other level, the understanding would be partial.

Contrast this ^{to,} say, a collectively and democratically managed producers' cooperative. The marketing organization and information system have to be so designed that all the primary producers (if feasible) or at least a substantially large and democratically constituted management council can have a comprehensive picture of the market. In such a situation, market research may have to become an open consultative process between consumers and workers. The survey-and-summation type of market research, with its aim of centralizing information, may not be useful for a democratically managed producers' cooperative.

The impact of "professional" management is not limited only to the organization of the marketing function. The very nature of the marketing function (and of conceptualizations about the function) is tied to the pattern of enterprise management.

Consider two core aspects of the marketing function: choice of customers (segments) and decision regarding the nature of product.

When the enterprise management pattern is professional, the choice of customers tends to be such that the customers are socially close to the management rather than to the producers. *Ceteris paribus*, an elite management opts for elite customers.³¹ If, for reasons of profitability, the management has to opt for customers dissimilar to itself, then the channel choice is such that, the adjacent links in the channel are socially compatible. In this way, a long channel becomes necessary to bridge the social distance between enterprise management and customers.

In a collectively managed social enterprise, the workers would tend to deal with customers who are socially close to the workers. Not only would the choice of customer segments tend to differ from a professionally managed enterprise but also the manner of the dealings with customers would tend to differ.

Under professional management, the producer as well as the manager is alienated from the product - the product is presented to the market in a detached, depersonalized manner.³² It is presented and promoted with a view to enhance its sales appeal and profit potential - to realize the maximum exchange value. In a social enterprise collectively managed, the producers are not alienated from the product. They see the product as the fruit of their labour - as an extension of themselves - much akin to the medieval craftsman's "pride" in his product. Such an enterprise would tend to present the product to the market in such a manner that its use value is maximized.³³ The producers

see the consumer in their own image. They relate to the product not only as an object that they produce with their own labour but also subjectively as an item which gives satisfactions to the consumers.³⁴ In this process, significantly, one of the crucial linkages between micro and macro conceptualization is achieved. The (micro) marketing process of an enterprise can be seen (conceptually as well as experimentally by the workers and consumers) as a particular instance of the general (macro) social process of production relating itself to consumption.

Using existing conceptual categories of the marketing discipline (derived as they are from specific and particularistic marketing forms), it is difficult to describe the character of marketing in a collectively managed social enterprise. Nevertheless, Table 3 attempts a verbal contrast between the marketing function in such an enterprise and in a professionally managed private enterprise.

Two caveats are relevant here. First, the large majority of social enterprises in existence today are professionally managed and hence their marketing functions do not differ from those of private enterprises on account of the management pattern. Differences do exist but they are on account of different ownership patterns and social milieu. The professional pattern of management, however, is incompatible with social pattern of ownership - democratization of ownership creates pressures for democratization of management. This is where the second caveat is necessary. Although professional pattern of management

Table 3

Differences in Marketing Functions of a Professionally Managed Private Enterprise and a Collectively Managed Social Enterprise

Professionally Managed Private Enterprise

The marketing function (the marketing concept notwithstanding) directs the products of the enterprise to the consumers. The product is specified by the manager, produced by the worker, appropriated by the manager for presentation and promotion to the market. Advertising, personal selling and distribution processes are initiated by the manager to enhance the sales and profits (the exchange value) of the products. Tenuous and delayed closure is attempted through market research and feedback information systems. The marketing process is largely unidirectional and linear, designed to maximise enterprise managers' goals.

Collectively Managed Social Enterprise

The marketing function brings together the primary producers and consumers in (an initially chaotic) continuous contact. The product is specified by the consumer, debated by the worker, a synthesis reached, and then produced by the worker. The product is presented to the market and observed in use by the producers. The consumer continues to convey the use experiences to the producers. In this way, the marketing process is a continuous, back-and-forth, zig-zag. It is open, dialectic and constantly redefining the product as well as redefining itself through a higher synthesis between the needs of producers and consumers.

is incompatible with social enterprise form, professional expertise

does find a place in an enterprise form of organization. Self-managed Yugoslav enterprises do use "professional executives".³⁵

However, the role of such executives is either a staff role

(problem solving on the basis of data) or a delegated line

role (implementing decisions of workers council). In this sense,

the marketing function in a collectively managed social enterprise

is no less "professional" but is a lot more democratic.

Influence of the Operating Environment

The operating environment influences the marketing activities of a social enterprise in many ways. Conventional conceptualizations in marketing implicitly assume a certain model of the operating environment - some form of monopolistic competition, a state charged (only) with regulatory and policing functions, a stratified consuming public whose buying behaviour is confined to choice among brands. These assumptions do not always correspond to the realities of the operating environment of private enterprises.³⁶

They are certainly violated in case of almost all types of social enterprises. Some or all of the following aspects of the operating environment of social enterprises may cause the marketing activities of such enterprises to be different from those of private enterprises:

1. Nature of competition
2. Nature of State and its relationship with the enterprise
3. Social composition and behaviour of the consuming public
4. Nature of institutional linkages of the enterprise.

In a socialist economy or in a socialized sector (branch of industry) of a capitalist economy, competition takes on a very different meaning than what is conventionally understood in a private enterprise context. At the sectoral (branch of industry) level, competition is not a given but a policy variable which can be manipulated. Since the competitive environment can be designed, market share may not represent the competitive standing of an enterprise vis-a-vis others in the industry.

It may represent, for instance, the size of the market segment allocated to the particular enterprise or an agreed-upon scale of operation for the particular unit in the industry. It follows that competitive strategy models using market share as a key variable are not applicable to such enterprises. Similarly, it can be shown that many conventional marketing conceptualization pertaining to segmentation, price and promotional behaviour may not be relevant for social enterprises whose competitive environment is not an exogenous factor.

The influence of state in the case of state owned enterprises has been discussed earlier. Even in case of social enterprises which are not state owned (e.g. cooperatives), the preference system of the state impinges heavily on enterprise goals. This is because in a social enterprise the state arrogates to itself several residual powers which may be held by private shareholders in case of private enterprise. It has been shown earlier that the state's preference system acts upon the marketing objectives, organization, strategies and operations and makes these different from those obtained in a private enterprise.

In a socialist economy, the model of society and the model of man, which are implicit in marketing conceptualizations, may not be altogether valid. To the extent that some of the socialist societies manage to create "the new socialist man", consumer behaviour theories and findings developed in the private enterprise context become suspect and perhaps inapplicable.

Consider, for example, the recent application of attribution theory models to consumer behaviour in response to incentives offered by marketers. It has been found that small incentives are more effective than large incentives in getting repeated buying response. The attribution theory explanation states that in case of small incentive, the buyer attributes the purchase behaviour to his own motivations and preferences while in case of large incentive, he attributes it to the incentive.³⁷ Implicit in this explanation is the model of a corruptible man, a man who says, "I will undertake a behaviour contrary to my values and attitudes if incentivized enough." In a society where corruptibility of man has been eliminated, it is doubtful if the above mentioned behaviour in response to incentives will be observed. Even if it is observed, the explanation given above cannot be valid. The point is that the social enterprise in such a setting cannot use the attribution theory framework in the form it has been used in the private enterprise, capitalist society context.

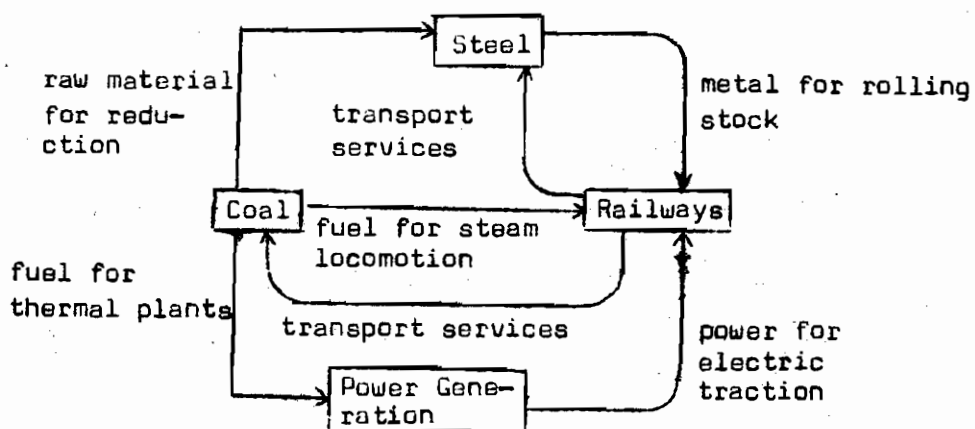
Enterprises have important linkages to other institutions. The vertical linkages - to suppliers and distributors - have received special attention from marketing scholars.³⁸ In socialist economies, or in economies with large public sectors, a special type of inter-enterprise linkage merits attention. A number of industrial sectors under social ownership are heavily interlinked as consumer of each other's products. One such situation prevailing in the Indian economy is depicted in Figure 1. The four sectors depicted are essentially publicly

owned but worked under relatively autonomous enterprises. Several difficult marketing problems arise in such inter-linked sectors:

1. Pricing: A sector which is in a stronger bargaining position can squeeze the others to make profits. Supra-sectoral interest dictates administered prices but then all these sectors are linked to the private economy where price flexibility may be required.
2. Payments: Because of heavy inter-sectoral trade, a lot of individualized billing and payment represents wasted effort. Also, withholding of payment by one sector can throw the entire system out of gear.
3. Product mix and distribution pattern: As major users of coal; steel, railways and power generation sectors each have a preferred mix of various grades of coal. What mix should the coal sector produce? A profit maximizing mix, if one can be worked out under controlled price conditions, may be disastrous for some of the consuming sectors. A similar logic applies to the distribution pattern.

Figure 1

Some Inter-sectoral Linkages in the Indian Economy



Existing marketing conceptualizations are of limited value in guiding the marketing operations of such inter-linked units.³⁹ Study of material flows, technological dependencies, inter-organizational processes, etc. may yield appropriate concepts for marketing forms found in such sectors.

Conclusion

In this section it has been shown why and how social enterprise marketing differs from private enterprise marketing. The basic differences stem from the ownership pattern, the management pattern and the operating environment associated with social enterprises. A variety of marketing forms exist in social enterprises because such enterprises differ from each other on the ownership, management and environment dimensions just mentioned. All these marketing forms, taken as a whole, differ significantly from the private enterprise marketing form. Existing marketing conceptualizations, based on the latter, are usually irrelevant and often contradictory to the social enterprise marketing forms. A new level of conceptualizations - hopefully leading to new and competing theories of marketing - is necessary to explain and influence the marketing activities of social enterprises.

IV. TOWARDS A NEW SYNTHESIS

The regeneration of marketing theory and the formalization of social enterprise marketing depend on each other. Marketing theory has been the poorer for the neglect of social enterprises and the marketing activities of social enterprises have suffered from the lack of appropriate conceptual frameworks. A new synthesis would benefit both.

Some Pre-requisites

In the present situation, marketing and socialism stand in contradiction to each other. Marketing theorists and commentators have refused to recognise socialist methods of organizing distribution and consumption activities. Even consumption-oriented activities of social enterprises in capitalist countries were ignored until such enterprises showed some tendencies to emulate the acknowledged marketing modes. In effect, the marketing theorist/professional confronts the social enterprise theorist/manager with the proposition, "I will recognise your existence and help you if you agree to

buy the toolkit of what I choose to call marketing techniques." The theorist/manager of socialist enterprises berates marketing as the ideology of capitalism, a manipulative device of the monopolists. The theorist/manager of social enterprises in capitalist societies also does not place much faith in the "commercial gimmickry" that he associates with marketing.

Most of these contradictions are illusory, stemming from ideological positions rather than social realities. There is a real contradiction between market and planning as mechanisms for allocation of social product. However, this contradiction does not lead to a contradiction between marketing (a process linking production and consumption at micro and macro levels) and socialism (a mode of organizing production at the macro level) or social enterprise (one of a variety of ownership patterns under which production can be organized at micro level). The setting aside of ideological positions and the examination of social reality for its own sake is the first pre-requisite for a synthesis of marketing theory and social enterprise practice.

Since production and consumption are complementary social activities, a process linking the two must exist, whatever the particular forms in which production and consumption are organized. If marketing is defined as this linking process, it does become a universal activity. However, the universality of marketing is limited to the level of abstraction in this definition. Specific marketing forms prevail in specific historical periods and geographical regions. The recognition of historical and contextual specificity of marketing forms is the

second pre-requisite for the synthesis of marketing theory and social enterprise marketing.⁴⁰

Lastly, such a synthesis requires willingness within the discipline to innovate in terms of new conceptual frameworks. In metascientific terms, this requires that a significant number of marketing scholars make the study of social enterprise marketing forms their "intellectual project"⁴¹. This study would conclude by presenting one outline for such an intellectual project.

The Outline

Recognizing the specificity of market form, it is first necessary to have a theory of society and social change in which marketing forms (and conceptualisation) are embedded. Conventional social science, like conventional marketing, shuns historicity and change. A theory of society relevant for social enterprises would have to be a radical theory. At the minimum, such a theory should be able to explain why and how different modes of production come into existence, how the enterprise form of organization emerges at the micro level and what factors lead to its privatization or socialization.

Following from above, a theory of marketing process is required which investigates the process in abstraction and, more importantly, explains the specific forms the process takes in different periods and contexts. Historical analyses such as Polanyi's (1974) can be invaluable here. Also necessary are contemporary cross-contextual studies of marketing forms. The conceptualizations emerging from socialist and Third World

countries are likely to provide many insights to the nature and forms of marketing process.

At the *micro-level*, a broadening of the theory of enterprise behaviour is needed. A critical study of how the ownership pattern, management pattern and the environment of an enterprise influence its marketing activities is called for to make the concepts of "marketing management" more broad-based and relevant to contemporary world situation.

Lastly, alternative and extended formulations of theory of consumption behaviour are necessary to provide the link between micro and macro conceptualizations relating to the production-consumption relationships. Alternative models of man need to be explored. The study of consumption needs to be broadened and deepened by examining a range of consumption-related behaviours and their longitudinal aspects.

Conclusion

The intellectual project outlined above is enormous but not intractable. However, the enormity or complexity of the project is not the issue. What is important is that this project needs to be done. The necessity does not stem from the theoretical difficulties of the marketing discipline, although the project will help in breaking the impasse. The necessity of this project is practical and historical. Marketing-like activities of social enterprises need theoretical frameworks. If marketing discipline fails to provide these, other branches of knowledge will. This study, it is hoped, has made a small beginning in this crucial intellectual project.

NOTES

1. The various perspectives referred to came into sharp focus with the pioneering paper of Kotler and Levy (1969). Other contributions which have sought to enlarge the perspective of marketing are Kotler (1972), Kotler (1975), Kotler and Zaltman (1971).
2. This has been elaborated in Dholakia and Dholakia (1977)
3. In this connection, the "broadening" and related "movements" assume a special significance. For the first time, non-private, non-industrial and non-enterprise forms of marketing have received concerted attention. See Kotler and Levy (1969), Kotler and Zaltman (1971), Kotler (1972), Lazer and Kelley (1973), Zaltman and Vertinsky (1971). Although a very substantial body of European marketing research and writing has accumulated, the basic corpus of marketing thought retains its American character.
4. See, for example, Lauter, (1971), Greer (1973), Walters (1975), Wills and Heyhurst (1971), Weller (1976).
5. In fact, some of them would go so far as to say that all interactive human activity has a marketing component. See Levy (1976).
6. See Luck (1969 and 1974).
7. The choice of the term "marketing", however, is unfortunate. Firstly, the use of the "ing" ending confounds marketing, the managerial activity, with marketing, the social process (Angelmar and Pinson, 1975; Levy, 1976). Secondly, the term "marketing" ties up activities facilitating distribution and consumption of good to the mechanism of "market" - which is by no means universal. Perhaps a term like "distribution and consumption science" would be more apt.
8. See, for example, Alderson and Cox (1948), Cox and Alderson (1950), Alderson (1957), Schwartz (1963), Cox, Alderson and Shapiro (1964), Howard (1965), Halbert (1965), Bartels (1970), Fisk (1971), Zaltman, Pinson and Angelmar (1973), Hunt (1976).
9. See, especially, Zaltman, Pinson and Angelmar (1975) and Hunt (1976).

10. Although consumer behaviour deals with the behaviour of the individual consumer and appears very "micro" in its focus, it is in reality a macro area of study. This is so because the individual consumer is studied as representative of the class of consumers who, in their totality, constitute the market system. An analogy can be provided from economics where the theory of the firm is a part of micro-economics while theory of consumption is a part of macro-economics.
11. See, for example, Howard and Sheth (1969)
12. For summary and perspectives on the debate, see Taylor (1965) and Dawson (1971).
13. Examples of attempts at developing such criteria are: Alderson (1957), Halbert (1964), Bartels (1970). Recent works, which draw more heavily on philosophy of science literature, are Zaltman, Pinson and Angelmar (1973) and Hunt (1976).
14. Hunt (1976) concludes his monograph on marketing theory thus: "Unfortunately, much of the so-called 'theory' in marketing falls substantially short of fulfilling the requirements as detailed in this monograph...", etc. (p.136).
15. In search of lawlike propositions in marketing, Hunt (1976) found Shapino's (1973) work broadly satisfying the criteria of lawlikeness. Shapino investigated the phenomenon of consumers using price as an indicator of perceived product quality. He found some people to be generally more price-reliant than others. Also, price-reliance increased when (for whatever reason) confidence in the buying decision was low and the confidence in the marketer was high. Such behaviours, and the derived relationships, implicitly assume a marketing system in which: (a) marketers do differ in the credibility they have, (b) price is manipulated to generate quality connotations, (c) consumers do face risky purchase situations (i.e., they get gypped on price and quality). In a country like China, these conditions may not exist and hence the price-quality relationship may be nonexistent or of a very different nature.
16. Witness, for example, a definite turn towards the 'practical' (and an implicit rejection of positivist theoretical work) in the editorial policy of Journal of Marketing in 1976.
17. A study has shown nearly total acceptance of the new, broader boundaries of marketing by marketing scholars. See Nichols (1974).

18. In discussing the "meaning of marketing", Angelman and Pinson (1975) have commented on this tendency of marketing theorists (including the broadening advocates) "to reify" or commit the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness".
19. For such a broad linkage, see Bartels (1970, chap. 17). The claim of Bartels' "general theory" (generality and to \angle to theoreticalness has been vigorously disputed. See Hunt (1971 and 1976).
20. See Marx (1875), Lenin (1917), Baran and Sweezy (1966).
21. The best known liberal "discoverer" of the nature of modern industrial state is Galbraith. See Galbraith (1967).
22. Hoddewyn (1971) has attempted some such formulations. See also Dholakia and Dholakia (1978 forthcoming).
23. On consumption patterns, see Firat and Dholakia (1977).
24. The only incisive piece of writing on the generic relationship between production and consumption, which the author has come across, is Marx (1857).
25. For one attempt in this direction, see Dholakia and Dholakia (1975). See also Spratlen (1972, Exhibit I, etc.) for framework with alternative value orientation.
26. See Baran and Sweezy (1966).
27. For one view of concept of "separation" and its use in theorizing about marketing, see McInnes (1964).
28. One of the ultimate aims (and an analytically derivable consequence) of socialism is the doing away of division of labour as a social necessity. (Marx, 1875). In such a society, marketing (as defined here) would cease to have a role. The socialist societies of today are far from this ultimate state.
29. In the context of management of a socialist economy, the nature of preference systems was elaborated by Oscar Lange. See Lange and Taylor (1936-37) and Drewnowski (1961).

30. The nature of interests which the modern state represents is complex and, in fact, contradictory. "The state is but a fragment of society that sets itself above society ..Setting itself above society, the state has interests of its own and its own social support..its bureaucracy..

The state apparatus serves the ruling class or classes, and at the same time acts as arbiter of their rivalries wherever they threaten the society's existence".

(Lefebvre, 1969, p. 124). From the point of view of state enterprises, the important points are (a) the state has interests (which may be derived yet) distinct from private capitalist/corporation interests; (b) these interests are articulated and championed by the bureaucracy.

31. In the Indian context, the elitist bias of mass consumption goods has been discussed by Sen Gupta (1975).
32. The depersonalization alienation in modern, capitalist marketing is acutely felt but rarely analysed. For example Philip Kotler - a leading marketing thinker - would like to see marketing processes and institutions develop in such a way that the personalized values and bonhomie of the neighbourhood store are restored. Kotler, however, fails to analyze the root causes of alienation inherent in marketing processes. See Kotler (1975a).
33. In the marketing discipline, the maximization of exchange value (usually, but not necessarily, in terms of profits) as the prime enterprise goal is regarded as axiomatic. This goal, however, is specific to an enterprise form - the modern capitalist industrial enterprise. Some of the traditional handloom weavers in Eastern India, who weave intricate and exquisite but not easily saleable handloom fabrics, refuse to switch to other varieties for which there is a growing and profitable market. These weavers operate private (cottage) enterprises and market their products but do not see the maximization of exchange value as their prime goal. To claim that the weavers are maximizing whatever (pride, prestige, etc.,) they get in exchange for their product would amount to a tautology.
34. For some illustrations of this form of marketing, see the description of "marketing" and "market research" in China provided by Joan Robinson (1973, pp. 5-7).

35. See Kralj (1976/77). The need for "professional expertise" would persist only so long as the social necessity for division of labour exists. If a transitional socialist society overcomes the necessity for the division of labour, which it inherits from its past, the necessity for "professional" marketing expertise would also disappear - such expertise would become universalized. Somewhat like the primitive societies in which each man was an adept hunter and barterer, each individual in a highly developed communist society would become an expert producer and marketer.
36. For a critique of the assumption about consumer choice behaviour being confined to brand choice, see Firat and Dholakia (1977).
37. For a discussion of these issues, see Ruby Roy Dholakia (1978 forthcoming).
38. See, for example, Bucklin (1970), Stern (1969).
39. In fact, a top manager of one such unit interviewed by the author opined that professional marketing (as conventionally understood) constituted a kind of extortion tool - the sector better equipped with professional marketing managers could extract a higher price from the other sectors, disregarding the impact on the whole system.
40. It is in glossing over of these specificities that the "broadening" advocates have done more harm than good to the development of marketing thought. While the broadening thrust has shed some light on the generic nature of marketing, it has also generalized a particular marketing form to inappropriate contexts.
41. For the role of intellectual projects in the development of science, see Radnitzky (1973).

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