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Revisiting Marketing as Constructive Engagement: Linking Policies and Managerial Practices

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Policies that initiate or support responsible micromarketing institutions and practices can be some of the most important catalysts to socioeconomic development and sustainable peace and prosperity, particularly in distressed or devastated political economies. Such policies and the accordant positive marketing forces might be considered a form of constructive engagement. The consideration of constructive engagement, including the idea that managerial marketing can be complementary to macromarketing, is gaining currency among some macromarketers, and is explored in this presentation. The author discusses some evolving successful cases from fieldwork in developing, devastated, transitioning and/or recovering economies.

This presentation is organized in response to a thoughtful invitation from Stan Shapiro, and the need to explore the important contributions that business enterprises and their management can make to marketing systems, especially marketing systems that are distressed, dysfunctional and/or developing economies. Ironically, macromarketing often is considered to be non-managerial, perhaps even hostile to management and business. Marketing management however profoundly affects – or has the potential to affect -- the well-being of marketing systems, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. Its study therefore would seem to be of keen interest to macromarketers, with hopes to affect best practices that in turn enhance individual quality-of-life and sustainable societal well-being in marketing systems. This idea was not lost on some of the early thought-leaders of macromarketing (e.g., Zif 1980) and is regaining currency among current macromarketers (e.g., Peterson 2013; Shapiro WIP). The purpose of this presentation therefore is to revisit marketing as constructive engagement, which requires policy change and effective marketing management in dysfunctional or sub-optimally performing marketing systems (Shultz 2007). Those systems could be developing/transitioning/recovering countries, regions, trade blocs and/or communities.

Constructive engagement is the deliberate and coordinated effort by adversaries to find win-win outcomes through trade, foreign direct investment, and/or academic and cultural exchanges; this effort typically occurs or could occur between governments of conflicting states (e.g., the US and Iran), but the underlying logic can apply to any adversarial groups seeking to optimize outcomes in extant or would-be marketing systems (e.g., Forcese 2002). Responsible business development and management – and employment generation, wealth creation, tax revenue, GDP growth, reinvestment in human resources and enterprises, poverty reduction, and multiplier effects therefrom and subsequent improvements to social justice and quality-of-life (QOL) – are integral to ensuring that the engagement is indeed *constructive* (Shultz 2007).

This presentation will revisit extant models and extend working models and cases to illustrate factors that drive engagement, factors that predict constructive engagement, and factors – including responsible businesses and their management -- that are likely to sustain *constructive* engagement, again where measures ultimately include improvements to QOL, and a just and sustainable marketing system at national, regional and/or community levels.

Examples from active research streams in various developing economies, including Africa, the Balkans, Middle East and/or developing Asia will be used to make key points.

References

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