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Doing Well while Doing Good?

An Integrative Review of Marketing Criticism and Response

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Abstract

Looking back at a century of innovation, the marketing profession has reason to celebrate its many contributions to the rise of economic wealth in Western nations. The marketing profession has, however, not only gained positive recognition, but also faced criticism for engaging in ever-new marketing practices that potentially harm individuals, communities, and societies. This paper presents findings from an integrative literature review to document key criticisms of marketing brought forth over sixty years; to identify the key moral demands that fuel these criticisms; and to illustrate the potentialities and limitations of positive marketing responses. The study suggests that positive marketing practices more often than not result from marketers' proactive engagement with critical narratives and emerging moral demands. Yet even though marketing criticism often fails as a moral compass for marketers, and positive contributions in one domain tend to produce problems in another domain, the interplay of marketing criticism and response does contribute to stimulate positive social, economic, and ecological change.

Key Words

Marketing criticism, consumer resistance, positive marketing

1. Introduction

In the last two centuries, Western societies have experienced unprecedented growth of economic activity, technological possibilities, and human living standards. Since around 1910, this development coincides not only with path-breaking technological and managerial innovations, but also with the rise of marketing theory and practice. The inventive minds of marketing practitioners, educators, and researchers have apparently played an important role in creating ever new forms of market exchanges that satisfy customer needs, wants, and desires in ever new ways and, thus, generate financial income for employees, company owners, investors, and governments (Bagozzi, 1975; O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002). From this perspective, marketing practice appears as an inherently positive force that contributes to uplifting the world by creating services of value for organizational stakeholders, individuals, and society (Lerman & Shefrin, 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Since the late 1930s, however, consumers, academics, activist groups, and public pundits have been calling attention to emerging marketing ideologies and practices that seem to produce more problems for consumers and their environments than they solve (see Cross, 2000; Dameron, 1938; Slater, 1997; Tadajewski, 2010). Critics, for example, address issues with corporations deliberately selling products that jeopardize their buyers' health (Varey, 2010); invading, exploiting, or homogenizing local communities (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Klein, 1999; Rumbo, 2002; Thompson & Arsel, 2004); or erecting veneers of social and ecological stewardship to conceal natural and human resource exploitation practices (Saha & Darnton, 2005).

Over time, some criticisms persist, whereas others rise and fade under changing cultural, social, economic, and environmental conditions (Hertz, 2001). Several marketing practices that consumers regarded as legitimate only a while ago are now considered detrimental to consumers' health, community spheres, and human or natural resources. For example, consumers have

formerly tended to welcome advertising billboards as valuable sources of information, to cheer extra gas-thirsty vehicles with wing-like fenders as signs of progress, and to celebrate chain-smoking movie characters as beacons of coolness. Under today's moral conditions, consumers are more likely to culture-jam advertisements posted in the wrong places (but spend more time researching their favorite brands online), to admire hybrid cars (but fly more), and adore movie characters that do without smoke (but who are more violent).

However, not only do the moral demands for legitimate marketing practice change, but also the ways in which these morals are expressed and affect marketing practice. Recent innovations in communication technology allow consumers to assess marketing practices more comprehensively and to respond more directly and influentially to unwanted practices (Abela & Murphy, 2008; Holt, 2002). When critical consumers spot corporate transgressions of legitimate practice, they tend to no longer mobilize local peers for local boycotts with limited consequences, but rather run global social media campaigns that can severely damage their target's reputation and bottom line (Carducci, 2006; Friedman, 2004; Sokolowsky, 2010).

For marketers, this shifting moral and critical landscape evokes substantial insecurities with regards to which emerging demands may, or may not, imply significant consequences for their marketing practices. Even though this terrain will remain somewhat nebulous and dynamic, marketers who are interested in doing well while doing good may still benefit from gaining clarity about 1) which marketing practices are most widely criticized in Western consumers cultures, 2) which underlying moral demands drive these criticisms, 3) how consumers express these moral demands in their resistance projects, and 4) how marketers can turn criticism into positive marketing practice to better serve consumers, companies, and society's interest (Lerman & Shefrin, 2014).

The present study approaches these complex questions by means of an extensive, integrative

literature review of 225 papers, 48 books, and 16 newspaper articles associated with academic, activist, or popular media criticisms of marketing practice, as well as with consumers' responses to undesirable marketing practice. This undertaking contributes a potentially useful overview and reflection of this complex subject matter for marketing practitioners and researchers, and yields four theoretical contributions:

First, the study collects, integrates, and reflects knowledge gained from a broad range of dispersed literatures on marketing criticisms, consumer resistance practices, and marketing responses within four domains in which marketing impacts consumers' lives—the consumer, the community, the society, and the human and natural resource domain. Second, the paper identifies six key moral demands that fuel a broad range of specific criticisms and consumer responses in these four domains. Third, by adopting a macro analytical perspective, this research suggests that marketers more often than not draw proactively, rather than reactively, on emerging moral demands for exploring new, positive marketing opportunities. Fourth, this review shows that consumer resistance and positive marketing practices symbiotically contribute to spurring cultural debates on emerging moral demands and thus address the key ethical challenges of contemporary consumer societies.

2. Method

The insights reported in this study are based on an extensive, integrative review of literatures from the fields of marketing, branding, consumer culture, and marketing in society theory (Ladik & Stewart, 2008; MacInnis, 2011). Between July 2011 and October 2012, the authors identified and analyzed publications from EBSCO, JSTOR, and SSCI databases that broadly addressed notions such as "consumer resistance," "morality," "ethics," and "social responsibility" with regards to marketing practice and criticism. The resulting data set included 420 academic articles

that covered about sixty years of academic debate and a broad range of academic fields (see table 1). Studies included from the field of consumer culture theory, for example, offered important insights into consumer resistance against corporate capitalism and the institutional role of marketing (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, 2007). Articles drawn from marketing in society research contributed critical reflections on the role of societal interests in the marketing field (c.f., Wilkie & Moore, 2012). And studies derived from marketing and branding research added important critical notions on the construction and evolution of marketing practice and ideology (Levy & Luedicke, 2013; Marion, 2006). An additional sampling in non-journal outlets extended this data set by 48 books, 16 newspaper articles, and six governmental and UN publications that also fulfilled the search criteria (see below and Table 1).

The authors then systematically narrowed the initial data set down to 225 relevant writings. This refinement was based on two criteria: The publications either had to comprise critical academic, or non-academic, reflections on the impact of marketing practices on consumers, communities, or society, or to provide insights into how and why certain marketing practices trigger consumer resistance activities. Including writings that address detrimental marketing effects from different angles, e.g. the macro perspectives of culture critics as well as the meso and micro cultural perspectives of consumer movements and activists, allowed us to produce a more nuanced account of the subject matter. On this focused data set, the authors then conducted a qualitative content analysis and inductively built interpretive categories. In this process, the relevant search expressions were frequently revisited and interpretive inconsistencies were resolved in reflective discussions (Mayring, 2002).

Gaining deeper insights into positive marketing response to these criticisms required a second round of literature search, inclusion, and analysis that span from July 2012 to October 2013. From this extended data set the authors singled out a broad range of marketing practices that

marketers use to respond to direct criticism from consumers, brand enthusiasts, and consumer activists, as well as to more general moral demands that arise in the media and popular writings (Eisenhardt, 1989).

Table 1 here.

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3. Findings

By analyzing a wide range of marketing critical literatures with the tools described above, the authors gained useful insights into the predominant marketing criticisms, the key moral demands that fuel these criticisms, the ways in which consumers express their dissatisfaction with marketers not fulfilling these demands, and into a range of tried ways for turning marketing criticisms into more positive marketing practices.

The literature considered in this review tends to address marketing criticisms, consumer expressions, and marketing responses along four ontological domains in which marketing practice produces consumer experiences. These domains are the individual consumer, the local community, the consumer society, and the realm of human and natural resources.

In each of these domains, the literature (often implicitly) discusses one or two fundamental and unfulfilled moral demands that consumers seek to fulfill through creative, critical resistance projects (Carducci, 2006). Consumer responses to such marketing misconduct or omission can range from high to low profile and from local to global impact actions (Crane & Desmond, 2002; Marion, 2006). This review addresses a portfolio of marketing practices that directly or indirectly cater to emerging consumer demands for improving marketer-consumer relationships, community stewardship, societal progress, and resource conservation in more or less radical

ways. The review includes cases of consumer activism, resistance, and entrepreneurial playfulness that highlight "spaces where ethics are at stake" (Kornberger, 2010, p. 222), where critics "negotiate the distribution of economic benefits" (Cova & Dalli, 2009), or where consumers and critics engage in dialogues about the cultural frames imposed by dominant marketing ideologies (Arnould & Thompson, 2007). The review does not consider cases of consumer ignorance, passivity, and disinterestedness, because they lack visibility and potential for evoking critical discourses or marketing responses. Also the study does not capture cases that have failed to raise sufficient attention to be addressed by critics.

Table 2 provides an overview of the four domains of marketing criticisms, their underlying moral demands, consequential consumer resistance projects, and positive marketing responses that are, in large parts, discussed in the following sections.

Table 2 here.

3.1. Consumer Deception and Intrusion

Research in the domain of *consumer deception and intrusion* discusses problems with five types of marketing practices: deceptive price policies, dangerous product policies, deceptive and intrusive promotion practices, and intrusive market research. In this domain of criticism, critics tend to portray marketers as highly skilled cultural engineers that ruthlessly capitalize on information asymmetries and unbalanced market influence at the expense of consumer protection and well-being (Edwards, 2000; Holt, 2002).

Marketing Criticisms: Critics of deceptive price policies, for example, specifically address marketing practices such as deliberately marking up prices to fictitious levels and then marking prices down to feign higher bargains (Kaufmann, Smith, & Ortmeyer, 1994).

Criticism of dangerous product policies includes practices such as designing products for premature functional or symbolic obsolescence (Guiltinan, 2009, for an overview; Packard, 1960), but also physically harmful practices. The latter practices include marketers selling incrementally harmful products such as many fast foods, some weight loss products, as well as alcohol and tobacco products to vulnerable consumers that are unable to resist marketing seduction (Dameron, 1938; Smith & Cooper-Martin, 1997; Smith & Quelch, 1993), but also, and despite knowledge of these dangers, selling directly perilous products, such as car tires that can burst at high speeds (Nader, 1965), or vehicles fuel systems that can explode in certain types of collisions (Birsch & Fielder, 1994).

Criticisms of deceptive promotion practices address behaviors by which marketers perpetuate unrealistic, overdrawn notions of human appearance and social relations as natural, inevitable, and desirable for their target consumers (Gurrieri, Previte, & Brace-Govan, 2013; Schroeder, & Borgerson, 2005). Critics argue that this form of deception can be influential in attenuating consumers' abilities to differentiate realistic from utopian life worlds and, thus, causing psychological problems for individuals who cannot live up to such lofty ideals (Pollay, 1986). In this domain, scholars also report consumers' unease with intrusive promotion practices by means of which marketers try to push commercial messages ever deeper into consumers' private lifeworlds (Heath & Heath, 2008). Specific practices include unsolicited mailing and emailing, telephone advertising calls, TV advertisements, out-of-home media, or Internet pop-up screens that invade consumers' psychological spaces and result in consumer perceptions of advertising clutter (Cohen, Comrov, & Hoffner, 2005; Rotfeld, 2006; Rumbo, 2002; Witkowski, 2005).

Lastly, critical literature on intrusive marketing research focuses on marketing practices related to covert Internet data collection (Ashworth & Free, 2006; Pollach, 2005). Practices in this area include the undisclosed tracking, recording, and storing of information about consumers' browsing and buying preferences in both stationary and mobile digital environments. These market research practices tend to raise concerns about insufficient declarations of information retrieval, which, in effect, render consumers more transparent than they are aware of (Palmer, 2005).

Emerging Moral Demands: The above criticisms of consumer deception and intrusion document a notable gap between consumers' moral demands for positive marketing, and specific contemporary marketing realities. In this domain of criticism, consumers implicitly or explicitly challenge marketers to better respect consumers' privacy and to refrain from exploiting consumers personal loyalties to firms (see Aksoy et al. in this issue). The pervasiveness and persistence of the critical discourse about privacy and trust suggests that marketers may benefit from finding new ways of paying respect to consumers' local communities, private homes spheres, and digital footprints, as well as from becoming more trustworthy, well-intentioned relationship partners.

Consumer Resistance Projects: These emerging moral demands not only perpetuate in scholarly reflections, but more importantly manifest directly and indirectly in consumer resistance projects. Consumers turn against privacy and trust violations, for instance, by carefully choosing brands, rejecting misguided ones, and overtly discrediting deceptive marketing practices (Helm, 2004; Speck & Elliott, 1997). To avoid excessive exposure to intrusive promotions, consumers subscribe to commercial-free broadcast services or proactively evade

radio spots, TV commercials, and Internet banners (Rotfeld, 2006). In online forums, consumers readily document their dissatisfaction with undesirable marketing efforts and caution other consumers against buying certain products (Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009).

Vis-à-vis their pre-internet counterparts, contemporary consumers are able to engage a wide range of online tools for redressing glossy corporate brand veneers and contesting overly optimistic product descriptions through instant, global anti-brand campaigns (Day, 2011; Deighton & Kornfeld, 2009; Pitt, Berthon, Watson, & Zinkhan, 2002). The media, consumer protection agencies, and other public interest groups support these quests for unmasking privacy and trust violations and, thus, further raise awareness for consumer criticism and moral demands (Roy & Chattopadhyay, 2010).

Such critical engagements with marketing practices have the potential for discomforting marketers in several ways. Consumer criticism of trust violations, for instance, can affect companies anywhere from going largely unnoticed, through medium-impact negative word-of-mouth, up to dramatically deflating brand value (Chylinski & Chu, 2010) and driving a company into bankruptcy (Sokolowsky, 2010). Unmet expectations in one product's performance most typically induce distrust towards other products of the same brand or may even impact competitors' offerings in the same category (Darke, Ashworth, & Main, 2010). In concert, these critical narratives about consumer deception and intrusion also advance negative stereotypes about marketing as an amoral profession and, thus, undermine marketing efficiency more generally (Darke & Ritchie, 2007).

Positive Marketing Responses: This extensive review considers a range of practices through which marketers directly or indirectly address consumers' moral demands for resolving privacy and trust issues. Most of these suggestions, however, focus on redressing trust problems, because

marketing solutions for privacy issues largely concern self-regulation by marketers or industry associations (Peltier, Milne, & Phelps, 2009). For regaining recognition as trustworthy relationship partners, scholars recommend a variety of practices. Marketers, for example, may engage in practices of proactively disclosing relevant information on product prices, properties, or production processes, and inviting external control from independent institutions (Cohen et al., 2005; Palmer, 2005). The American coffee company *Starbucks*, for example, ran an advertising campaign that indirectly responded to consumers' calls for companies to demonstrate their trustworthiness. Starbucks decided to provide customers with detailed information about the company's costs for sourcing and supplying a cup of coffee with the goal of increasing price fairness perceptions among its customers (Carter & Curry, 2010). Such initiatives for increasing price transparency, however, cannot only evoke further criticisms (Carter & Curry, 2010), but even a significant backlash. In early 2012, *JC Penney* decided to offer everyday low prices instead of silently marking up prices to then mark them down for sales offers, coupons, and clearing racks. This new pricing strategy failed dramatically because *JC Penney* underestimated how much the absence of marked-down prices has served as a yardstick for consumers to gauge the value of a product, and for feeling competent as a shopper (Ehrenberg, 2012).

For retailers, another way of rebuilding brand trust is to pressure their suppliers into more positive behaviors by obtaining relevant health and safety information from them. In 2006 the New England grocery chain *Hannaford Brothers*, for example, installed a nutrition information and rating system called *Guiding Stars*. This system assists consumers in distinguishing fact from fiction in terms of healthy benefits and prevents suppliers from making deceptive health claims (Martin, 2006; Roy & Chattopadhyay, 2010).

Yet another suggestion for earning trust is to abandon the idea of brand domination and control and see brands as interactive dialogues with creative consumers and other brand co-

producers instead (Day, 2011; de Waal Malefyt in this issue; Fisher & Smith, 2011; Fournier & Avery, 2011; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The Danish *LEGO Group*, as an example, revitalized its stagnating brand in the 1990s by embracing a new, interactive model of brand communication and innovation (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). When the company first launched the robotics product *Mindstorms*, enthusiastic consumers hacked its software and developed new applications and extensions to the original code. *LEGO*, rather than suing these creative consumers, assigned them a "right to hack" and to innovate cooperatively with the company, rather than working against it (Hatch & Schultz, 2010). The *LEGO* group now proactively engages in stakeholder dialogues with their more "reflexive" types of customers (Beckett & Nayak, 2008, p. 301), which enhances not only their rate of innovation, but also revitalizes consumers' trust in the *LEGO* brand.

In summary, academic writings, public media commentaries, and consumer resistance projects raise and feed critical debates about consumers' demands for privacy and trust in marketers and their brands. The review documents that many marketers both draw from, and proactively add to, these critical discourses in different ways. Companies like *Starbucks* and *Hannaford Brothers* made proactive use of the popular moral discourses surrounding trust issues to venture deeper into "positive" marketing terrains. With their responses to marketing criticisms, these companies spurred cultural debates on the viability of (less) deceptive, intrusive, and perilous modes of communication, interaction, and production, and thus potentially raised the bar for positive marketing.

3.2. Community Co-Optation and Commercialization

Studies associated with the second domain of criticism concern marketing practices that leverage economic profits by means of co-opting and commercializing communal consumption

spaces such as brand communities, virtual communities, and subcultures of consumption, but also local neighborhoods and other authentic cultural epicenters (Fournier & Avery, 2011; Fournier & Lee, 2009; Holt, 2002; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007). These studies advance four types of marketing criticism.

Marketing Criticisms: First, critics address practices of community co-optation that pursue goals of turning cool cultural ideas, styles and artifacts into commercial offerings (Frank, 1997; Heath & Potter, 2010). The critical take on such co-optation holds that such practices tend to erode the specific cultural appeal of each source context and, by taking up one sub-cultural invention after the other, gradually absorbing these authentic cultural epicenters into a mainstream marketing and branding system (Holt, 2002; Klein, 1999).

Second, cautionary writings about commercialization attribute consumers' criticism of marketing to an underlying feeling of excessive promotional noise in public social spaces (Klein, 1999; Rumbo, 2002). Authors argue that overly aggressive advertising, such as excessive placement of billboards or professional branding of neighborhoods, violates resident citizens' aesthetic desires and deprives them of socio-cultural spaces devoid of commercial interests (Klein, 1999). Similarly, studies show that critical consumers concerned with community protection regard the spread of global chain stores and restaurants—despite some of them delivering affordable goods to disadvantaged demographics—as the main cause for local retailers bankruptcy and a subsequent reduction of consumption choices that threatens the originality of local commercial offerings, tastes, and brand meanings (Lavin, 2003; Thompson & Arsel, 2004).

Third, even though marketing critics tend to welcome marketing practices that, for example through sponsoring and investment, advance the production of cultural goods in the fine arts, literature, or music, they also fault such sponsors' attempts for installing restrictive property

rights on these cultural products, which limits their dissemination and produces new boundaries for grassroots cultural innovation (Fourcade & Healy, 2007). As an example, the yoga entrepreneur Bikram Choudhury attracted public criticism in India and the U.S. for asserting copyright claims on certain yoga poses that are considered part of ancient Indian traditions (Srinivas, 2007).

Marketing practices associated with such legal trademark protection also attract criticism for confining a community's control over its own communication processes (J. Ozanne & Murray, 1995), including the privatization of language, and the limitation of non-commercial and brand-critical contents in public media (Arvidsson, 2006; Cohen et al., 2005; Klein, 1999). As one example, critics decried *Disney* along these lines as a *brand name bully* for securing and reinforcing rights on popular folktales, such as Cinderella and Snow White (Bollier, 2005).

Lastly, criticism is directed towards marketing practices in online communities designed to blur the boundaries between information, advertising, and entertainment. As the literature shows, consumers take issue, for example, with viral campaigns and micro-targeting efforts that they perceive as an intrusion of their community spheres (Fournier & Avery, 2011). In on- and offline environments, consumers blame marketing for colonizing public, discursive spaces of authentic communities, leaving consumers little power for reclamation (Rumbo, 2002).

Emerging Moral Demands: In the community domain, criticism focuses on consumer demands for marketers to preserve commerce-free community spaces, and not exploit authentic cultural resources. The demand for commerce-free spaces drives critical projects in which communities try to regain power over deciding which marketing activities are allowed in their communities. The demand for protection of cultural resources drives critical projects in which communities and subcultures protect their original languages, material artifacts, and rituals

against corporate co-optation and commercialization.

Consumer Resistance Projects: In response to practices of uninvited community intrusion, consumers defend their community spaces through culture-jamming brand messages, or escaping into ever new, authentic consumption spheres (Cova, Kozinets, & Shankar, 2007; Fournier & Avery, 2011; Kozinets, 2002). Culture jammers, for example, disseminate critical "Doppelgänger" brand images, such as the Frankenbucks image of an intrusive Starbucks corporation (Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006). Consumers are also increasingly competing with marketers rather than protesting against them. Using online media, these entrepreneurs playfully generate "alter brands and counter brands" (Cova & White, 2010, p. 264) that challenge contested companies and their marketing practices through providing stronger communal value.

These consumer actions can affect marketers in various ways. Community brands that gain market traction can, for example, constitute a "significant risk" for companies as competitors (Cova & White, 2010, p. 264). In online spaces "owned by the social collective" (Fournier & Avery, 2011, p. 203), criticism and ridicule projects contribute to changing the rules of the marketing game and rendering traditional marketing tools disconnected and irrelevant. Consumer resistance to marketers' community co-optation and commercialization thus force marketers into finding more positive ways for catering to these communities (Carducci, 2006).

Positive Marketing Responses: Even though many consumer communities reject the presence of marketing practices altogether, some marketing practices allow for building positive company-community relations that serve both, company and community goals.

To attenuate criticism of exploitative co-optation and invasive commercialization of community spheres and resources, scholars propose a range of practices concerned with fueling

more overt, multi-way communications, and with providing communities with (creative) material, spaces, and platforms that support original processes of creating meaning, social relationship building, and perpetuation of a strong cultural fabric (Arvidsson, 2011; Cova, 1997; Cova & Cova, 2002; Deighton & Kornfeld, 2009; Kozinets, Hemetsberger, & Schau, 2008; Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007).

The case of the entrepreneurial Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) community *Mozilla Firefox* illustrates how fueling a debate about legitimate marketing practices helps to resolve critical tensions in a community with social goals but inevitable commercial impact (Husemann, 2012). Mozilla community members tend to address frequently emerging ideological contradictions through "collective authentication practices" (Gabl & Hemetsberger, 2012). These practices include, for example, overtly explaining and discussing the hidden agenda of public marketing projects, or emphasizing the approachability and individuality of community members and decision makers (Gabl & Hemetsberger, 2013).

The action sports brand *Volcom*, in contrast, engages a variety of practices in order to be regarded as an appreciated community member rather than a commercial freeloader. This brand markets fashionable clothing to the members of the board sport subculture, while also giving back to the community by supporting its events, arts, and music venues in an effort of "playful, passionate, and entrepreneurial" community building (Canniford, 2011, p. 591). In so doing, Volcom acknowledges the community as an "arena of social learning" (Goulding, Shankar, & Canniford, 2013, p. 31) rather than a manageable entity (see also Fournier & Lee, 2009).

Lastly, scholars have shown that communities can avert co-optation attempts, but mainly on a structural level. The countervailing market of *community-supported agriculture* (CSA) in the United States poses an example for the preservation of consumers' "social" and "spatial embeddedness" (Feagan & Morris, 2009, p. 240) in local food production and consumption. The

CSA market system provides participants with a feeling of being part of an "intimate and human-scaled" relationship (Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007, p. 150), rather than an anonymous market structure. Through "ideological recruitment" (Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007, p. 147), key agents in the countervailing CSA market foster moral principles, ideals, and values that larger commercial entities are unable to co-opt.

In summary, marketing criticism in the domain of community co-optation and commodification perpetuates moral demands for market offerings that better reflect and support the priorities, values, and ideals of consumer communities. The positive marketing responses discussed above address these moral demands by adopting a more supportive mindset towards these communities, respect these community's non-commercial interests, and support them in perpetuating original cultural characteristics.

3.3. Society Seduction and Degeneration

Research in the third domain of criticism focuses on marketing practices related to even broader socio-cultural issues such as the transformation of people into consumers and the degeneration of consumers' social relations, self-perceptions, and physical body conditions.

Marketing Criticisms: The first and broadest criticism of marketing practices in this domain concerns the role of marketing practices in fostering the notion that ever more consumption inevitably leads to increased happiness and a "good life" (Holt, 2002, p. 80), despite contrary evidence from happiness research (Belk, 2001; Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002; Kasser, 2002; Layard, 2005; Shankar, Whittacker, & Fitchett, 2006). Critics argue that marketing practices implicitly promote superficial, material desires and celebrate hardworking, high-earning, hedonistic life-styles at the expense of potentially more traditional and rewarding alternatives,

such as spending time on community work and nurturing human relationships, or engaging in purposeful leisure activities (see Abela, 2006, for a discussion). From this critical viewpoint, the perpetuation of such lifestyle models gradually produces cultures of all-consuming citizens who lack the social skills and interests that formerly marked the grounds for solidarity in society (Cross, 2000; Varey, 2010). The dynamics of commodification – that are marketization processes "transforming into saleable objects social phenomena which were not previously framed in that manner" (Slater & Tonkiss, 2001, p. 24) – are also key in this line of critical thought. Critics of commodification see more authentic socio-cultural relations and civic support for public goods and services as silently succumbing to economic measure, thus degenerating a society.

A second point of critique concerns marketing practices that perpetuate a dangerous credit-consumption-debt cycle and indirectly produce a nation of over-spent, bankrupt consumers (Schor, 1998). Critics raise the concern that marketing practices contribute to fostering cultural discourses that "normalize credit/debt" and thus potentially shape a culture in which individuals value "financial and material gain" more than "pleasure, enchantment, and play" (Peñaloza & Barnhart, 2011, p. 760). Marketing practices that seduce consumers into buying things that they cannot afford not only raise levels of individual debt and bankruptcy, but also leverage accumulated financial risks within a society and beyond.

Lastly, critics argue that by seducing consumers to over-consume, marketing practices internalize profits from additional sales, while externalizing costs to the public sector (Varey, 2010). Most notably, marketing practices in the food industry have come under attack for culling profits from seducing consumers into more unhealthy and excessive food consumption patterns (Dobson & Gerstner, 2010). In this line of argument, critics particularly attack marketing practices that suggest a link between larger portions and higher status, or offer easier access to continuously cheaper, larger, and tastier, yet calorie-dense, food portions. Such practices are held

to lure consumers into increased calorie intake, thus, contribute to the fueling of an obesity epidemic (Chandon & Wansink, 2011; Dobson & Gerstner, 2010).

Emerging Moral Demands: At its basis, marketing criticism associated with the domain of society seduction and degeneration highlights consumers' moral demands for finding and reinforcing the particular level of consumption that can still be considered healthy for individuals and society. The aim of this critical project is to prevent marketing systems from producing more isolated, consumption-focused individuals who pursue instant gratification at the expense of more complex and resilient types of social relationships (Cross, 2000). Consumers, in this domain, urge marketers to invent more positive practices that reduce overall pressures to consume while still driving the economy.

Consumer Resistance Projects: Consumers engage a variety of individual and collective activist projects for "striking blows against the capitalist empire" (O'Guinn & Muniz, 2004, p. 100) and altering mainstream consumers attitudes towards consumption (Dobscha, 1998; Herrmann, 1993; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Varman & Belk, 2009). A recent example of consumer activism in the online sphere is the anti-soft drink film "The Real Bears," directed by Alex Boguski. The animated film went viral within hours of its online appearance, attracted more than 1.7 million viewers within two weeks, and garnered unprecedented support from healthy food pundits, consumer advocates, and *Facebook/Twitter* followers. The film apparently hit a nerve among Internet users interested in learning about the relationship between soft drink consumption and obesity, diabetes, and other serious health consequences.

Consumers also proactively downshift their own consumption demands through do-it-yourself products, sharing and re-using goods, and participating in alternative consumption and exchange

communities (Bekin, Carrigan, & Szmigin, 2005; Belk, 2010; Shaw & Newholm, 2002). Such consumer resistance projects alter the social, economic, and political environments of marketers and consumers in direct and indirect ways. Even though critical consumers that adopt a simpler, "post-consumerist" (Alexander & Ussher, 2012, p. 67) lifestyle are a minority in Western cultures, they still diffuse their critical thoughts and alternative consumption approaches gradually into the commercial mainstream (Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Portwood-Stacer, 2012). This dynamic slowly changes the moral landscape that matters for positive marketing practice.

Positive Marketing Responses: In response to criticisms of seduction and degeneration, marketers have begun to explore new business models and practices that focus less on selling more things, but on offering value-adding services and improvements for more flexible product platforms (Waddock & McIntosh, 2011). For example, sparked by technological innovations as well as the consumer resistance practice of illegal file sharing, music and film industries went through dramatic changes, moving away from selling physical sound and film carriers towards distributing content through networks as on demand services (Waddock & McIntosh, 2011). Furthermore, marketers have contributed to the emergence of a range of (online) services, such as virtual worlds, online resale platforms and mobile apps. Alongside their seductive potentials, market-mediated virtual spaces allow consumers to explore new, potentially "liberatory experiences beyond the normal roles of a 'consumer'" (Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010, p. 114), expanding their possibilities for self-expression while reducing the need for more material items.

Studies in the present review also discuss practices that directly or indirectly cater to consumer demands for reducing material overconsumption through sharing. *Zipcar*, the world's largest car sharing company, for example, successfully sells easy access to temporary car ownership on a

usage and membership basis. Such sharing services seem attractive for pro-socially as well as entirely utilitarian motivated consumers (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012). Premium car manufacturers, such as *BMW* (with the *DriveNow* sharing system) and *Mercedes* (with *Car2go*) have also begun to explore new access-based business and marketing models in anticipation of eroding demands for private cars in urban settings. Local sharing schemes such as children's toy libraries similarly allow parents to reduce their children's consumption of new items through borrowing toys from their local peers (L. Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010).

In response to the accusation of marketing-induced human degeneration, marketers explore options for joining forces with critical consumers to advance a common socio-cultural agenda (Anker, Kappel, & Sandøe, 2009; O'Guinn & Muniz, 2004; Rumbo, 2002). The sports- and outdoor equipment brand *Patagonia*, for example, recently experimented with raising awareness for "conscious consumption" (Ling, 2012, p. 26) by asking consumers to consider their true needs with regards to the ecological impact of their outdoor gear purchases. As a case in point, Patagonia gained significant media attention for a commercial that asked consumers "to buy less and to reflect before [they] spend a dime on this jacket or anything else" (Patagonia.com/CommonThreads).

In summary, in the domain of society seduction and degeneration, criticism yields debates about excessive and unhealthy levels of consumption and their negative effects on "personal and collective well-being" (Sheth, Sethia, & Srinivas, 2011, p. 25). Whereas some marketers use their advertising budgets to fight government or activist health initiatives (Grynbaum 2013), others join the discussion by positioning their brands as creative, forward-thinking members of society that monitor emerging socio-cultural problems, stimulating public debate about them, and propose positive marketing practices that attenuate these tensions (Bublitz & Peracchio in this issue; Holt, 2004; Holt & Cameron, 2010; Thompson & Arsel, 2004).

3.4. Human and Natural Resource Exploitation

Research associated with the fourth domain of criticism addresses marketing practices aimed at hiding unethical and unsustainable use of human and natural resources behind glossy brand façades.

Marketing Criticisms: One primary line of criticism in this domain addresses the practice of communicatively separating the more exciting experiences of consumption from the often less exciting procedures and consequences of production (Edwards, 2000; Holt, 2002). For example, sophisticated cultural advertising campaigns allow companies to associate their brands with moral meanings, even though products may actually be produced by means of rampant human and natural resource exploitation (Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård, 2007). Likewise, critics claim that complex and opaque globalized supply chain systems make it difficult for consumers to trace resource flows and human and environmental costs of producing in very low wage, low health and environmental standard areas of the world (Klein, 1999).

Another important point of criticism is the promotion of quick and easy buy-use-and-dump consumption cycles. Critics view marketing as responsible for perpetuating this linear resources utilization model and externalizing post-purchase problems of recycling and disposing to the public sector (Kotler, 2011). In this vein, critics demand that a circular consumption-production system must eventually replace this linear model if the goal is to sustain growth while also bringing the resource impact of consumption closer to sustainable levels (Fuller, 1999).

Lastly, scholars highlight marketing practices of proactively misleading the public by communicating commitment to social or environmental causes without living up to these claims. These window-dressing practices, decried as bluewashing (social) and greenwashing

(environmental), not only conceal facts about an individual company's social and ecological footprint, but also undermine consumers' general confidence in more realistic achievements in positive marketing that have already been realized (Crane, 2000; Gillespie, 2008; Parguel, Benoît-Moreau, & Larceneux, 2011; Peattie & Crane, 2005; Saha & Darnton, 2005).

Emerging Moral Demands: The focal moral demand underlying criticism in this domain is the call for marketers to treat human and natural resources more fairly and sustainably. Consumers expect that marketers no longer take a free ride on the shoulders of dependent workers, future generations, and the natural habitat, but instead develop a more sustainable marketing ideology that considers the needs of future generations (Kilbourne, McDonagh, & Prothero, 1997) and allows marketers for ending excessively resource-depleting manufacturing and distribution processes even though they may be profitable for individual companies (Achrol & Kotler, 2011).

Consumer Resistance Projects: Consumers who take issue with marketing's role in exploiting resources tend to respond, once more, by adjusting their own market choices and by mobilizing fellow consumers. As with reactions to criticism in other domains, consumers make use of their buying power by seeking out the most ecologically and socially responsible consumption choices (Hertz, 2001; Shaw, Newholm, & Dickinson, 2006; Soper, 2007). Through "buycotts" (Friedman, 1996, p. 439), for example, consumers support Fair Trade-labeled brands, or join forces with retailers to ban plastic bags from their stores and cities (Moraes, Shaw, & Carrigan, 2011; Shaw et al., 2006).

These consumer actions affect marketers directly with every consumer vote against exploitation (or for positive marketing practices), and indirectly by gradually changing the moral zeitgeist (Moraes et al., 2011; Thompson, 2004; Ulver-Sneistrup, Askegaard, & Kristensen,

2011). Furthermore, the activities of pro-social activist movements, such as cleanclothes.org, that are managed by "alternative hedonist consumers" (Soper, 2007, p. 214) affect marketing bottom lines directly through raising public attention for misleading corporate promises and brand images (Peñaloza & Price, 1993; Thompson, 2004).

Positive Marketing Reponses: The long-standing, yet intensifying, criticism of human and natural resource exploitations challenges companies to reconsider their marketing goals and heuristics for marketing decisions (Achrol & Kotler, 2011; Lee & Sirgy, 2004; Witkowski, 2005). Prominent cases of indirect positive marketing responses in this domain include exploring new marketing concepts that serve a triple - economic, ecological, and social - bottom line, conserve resources by asking consumers for cooperation, and foster relations with independent activists to lift up the standards of resource conservation collectively.

One promising path to triple-bottom-line based marketing is to question established assumptions about consumer preferences and to venture out onto proverbially greener pastures (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2011; Menon & Menon, 1997). As an example, the California-based company Method Products started up in 2001 with the goal of providing consumers with attractively packaged and environmentally friendly cleaning products, even though consumers in this category previously considered both of these features irrelevant. However, broadening the set of relevant product features helped the company to earn double-digit growth rates and to take away market share from less responsible competitors (Walker, 2004).

A second marketing practice with potential for resource conservation is the practice of making consumers aware of their own responsibility for protecting the environment (Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2011). Reminding consumers of mindful consumption may not only signal to buyers that the company cares about cost reduction, but also allows consumers to acknowledge the

possibility that marketers actually pursue a sustainability agenda (Sheth et al., 2011). The hotel industry, for example, garners positive responses from consumers when encouraging guests to voluntarily reduce towel and linen replacements, particularly when the hotel promises to donate its savings to charity (Shang, Basil, & Wymer, 2010)

Lastly, positive marketing practices of voluntarily seeking and communicating industry partnerships and external control from independent watchdog institutions are gaining popularity. These practices help to re-establish the link between products on the shelves and the environmental and social impact of their production and distribution. Multi-stakeholder certification initiatives, as provided by the "Fair Labor Association" (FLA) for example, successfully urged a range of high street clothing companies to work with their suppliers and thus encourage a more ethical treatment of their workers (Marx, 2008).

In summary, critical writings in the domain of human and natural resource exploitation reveal the rise of moral demands for ethical and sustainable treatment of resources. Consumer critics urge marketers to resolve the conflict between societal sustainability demands and organizational stakeholder interests in useful ways (Burroughs, 2010; Desmond & Crane, 2004; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). Studies argue that positive marketing responses to these calls may include invitations for external control, adopting the role of a proactive innovator, and investing in sustainable market solutions (Kotler et al., 2011).

4. Discussion

This integrative review study of 289 academic and non-academic publications on marketing criticisms and responses illustrates that venturing into positive marketing practices can be an intricate challenge for marketers (Lerman & Shefrin, 2014; Shefrin, 2007). On the one hand, engaging in positive marketing practices seems to be a promising way of addressing some of the

emerging moral demands documented above, while also benefiting the financial bottom line. On the other hand, some moral demands appear just too ambiguous, complex, or far-reaching to serve as a reliable compass for positive marketing.

The present research sheds some light on this complex situation by documenting 12 marketing practices that marketing critics have addressed most vividly in the past 60 years, identifying the six key moral demands that tend to evoke these specific criticisms, highlighting eight consumer resistance projects that express these demands, and discussing ten ways in which marketers have, deliberately or not, advanced positive marketing agendas (see Table 2).

This broad, structured account of a dispersed body of literature can be useful for scholars interested in pushing the boundaries of critical and positive marketing knowledge by documenting the status quo of critical thinking in four domains of marketing impact. The study can also be useful for practitioners interested in exploring positive marketing options by providing an overview of problems with marketing as well as successful answers and important caveats.

To unfold its full potential, however, a macro-level account on marketing criticism and responses requires a more fine-grained discussion of the potentialities and limitations of marketing criticism, positive marketing responses, and their relationships.

Potentialities and limitations of marketing criticism: Our review documents that marketing criticism addresses specific marketing practices in consumer, community, society, and resource domains of marketing impact. Within these domains, criticism primarily addresses marketing practices associated with consumer deception and intrusion, community co-optation and commercialization, society seduction and degeneration, and human and natural resource exploitation.

The analysis of these individual marketing criticisms reveals six underlying moral consumer demands that appear stable at their basis, yet flexible in their expression within different socio-cultural contexts. By communicating these moral demands, consumers urge marketers for better respect of consumer privacy, cherish consumers' trust in brands and marketing practices, preserving commerce-free community spaces, respecting (rather than exploiting) consumers' creative resources, keeping consumption at more healthy levels, and treating human and natural resources fairly and sustainably.

The first question that arises from these findings is: How relevant are these criticisms for marketers, consumers, and society? Commentators of consumer resistance projects argue that each public act of consumer criticism—from minor and local to or major and global—adds an impulse to dispersed, yet important, debates about the legitimacy of certain marketing practices. The emerging technological tools for mobilizing consumers across the social media sphere endow these consumers with unprecedented means for expressing their moral demands, setting critical agendas, and putting pressure on marketers (Cova & Dalli, 2009; Denegri-Knott, Zwick, & Schroeder, 2006; Fournier & Avery, 2011). Some authors argue that contemporary consumers seek such ways for expressing their concerns particularly with social and environmental issues more often than at any period before, and hence can hardly be ignored (Carducci, 2006; Shaw et al., 2006).

From this perspective, marketing criticism and consumer resistance projects are regarded as beneficial to improving the (marketing) world, because they contribute to putting important subject matters on the public agenda, and expressing moral demands to which marketers may then choose to attend. However, some cases of critical activism, such as brand boy- or buycotts, can cause problems for associated firms, employees, consumers, or stakeholders who may not be responsible for the criticized practices, but still suffer the consequences of consumer protest

(Friedman, 2004; Hertz, 2001).

Overall, however, most authors seem to converge on the notion that cultures, in which critical consumers and commentators openly articulate their critical views, tend to facilitate the marketing task of identifying opportunities for positive practices that consumers morally support (Cherrier & Murray, 2004).

A second notable question that arises from this review is: Does marketing criticism generally provide useful guidance for positive marketing projects? Our study suggests that whereas the specific accusations discussed in the four domains may only be relevant for marketers that are involved in the relevant practices, our insights into the broader moral demands in each domain may be relevant for most marketers. These broader moral demands are formulated less specifically and therefore leave room for interpretation and innovative response. However, both specific marketing criticisms and broader moral demands are of limited use as a moral compass under any of the four following conditions.

First, in some contexts, critics send contradictory signals. The often-cited gap between consumers' articulated environmental consumption attitudes and their actual consumption behaviors illustrates this problem at a micro level (Devinney, Auger, Eckhardt, & Birtchnell, 2006; Prothero et al., 2011). When asked for their intentions of buying or supporting healthy or ecologically responsible products, consumers appear quite approving and considerate. However, when it comes to actual purchase decisions these ethical attitudes do not come to fruition (see also the JC Penney case above). Such data on well-intentioned, yet inconsequential, moral demands discourage producers to engage in positive marketing practices and thus avoid the risk of suffering severe bottom line consequences.

Second, in some contexts, consumers' moral demands are ambiguous and fluid (Devinney et

al., 2006; Thompson, 2004). When consumers, for example, urge marketers to respect "healthy" consumption levels or treat human resources "fairly", marketers often remain in the dark about which marketing practices these consumers actually deem acceptable and which ones they condemn. Successful progressive marketers therefore go to great length to assess which precise levels of positive marketing innovation consumers are ready to embrace at a given point in time, and which initiatives will likely fall prey to sticky consumption habits.

Third, some critics tend to portray Western marketers as highly skilled and self-centered cultural engineers, and consumers as mindless dupes that are unable to maintain a critical distance from marketing influences (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006). These critics consequentially put most of the blame for societal problems on marketers' shoulders rather than granting consumers some degree of individual freedom and agency. Similarly, some consumer activists turn towards extreme viewpoints and demands that no longer reflect mainstream consumers' ideals and therefore repel rather than recruit mainstream consumers and marketers (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). When following such highly critical minorities, marketers may overestimate consumers' support for certain practices and thus jeopardize their positive marketing initiatives.

Lastly, conventional marketing ideology offers abundant material for rejecting almost any kind of consumer criticism as hypocritical, impractical, or unreasonable. For marketers operating in contexts that perpetuate conventional beliefs such as "the competitive situation requires taking negative measures," consumer resistance projects will unlikely be regarded as impetus for exploring unfamiliar positive terrain (Marion, 2006).

Potentialities and limitations of positive marketing responses: Our review documents ten ways in which marketers deliberately address moral demands in either of the four domains. In the literature considered here, positive marketing practices, for instance, cater to consumer well-

being in more subtle, less forced, and engaging ways; reconsider brands as creative, forward-thinking agents in society; or to adopt the role of proactive innovators, investors, or propagators for resource conservation (see Table 2 for the full list).

These insights warrant a third question: How are these positive marketing practices related to marketing criticisms? The present review documents both direct and indirect routes from criticism to response. Cases such as LEGO's response to hacker attacks evidence that consumer criticisms can lead directly to positive marketing responses within a company. However, the data overall rather confirms the notion that "clear cause-and-effect relations are the exception, rather than the rule" (Friedman, 2004, p. 54). In fact, the majority of cases presented in the literature reveal that marketers more often use consumer criticisms as a compass for exploring the shifting boundaries of morally legitimate marketing practice, rather than reacting to scandals or opportunistically surfing on erratic moral waves. As a caveat, this diagnosis might either reflect common practice or a sampling bias within the literatures considered in our review.

A fourth relevant, and consequential, question is to which extent these marketing responses to criticism are "positive", e.g. benefit businesses, individuals, and society. The studies considered in our review discuss multiple ways in which new marketing practices benefit these three stakeholders in various ways (see Table 2 for examples). However, assessing the precise extent to which these marketing practices benefit these constituents across different domains of marketing impact poses two analytical problems.

First, whereas many definitions of what a society or group considers "beneficial" are unambiguous and widely agreed upon, other definitions differ across contexts and times, or are controversially discussed within one given context (Devinney et al., 2006; Kornberger, 2010;

Levy & Luedicke, 2013; Luedicke, Thompson, & Giesler, 2010; Varman & Belk, 2009). For that reason, the authors of this review consider marketing practices here not as *absolutely* beneficial—or positive—but rather as *relatively* beneficial in relation to the current moral expectations and the status quo of marketing fulfilling these expectations. For a positive impact to be achieved, a marketing practice must produce at the minimum consumer-acknowledged improvements for either individuals or society, and at least not impair business outcomes. Ideally, however, positive marketing practices offer improvements in multiple dimensions.

Second, and related to the first point, a marketing practice may have unquestionably positive effects in one domain, but produce negative effects in another domain. For example, consumers may regard environmentally friendly products such as the Method detergent as a contribution to resource protection (resource domain), but simultaneously consider the brand a case for even more sophisticated consumer seduction and societal degeneration (consumer and societal domain). Consumers may also consider campaigns for conscientious consumption, such as the Patagonia campaign, as authentic calls for more simplistic and responsible lifestyles, but also criticize that the campaign has significantly increased the company's sales of outdoor products (Pietrykowski, 2004). The reflections illustrate that precisely assessing the positive potential of a marketing practice is an intricate task because the line between the authentic ideological recruitment and sophisticated marketing seduction is difficult to draw.

On the relationship of marketing criticism and positive marketing response: The review shows that not only is assessing the benefits from positive marketing practices difficult, but assessing the mutual influences of marketing criticism and positive marketing responses is also quite complex (see Mittelstaedt, Kilbourne & Shultz in this issue for an outline of the developmental approach and critical approach to this discussion).. Nevertheless, the studies reviewed here still

provide some insight into, and thoughts on, the broader relationship between marketing criticism and response.

As argued above, critics tend to consider any visible marketing criticism or consumer resistance project a contribution to advancing a moral agenda. Marketers, in turn, are portrayed as either responding to direct criticism, or proactively using emerging moral demands when assessing, inventing, and implementing positive products and communications. In this way, both marketers and critics contribute to market-critical agendas by raising awareness of ethical problems, spurring critical debates, testing and promoting alternative points of view, and setting new standards for positive marketing practice. This general mechanism is held to work also for positive marketing practices that do not emerge from explicitly positive marketing agendas. Any positive practice, so some authors argue, notwithstanding its underlying motivations, can have "positive moral significance" (Anker et al., 2009, p.528) for consumers and thus contribute to shaping moral demands.

However, this relationship again entails two problems: First, since consumers have learned not to blindly trust marketers' promises, they tend to evaluate such practices through a critical filter. Consumers therefore tend to render even ostensibly positive marketing practices as purely instrumental for reaping profits (as in greenwashing or bluewashing debates) rather than authentic expressions of moral marketing agendas. Our review suggests that very few, if any, profit-oriented companies enjoy the benefits of unbounded consumer trust. Hence, the positive contributions of most companies do not stand beyond such doubts.

Second, the present analysis suggests that marketing criticism has directly or indirectly contributed to inducing changes in many isolated domains of marketing, for instance, in inviting external control, promoting mindful consumption, or setting up alternative market systems. However, few, if any, positive marketing practices are able to permanently silence critical voices.

Marketing criticisms and positive marketing responses rather seem to co-evolve in a dialectical relationship of exploration, evaluation, criticism, and – sometimes – redress. This interactive mechanism constantly rejuvenates consumer criticisms (see Holt, 2002; Marion, 2006), the identity projects of participating consumers, and positive marketing developments (Kornberger, 2010).

5. Conclusion

The extensive, integrative review has shown that, and why, doing well while also doing good is a complex challenge for marketers. We have argued that marketing naturally helps to uplift society by providing consumers with affordable nutrition, medication, shelter, and means of self-expression. But we have also shown that marketing is extensively criticized for causing detrimental effects for individuals, society, workers, and nature.

Our research documents and discusses a variety of marketing responses that critics consider beneficial for businesses, individuals, and society. The study, however, also reveals that few, if any, of these practices are able to benefit these constituents across all four domains of marketing impact. In fact, none of the practices considered in our study reaches outside of the commercial comfort zone far enough to immunize the company from further criticism. Marketing critics and marketing responses will therefore continue to fuel each other until marketers take over who pursue commercial goals based on critical, rather than conventional marketing ideologies.

In the meantime, marketing researchers inspire practitioners to embrace criticism and passionate activism as a standard mode of marketing innovation, rather than fighting criticism as uninvited disturbance. To further support such positive marketing agendas, researchers may study the institutional, regulatory, organizational, ideological and strategic conditions that help

marketers (and critics) to overcome structural constraints and implement new marketing practices that help uplift the world to more positive spheres (Lerman & Shefrin, 2014).

In conclusion, we hope that this study inspires other academics to advance research on positive marketing, and thus illuminate viable roads for economically, ecologically, and socially responsible progress.

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7. Tables

Academic Fields	Relevant Themes
Consumer Culture Theory	Mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies; marketplace cultures
Marketing in Society Research	Ethics; sustainability; quality of life, consumer welfare; corporate social responsibility
Marketing and Branding Theory	Marketing ideology; brand logic; critical marketing

Table 1: Overview of academic fields and relevant themes included in this review

	Consumer Deception & Intrusion	Community Co-Optation & Commercialization	Society Seduction & Degeneration	Human and Natural Resource Exploitation
Marketing Criticisms	**Deceptive product & pricing practices** – Planned product obsolescence (e.g., Guiltinan, 2009; Packard, 1960) – High-low pricing (e.g., Kaufmann et al., 1994) – Targeting harmful products to vulnerable consumers (e.g., Dameron, 1938; Smith & Cooper-Martin, 1997; Smith & Quelch, 1993) – Marketing verifiably perilous products (e.g., Birsch & Fielder, 1994; Nader, 1965) **Deceptive promotion practices** – Stereotypical, hyperreal visions of human appearance (e.g., Gurrieri et al., 2013; Pollay, 1986; Schroeder & Borgerson, 2005) **Intrusive advertising & data mining in private life spheres** – Over-hyped, "cluttered" advertising (e.g., Cohen et al., 2005; Pereira Heath & Heath, 2008; Rotfeld, 2006; Rumbo, 2002; Witkowski, 2005) – Covert Internet data collection (e.g., Ashworth & Free, 2006; Palmer, 2005; Pollach 2005)	**Eroding specific appeal of cultural source contexts** – Commercial co-optation of local ideas, styles, and materials (e.g., Frank, 1997; Heath & Potter, 2010; Holt, 2002) **Excessive promotional noise in public spaces** – Unsolicited advertising in public spheres (e.g., Klein, 1999; Rumbo, 2002) – Pressing global spread of chain stores and restaurants (e.g., Klein, 1999; Lavin, 2003; Thompson & Arsel, 2004) **Limiting cultural dissemination & innovation** – Restrictive property rights (c.f., Fourcade & Healy, 2007; Srinivas, 2007) – Privatization of language & limitation of non-commercial content in media consumption (e.g., Arvidsson, 2006; Bollier, 2005; Cohen et al. 2005; Klein, 1999; J. Ozanne & Murray, 1995)	**Promoting superficial, material desires** – Fostering the misleading generalized notion of more consumption leading to ever more happiness (e.g., Burroughs & Rindfleisch, 2002; Shankar et al., 2006) – Advancing wasteful materialistic lifestyles at the expense of meaningful alternatives (e.g., Abela, 2006; Cross, 2000; Varey 2010) – Succumbing public goods and services to economic measure (c.f., Fourcade & Healy, 2007) **Animating the "normalization" of credit-consumption-debt cycle** (e.g., Peñaloza & Barnhart, 2011; Schor, 1998) **Externalizing social costs of overconsumption to the public** (e.g., Chandon & Wansink, 2011; Dobson & Gerstner, 2010; Varey, 2010)	**Separating exploitative production procedures from glossy brand facades** (e.g., Edwards, 2000; Holt, 2002; Klein, 1999; Salzer-Mörling & Strannegård, 2007) **Promoting wasteful, linear consumption cycles** (e.g., Fuller, 1999; Menon & Menon, 1997; Kotler, 2011) **Communicating commitment to social or environmental causes without living up to it** (e.g., Crane, 2000; Gillespie, 2008; Saha & Darnton, 2005; Parguel et al., 2011; Peattie & Crane, 2005)
Emerging Moral Demands	– Appreciation of Trust – Respect for Consumer Privacy	– Commerce-free community space – Protection of creative resources	– Healthy level of consumption	– Legitimate treatment of resources

Consumer Resistance Projects	**Brand & advertising avoidance / cynicism** (e.g., Chylinski & Chu, 2010; Helm, 2004; Rotfeld, 2006; Speck & Elliott, 1997) **(Online) Feedback / Complaining** (e.g., Day, 2011; Deighton & Kornfeld, 2009; Krishnamurthy & Kucuk, 2009; Pitt et al., 2002)	**Brand hijacking & parodies of brand messages** (e.g., Carducci, 2006; Fournier & Avery, 2011; Luedicke et al., 2010; Thompson & Arsel, 2004; Thompson et al., 2006) **Creating new "authentic" community space** (e.g., Cova et al., 2007; Cova & White, 2010; Kozinets, 2002)	**Individual & activist consumer rebellion** (e.g., Dobscha, 1998; Herrmann, 1993; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Varman & Belk, 2009; O'Guinn & Muniz, 2004; Portwood-Stacer, 2012) **Downshifting tactics & commitment to "alternative" consumption communities** (e.g., Alexander & Ussher, 2012; Bekin et al., 2005; Belk, 2010; Shaw & Newholm, 2002)	**Engaging in more informed, socially & environmentally responsible consumption choices** (e.g., Friedman, 1996; Hertz, 2001; Moraes et al., 2011; Shaw et al., 2006; Soper, 2007; Ulver-Sneistrup et al., 2011) **Activism & boycotts** (e.g.; Peñaloza & Price, 1993; Thompson 2004)
Positive Marketing Responses	**Voluntary information disclosure & external control** (e.g., Carter & Curry, 2010; Cohen et al., 2005; Palmer, 2005; Peltier et al., 2009) **Coordinating brand conversations & inviting consumers to co-create brand meanings** (e.g., Beckett & Nayak, 2008; Day 2011; de Waal Malefyt, 2014; Fisher & Smith, 2011; Fournier & Avery, 2011; Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004)	**Providing material, spaces & platforms for community engagement** (e.g., Canniford, 2011; Fournier & Avery, 2011; Holt, 2002; Kozinets et al., 2008; Goulding et al., 2013) **Facilitating collective meaning making & relationship-building** (e.g., Arvidsson, 2011; Cova, 1997; Cova & Cova, 2002; Deighton & Kornfeld, 2009; Fournier & Lee, 2009; Gabl & Hemetsberger, 2012; Kozinets et al., 2008; Thompson & Coskuner Balli 2007)	**Offering value-adding services for more flexible base products / platforms** (e.g., Denegri-Knott & Molesworth, 2010; Waddock & McIntosh, 2011) **Advancing resource sharing** (e.g, Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; L. Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010) **Supporting a common socio-political agenda** (e.g.; Anker et al., 2009; O'Guinn & Muniz, 2004; Rumbo, 2002)	**Developing new, triple bottom line marketing strategies** (e.g., Burroughs, 2010; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004; Menon & Menon, 1997; Kotler et al., 2011; Witkowski, 2005) **Promoting mindful consumption** (e.g., Achrol & Kotler, 2011; Pereira Heath & Chatzidakis, 2011; Shang et al., 2010; Sheth et al., 2011) **Inviting partnerships and external control for furthering sustainability and ethical standards** (e.g., Lee & Sirgy, 2004; Marx, 2008)

Table 2: Overview of marketing criticisms, emerging moral demands, consumer resistance projects, and positive marketing responses in four ontological domains