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Sustainability in Marketing

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Introduction

Marketing is predicated on creating "value for customers and build[ing] strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return" (Kotler et al. 2017, 5) or as the most recent American Marketing Association (2008) definition states on "creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large". While such representations endow marketing with an important social and economic function in society, they overlook sustainability concerns, as they rely on prevalent notions of value, which tend to neglect the "intrinsic value" (O'Neill 1993, 8) of the natural world, the notion of value linked to sustainability (see McDonagh and Prothero 2014), as well as other forms of non-materialistic value such as the value of justice or equity.

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Businesses (and marketing in particular) impact on the physical environment through *what they take* (the natural resources they use such as oil and water), *what they make* (the products derived from those resources), and *what they waste* (industrial waste causing pollution and destruction of natural systems) (Hawken 1993, 12; Fuller 1999). These effects are considerable and are driven by a "high consumption way of life", which is "utterly unsustainable" (Assadourian 2010, 186). News stories remind us daily of the severity of problems that threaten sustainability (e.g. global warming, plastics in oceans, poverty and growing income, and wealth inequalities). According to a recent study by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), biodiversity continues to decline, endangering the world's capacity to provide food, water, and security to billions of people (Watts 2018). Beyond the negative implications for humans and their well-being, this is worrying for the sake of the "intrinsic worth" (Pepper 1997) of nature.

While many companies and consumers have reinvented practices and patterns of producing and consuming more attendants to the environment, the net effect of such effort remains insufficient given the scale of the environmental problems. At the same time, the rhetoric of marketing scholarship, reflected in the hegemony of the normative managerial marketing approach espoused in many marketing textbooks, tends to portray marketing as a benign force (Hackley 2003, 2009; Brown 1995), distant from ecological and other adverse effects. This is despite marketing arguably being the primary tool used by businesses to create and maintain consumer cultures (Assadourian 2010). As a result, sustainability remains largely overlooked within academic conversations about recent trends in the marketing discipline (McDonagh and Prothero 2014).

To engage meaningfully with sustainability we need, as marketing scholars, to contextualise discussions of the construct within the marketing curriculum and not relegate them to a sub-topic of an introductory or revision lecture in our courses. The aim of this chapter is to share our views on the urgency of making sustainability a fundamental topic of our teaching, as well as our experiences of how we have been embedding sustainability within our teaching. We will cover pedagogy, design, and content, as well as the challenges that underscore our efforts. However, before doing so, it is important that we provide some brief context to recent

initiatives to develop sustainability within the curriculum at university level and school level that have impacted our attempts to embed sustainability within marketing education.

Background

The Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment of 1972 was the first to allude (even if indirectly) to the importance of sustainability in higher education (Wright 2002). Principle 19 of the Declaration states that "*Education in environmental matters, for the younger generation as well as adults, giving due consideration to the underprivileged, is essential in order to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in protecting and improving the environment in its full human dimension*" (United Nations 1972). Since then, around the world, various national and international bodies have lent support to developing educational resources to incorporate sustainability in order to help to create a more sustainable future by aligning with the United Nations initiative of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) between 2005 and 2014 (UNESCO 2005). The British Government set out its vision for a more sustainable environmental, social, and economic future in its report: "Securing the Future: Delivering the UK Sustainable Development Strategy" (HM Government 2005). This report highlights the key role of compulsory education for young people to raise awareness of sustainable development and provide them with skills to put sustainable development into practice in later life. At the same time, it acknowledges the need to increase "sustainability literacy" elsewhere in colleges, universities, and professional development. Next, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) launched a *Sustainable Development in Higher Education* policy document to underpin the government's goal of sustainable development within the higher education sector in England (HEFCE 2005), in which it articulated the following vision: "*Within the next 10 years, the higher education sector in this country will be recognised as a major contributor to society's efforts to achieve sustainability—through the skills and knowledge that its graduates learn and put into practice, and*

through its own strategies and operations." The accompanying ten-year action plan has undergone regular review, cumulating in the recent publication of HEFCE's policy development and framework for future work in this area (HEFCE 2014). An examination of the latest vision statement indicates some minor amendments to broaden the scope by including the role of research, knowledge transfer, and community engagement in promoting sustainable development: "*HEFCE's vision is that universities and colleges are widely recognised as leaders in society's efforts to achieve sustainability—through the understanding, skills and attitudes that students gain and put into practice, through research and knowledge exchange, and through community involvement, as well as through their strategies and operations that bring all these together*" (HEFCE 2014).

Against this backdrop of higher education responding to the sustainability agenda, our university (the University of Nottingham) was one of seven pilot institutions that participated in the Higher Education Academy's (HEA) Green Academy programme launched in 2011 to develop and embed sustainable development within the curriculum (HEA n.d.). Naturally, the Nottingham University Business School's engagement with this organisational change programme to promote the sustainability agenda at school level has been accompanied by various collaborations with other stakeholders. For example, the School is a Champion School for the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) in the 2018–2019 cycle and an active member of a business-led community outreach organisation, Business in the Community. At the same time, the School is subject to monitoring and review by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), which is responsible for raising the academic standards and quality of UK higher education. This means that it has to conform to QAA processes for quality assurance and curriculum management, which involves defining and assessing subject-specific learning outcomes for undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in terms of key areas of knowledge and understanding (which include the importance of sustainability issues) and skills (i.e. intellectual, professional, and transferable ones). Finally, increasingly stringent demands are being placed on the School by three key international business-education accreditation bodies (i.e. EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), Association of MBAs (AMBA), and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of

Business (AACSB)) to demonstrate how sustainable (or sustainability) thinking is reflected in curricula, policies, and practice. The School's mission, which emphasises a strong commitment to delivering excellence, innovation, impact, responsibility, and sustainability, influences its teaching and learning strategy to ensure that these key areas are appropriately embedded into its programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Let us now consider how we have approached this task in marketing education.

Marketing Education for Sustainability

Raised public awareness of the urgency of environmental issues has been reflected in the growth of programmes and courses in business higher education dealing with sustainability and social responsibility (Moon and Orlitzky 2011); nevertheless, little is known about how marketing faculty integrate sustainability education into their courses (Nicholls et al. 2013). How we have approached this task has been influenced by our shared philosophical assumptions that reality is multiple, socially constructed within social, cultural, and historical contexts; and that knowledge generation is idiographic, time-bound and context-dependent (Hudson and Ozanne 1988). These assumptions require us to notice and challenge deeply ingrained beliefs and ways of thinking that constitute the Dominant Social Paradigm of Western, industrialised societies (Kilbourne et al. 1997; Kilbourne and Carlson 2008). These include the prevailing anthropocentric approach, which holds that the existence of the human species is "the central of most important fact in the universe" (Cambridge Dictionary 2018) and treats non-human species as important only for their instrumental value to humans (O'Neill 1993), as well as a materialistic view of progress and quality of life (Kilbourne et al. 1997). These ideologies are important for they condition views about how society relates to nature and colour arguments about environmental issues (Pepper 1997). It is argued that marketing serves as an engine for this paradigm because marketing relies on the promotion of a consumer-oriented vision of life and happiness (see, e.g. Alvesson 1994; Shankar et al. 2006; Varey 2010; Heath and Chatzidakis 2012). Marketing has, therefore, an "inherent drive toward unsustainability" (van Dam and

Apeldoorn 1996, 45; see also Kilbourne et al. 1997), which bestows marketing educators with an added responsibility to engage with this topic.

To be meaningful, such an engagement needs to be predicated on a deep understanding of (un)sustainability and a genuine commitment to address the implications this poses to our discipline. A sustainability approach to marketing needs to take the notion of "environment friendliness" as more than a "marketing tool" to sell more "green products" (see van Dam and Apeldoorn 1996, 52). Likewise, we believe that educators in marketing (and other fields) should not reduce the incorporation of sustainability into curricula to a mere requirement to satisfy the demands of external or internal stakeholders; rather, they need to embrace it as a fundamental topic ("*the* pressing issue", McDonagh and Prothero 2014, 1200) within their curricula. This should vest the sustainability agenda with a strengthened sense of urgency. In marketing education, in particular, this necessitates a macro approach, which conceives marketing discipline and practice beyond the constrained set of beliefs and ways of thinking within the Dominant Social Paradigm (see Kilbourne and Carlson 2008; Gordon et al. 2011) that often work against sustainability. Thus, either through developing new programmes and courses that specifically address sustainability matters pertaining to the discipline and practice of marketing, or via systematically integrating these concerns into the curricula of existing courses, we seek to challenge an uncritical approach to looking at the discipline (see also Catterall et al. 2002) that tends to remove marketing systems and practices from their consequences on the planet.

Planning for and Designing Sustainability Education in Marketing

As is normal for higher education programmes and courses, there are policies and procedures in place for curriculum design and management in keeping with the institution's requirements. At our Business School, curriculum design should be relevant to degree title, the School's mission and vision, and faculty's teaching and research interests. It is managed

under the auspices of the QAA Business and Management Subject Benchmark Statements for undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Thus, since we are embedding sustainability in course content, it was necessary to demonstrate that each course satisfied the appropriate curriculum content items of the QAA subject benchmark statements for Business and Management. This is what happened in a compulsory course in "Consumers and Markets" for first-year undergraduate students, which was launched in 2014/2015, following the restructuring of the BSc Management degree.

This first-year course is important to signal to students that sustainability is a foundational matter within marketing. Its aim is to develop an understanding of the contexts in which markets develop, and marketing and consumption are practised, in order to enable students to develop a personal and critical perspective prior to studying the technical aspects of marketing management in the second and third years of their degree programme. Thus, for sustainability-oriented learning objectives and outcomes, the course was designed to develop a knowledge and understanding of "*The importance of sustainability issues, including an understanding of the challenges and opportunities arising from the activities of people and organisations on the economic, social and environmental conditions of the future*" and develop key intellectual skills (e.g. critical thinking), professional practical skills (e.g. self-awareness, openness and sensitivity to diversity issues), and transferable skills (e.g. communication) to enhance the employability of the students. Following the publication of the latest QAA subject benchmark statements in 2015, the course content was reviewed to meet the corresponding updated learning objectives and outcomes (i.e. to develop a knowledge and understanding of "*The need for individuals and organisations to manage responsibly and sustainably and behave ethically in relation to social, cultural, economic and environmental issues*") and develop key intellectual skills (e.g. conceptual and critical thinking), professional practical skills (e.g. self-analysis and awareness/sensitivity to diversity issues), and transferable skills (e.g. emotional intelligence and empathy)). Next, we will illustrate how we incorporated the concept of sustainability as an underlying theme in this course.

Pedagogy and Teaching Methods

We consider ourselves to be facilitators of learning and therefore, in keeping with the features of suitable pedagogy to support education for sustainability (Littledyke and Manolas 2010), our pedagogical approach is student centred, concentrates on real-world contexts for critically examining sustainability issues relating to marketing and consumption, and focuses on shared learning experiences and active, constructivist methods to accommodate, extend, or challenge common beliefs. On the whole, we have employed the traditional educational methods of large-group lectures and small-group tutorials, which are supported by online material (e.g. news announcements, forum, and audio-visual materials) on our virtual learning environment (Moodle). The following account highlights content we cover, as well as practices and learning activities we employ to facilitate students' learning and critical engagement.

Setting the Context: Making the Case for Sustainability

Although the natural environment is pervasive in public discourse and there are opportunities for environmental education across the National Curriculum for primary and secondary state schools in England (National Association for Environmental Education 2018), we often find that students come to the classroom with little understanding of sustainability. Thus, to begin a discussion about the relationship between the business (and marketing) field and the planet, it is important to clarify to students the concept of sustainability and the interlinked nature of the economic, social, and environmental considerations that broad understandings of the concept entail (Crane and Matten 2016). This also serves to appease those less ecologically minded students, who may question the usefulness of sustainable considerations when these can hinder financial results.

While the "win-win-win" discourse that underlines the triple bottom-line principle of ecological, economic, and sociocultural sustainability (Elkington 1998) is very useful to present an attractive case for sustainability, caution is warranted in alerting students to the dangers of a

rhetoric which may marginalise concern for ecology and reinforce business-as-usual approaches, thus contributing to unsustainability (see Milne and Gray 2013). Therefore, to acquaint marketing students with the sustainability agenda and raise their awareness of the importance of the topic, we find it helpful to provide a brief portrait of problems of the planet with regard to ecology and social issues, such as inequality and poverty; to this effect, we draw on a variety of contemporary evidence from press articles (e.g. *The Guardian*'s Climate Change section), academic articles, environmental reports, and publicly available videos and images with graphic representations of, and impactful content about, the severity of the environmental and social problems we face. Asking students in the classroom to calculate their carbon footprint using the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) environmental footprint calculator (see http://footprint.wwf.org.uk/) reinforces the idea that there are limits on the ability of the planet to sustain our consumption levels and facilitates a thoughtful discussion of actions they might take to reduce their impact on the planet. Students can then appreciate that sustainability is a "megatrend" and that materialism and overconsumption encouraged by market systems constitute "one set of barriers to sustainable living" (Scott, Martin and Schouten 2014, 282).

From then, we can ask students to consider "Why should we care about the good of future generations and non-humans?" (O'Neill 1993). As well as arousing guilt (and perhaps perplexity) about humans' impact on the Earth, these considerations are designed to engage students with the moral imperative of respecting the limits of the planet for future generations (O'Neill 1993; Reid 1996), a principle put forward earlier in Rawls' (1971) well-known *Theory of Justice* (see also Heath and Chatzidakis 2012). We have found that not all students will agree that there is a moral requirement to attend to the needs of future generations, which opens up differing positions to be taken in ensuing lively and reflective debates.

Instructors can then contextualise marketing discourse and practice within the sustainability agenda and probe students to consider whether and how marketing has progressed to "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987). Taking a critical perspective, instructors

may wish to problematise the Brundtland Report's widely accepted definition of sustainable development by challenging the vague notion of needs (see Reid 1996). They may also draw on critical marketing to discuss claims that "false" needs (e.g. "the tendency to give priority to economic over ecological goals") and a misconstruction of wants as needs are commonly used by marketers to influence demand (Alvesson 1994, 303).

Next, a study of the history of environmental matters in marketing helps students to grasp the challenges and complexity of discussing sustainability within marketing. Such an account is also useful for students to be able to ground environmental discussions of marketing within the temporal and contextual frameworks in which they emerge.

A Brief Historical Review of Marketing's Relation to Sustainability

Kilbourne and Beckmann (1998), Leonidou and Leonidou (2011), and McDonagh and Prothero (2014) all offer comprehensive reviews, on which we shall draw to provide a brief discussion of the topic. Our account is far from exhaustive, and only purports to highlight streams of thought, ideas, and concepts that have marked this field of the discipline.

Following the seminal works of Rachel Carson's (1962) *Silent Spring*, the Club of Rome's report *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al. 1972), and the concomitant growing awareness of worsening natural-environmental problems and the human (and corporate) responsibility therefor, several marketing scholars took an interest in the environmental agenda (Peattie 2001; Kilbourne and Beckmann 1998; Belz and Peattie 2009). The growing environmental regulations and stakeholders' concerns about pollution also contributed to this interest (Leonidou and Leonidou 2011). Thus, in the 1970s, a first stream of studies (as identified by Kilbourne and Beckmann 1998), attempted to identify (and measure) who *socially conscious* (Anderson and Cunningham 1972; Webster 1975), *ecologically concerned* (Kinnear et al. 1974), or *environmentally concerned* consumers were (Murphy et al. 1978). Although the need for

this understanding was often justified with reference to its managerial relevance (e.g. Anderson and Cunningham 1972), intrinsic ecological concerns for the impact of rising consumption on the planet were already put forward by Fisk (1973), who proposed a set of criteria for a theory of *responsible consumption*. Some of these studies were quite narrowly focused (Peattie 2001) on consumers' attitudes and/or behaviour in relation to specific products, such as gasoline (Kassarjian 1971) or detergents (Henion 1972; Kinnear and Taylor 1973). In the 1980s, literature in the field turned towards energy conservation and efficiency (e.g. Allen 1982; Anderson and Claxton 1982) and attitudes towards environmental regulations, which marked the second stream of research (Kilbourne and Beckmann 1998). A few studies further looked at how some consumers were choosing to embrace a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity, characterised by ecological awareness, and efforts to reduce personal levels of consumption (Leonard-Barton 1981). At the same time, efforts proceeded to understand the unclear relationship between environmental attitudes and behaviour (e.g. Balderjahn 1988).

During the 1980s and 1990s, amidst media attention to several environmental disasters and growing problems, public concern about the environment rose (Peattie 2001; Belz and Peattie 2009). As companies discovered that "green" sells, environment friendliness became a competitive factor (Belz and Peattie 2009) or a marketing tool (van Dam and Apeldoorn 1996). Accordingly, the late 1980s and 1990s saw the proliferation of "green marketing" initiatives (Ennew and McKechnie 1992; Ottman 1993), whereby businesses attempted to produce and market "greener" products to attract those consumers who were concerned about the environment and willing to pay a premium for the sake of it (see Kilbourne 1998; Peattie 1999; Belz and Peattie 2009).

Green marketing would be later described as "activities which attempt to reduce the negative social and environmental impacts of existing products and production systems, and which promote less damaging products and services" (Peattie 2001, 129). Unsurprisingly, there was a continued interest in the environment within academic marketing studies, many of which sought to characterise environmentally concerned consumers (e.g. Brown and Wahlers 1998) and examine the relationship between environmental attitudes and behavioural intentions or behaviour (e.g.

Schwepker and Cornwell 1991). Efforts were concomitantly dedicated to informing the development of marketing strategies (e.g. Menon and Menon 1997; Brown and Wahlers 1998), including advertising decisions (e.g. Davis 1994; Obermiller 1995) attendant upon the environmental agenda.

In spite of the apparent enthusiasm with which businesses embraced the green agenda, their strategies involved, to a great extent, only superficial changes or changes which were insufficient given the magnitude of transformation required for addressing the needs of the planet (Kilbourne 2010). Green marketing activities were "primarily managerial strategies to increase sales and only secondarily green" (Kilbourne 1998, 642). That represented, as van Dam and Apeldoorn (1996, 51) articulated, a "micro solution for a macro problem", which fell short of what a truly green approach to marketing necessitated (Kilbourne 1998; van Dam and Apeldoorn 1996). To make matters worse, green marketing was somehow decried amidst the realisation that some companies were merely engaging in "green washing" or "green selling", simply adjusting promotional campaigns or public relations efforts, but otherwise behaving *as usual* (Peattie and Crane 2005; Peattie 1999; Gordon et al. 2011). The MTV 2008 Switch campaign was a global youth-focused campaign to promote environmentally friendly lifestyle choices. Playing "The Green Song" from this campaign (YouTube 2018) can vividly illustrate to students the concept of green washing and open up discussion in the classroom.

From around the mid-1990s on, a new stream of studies emerged, which recognised the limitations of a managerial, green agenda and pushed for the inclusion of macromarketing considerations (Kilbourne et al. 1997; Kilbourne and Beckmann 1998; Peattie 1999). This research stream also offered a greater critical outlook of marketing vis-à-vis sustainability than mainstream studies did hitherto, which challenged marketing's assumptions and its effects on the environment and framed the environmental problem and marketing's discussions therein within the cultural context of Western, developed societies (van Dam and Apeldoorn 1996; Kilbourne et al. 1997; Kilbourne and Beckmann 1998). This evolution is supported by developments in the area of critical marketing, which question marketing's role in fostering a consumer-oriented vision of life (e.g. Alvesson 1994; see also McDonagh and Prothero 2014). Since

then, many studies have devoted attention to explain the Dominant Social Paradigm of Western, industrialised societies and the ways in which the values and beliefs embedded therein (e.g. limitless economic growth, the association of happiness with consumption, a belief that technology will find solutions to the environmental problems, and anthropocentrism) affect our attitudes and behaviour in ways that are damaging to sustainability (e.g. Kilbourne et al. 1997; Kilbourne 1998; Kilbourne and Carlson 2008; Varey 2010; Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; McDonagh and Prothero 2014).

Such broader reflections paved the way for ecologically minded scholars to question current levels of consumption (e.g. Kilbourne et al. 1997; Buchholz 1998) and call for limits to growth (e.g. Varey 2010). As Kilbourne and Carlson (2008) noted, "green products and green consumers are first and foremost products and consumers. While green products are slightly less resource intensive, they still require resources. If consumers consume more of them, no net gain is realized" (p. 107). These concerns are accompanied by a shift in some scholars' discourses from green marketing (which has often too managerialist a focus) to sustainable marketing (which evinces broader and future-oriented concerns). A truly sustainable approach to marketing is an appeal, amongst others, to "accept the limitations of marketing philosophy", "value continuity over profit", accept the need for regulations to the market system and move beyond replacing products to rethinking levels of consumption (van Dam and Apeldoorn 1996, 53; Belz and Peattie 2009).

However, despite many business attempts, the overall outlook on sustainability did not improve; in the 1990s, the degree to which businesses "moved closer to real sustainability" was deemed "minimal" (Peattie 1999, 131), and more recent assessments remain, sadly, far from optimistic. The observations that "overall consumption growth has offset most incremental eco-efficiency improvements" (Peattie and Peattie 2009, 262) and that "[t]he past 20 years of debate and business initiatives linked to marketing and the environment have clearly failed to deliver significant change or substantive progress towards sustainability" (Peattie and Peattie 2009, 262) shed a grim light on our planet's prospects and the effectiveness of the overall green/sustainable initiatives. As a consequence, in the last decade, and amid growing sustainability concerns, including

those of climate change, loss of biodiversity, and world inequalities (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009; Belz and Peattie 2009; Watts 2018), and a loss of trust in marketing (e.g. Sheth and Sisodia 2005), we have observed a growing number of marketing scholars advocating radical, substantive, or dramatic changes (e.g. Varey 2010; Kilbourne 2010; Scott et al. 2014) in our ways of thinking about, and engaging with, marketing and consumption.

This historical account, supported with debates and discussions of relevant case studies (e.g. "Unilever—a prototype for tomorrow's company?" in Kotler et al. 2017, 618–620) and other examples of business practices and principles (M&S's "Plan A", Lush's "Our Green Policy", The Body Shop's "Enrich Not Exploit Commitment"), should highlight to students the plurality of "sustainability" discourses that have populated the marketing discipline and practice since at least the 1970s. It also challenges them to appreciate both the complexity of, and urgency for, marketing engaging creatively and meaningfully with the sustainability agenda.

Defining Sustainable Marketing

To reflect changes in the discipline and practice of marketing in face of the ecological imperative, several conceptualisations of what a sustainable marketing orientation entails have been produced. Discussing with students some of these definitions helps to highlight the strong managerial focus that understanding of the phenomenon tends to maintain (see also McDonagh and Prothero 2014), which may lessen the perceived urgency of the environmental and social matters at stake. Thus, for example, Fuller (1999) defines sustainable marketing as: "the process of planning, implementing, and controlling the development, pricing, promotion, and distribution of products in a manner that satisfies the following three criteria: (1) customer needs are met, (2) organisational goals are attained, and (3) the process is compatible with ecosystems" (p. 4). Fuller (1999) argues that this definition is a "logical extension of contemporary marketing's managerial orientation, not a radical departure from it" (p. 4); it treats sustainability as an additional variable to consider to the

marketing practice. Martin and Schouten (2014) draw on the AMA's (2008) most recent definition of marketing to articulate sustainable marketing as marketing that does not damage, and may even improve human and environmental conditions: "the process of creating, communicating and delivering value to customers in such a way that both natural and human capital are preserved or enhanced throughout" (p. 18). A similar understanding that marketing can preserve or enhance the planet for the future is popular in marketing textbooks, such as Kotler et al.'s (2017), who model their definition of sustainable marketing on the WCED's (1987) definition of sustainable development: "Socially and environmentally responsible marketing that meets the present needs of consumers and businesses, while also preserving or enhancing the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (p. 593). This kind of rhetoric, however, risks downplaying the urgency of sustainability by suggesting that marketing is about enhancing consumers' lives, including those of future generations. Perhaps, the broadest and most sustainability-oriented understanding of marketing, which they term sustainability marketing, is found in Belz and Peattie (2009, 18): "it delivers solutions to our needs that are:

- *Ecologically oriented*, taking account of the ecological limits of the planet and seeking to satisfy our needs without compromising the health of ecosystems and their ability to continue delivering ecosystem services.
- *Viable*, from technical feasibility and economic competitiveness perspectives.
- *Ethical*, in promoting greater social justice and equity, or at the very least in terms of avoiding making any existing patterns of injustice worse.
- *Relationship-based*, which move away from viewing marketing in terms of economic exchanges, towards viewing it as the management of relationships between businesses and their customers and other key stakeholders."

While comprehensive, this conceptualisation may be seen as too long to be practically used, which could limit its adoption. However, in their

book, Belz and Peattie (2009) do offer a shorter articulation of the concept that retains its broad focus.

Embedding Sustainability Throughout the Marketing Curriculum

Along with having dedicated sessions to address sustainability in marketing, we integrate the topic throughout the different parts of curriculum. Thus, for example, we derive implications for sustainability when we analyse the various elements of the marketing environment (e.g. How does sustainability and the natural environment impact on the technological environment?; How may sustainability-related concerns such as employers' working conditions or respect for the natural environment affect suppliers' choices?), as well as when discussing reasons and strategies for new product development. In particular, we look at meanings of consumption and brands, consumer culture, and consumers' behaviour through the lens of sustainability, exposing how consumption-oriented lifestyles significantly impact the planet. We explain to students that the responsibility for fostering sustainable development does not lie entirely on the business side; individual consumers have an equally important role therein (Heath and Chatzidakis 2012; Gordon et al. 2011), as widely recognised in marketing literature (e.g. Connolly and Prothero 2003); we also discuss how more environmentally oriented, or "mindful" ways of consumption (Sheth et al. 2011), "collaborative consumption" and "sharing" (Belk 2014) and "anti-consumption" practices (e.g. Cherrier et al. 2011) can help to move sustainability forward. Monbiot's (2012) insightful opinion article "The Gift of Death" highlights the impact and futility of excessive consumption in the industrialised world and should facilitate an interesting conversation in the classroom about the impact on sustainability of excessive consumption; "Bake them a cake, write them a poem, give them a kiss, tell them a joke, but for god's sake stop trashing the planet to tell someone you care. All it shows is that you don't." (Monbiot 2012).

In addition, sustainability matters can be usefully entrenched in discussions of the marketing mix, so that students appreciate that companies'

operational choices can (and should) be attendant to society and the environment. As Kotler (2011) outlines in a short article celebrating the 75th anniversary of the *Journal of Marketing*, these considerations may focus on issues in relation to each of the four P's such as: production and packaging of items in ways (and using materials) that are more sustainable and reduce waste (product); pricing options that reflect products' environmental friendliness (price); channel organisation decisions attendant to the social and environmental impact of a company's production and distribution facilities (place); decisions about where and how to communicate companies' offerings so as to minimise their environmental impact (e.g. reducing promotional print campaigns in favour of digital campaigns) and promote the company's commitment to sustainability (promotion) (see also Fuller 1999). A more comprehensive discussion of what the "greening" of the marketing mix may involve is provided by Simintiras et al. (1997), whilst the effects of such green marketing practices on companies' performances are addressed by Leonidou et al. (2013).

Finally, throughout the different sections and subjects covered, we always endeavour to share with students examples of companies' and brands' (e.g. Fair Trade, Ben & Jerry's) best practices in sustainability to inspire them in their future careers. We show them that while many companies have been successfully reinventing their marketing mixes to respond to these growing environmental concerns (Leonidou et al. 2013), a few have been especially ingenious (e.g. IKEA's plans for using the Ecovative's mushroom-based packaging, Borhuaer 2017) in joining critical voices that advocate limits for consumption and waste. That is the case of Patagonia's well reported 2011 campaign "Don't buy this jacket"; this campaign raised consumers' awareness of the environmental impacts of the clothing industry (and specifically of producing and transporting a particular jacket), whilst garnering considerable publicity for the company. Intercalating discussion with these and other examples (e.g. advertising campaigns by environmental pressure groups, such as Greenpeace and WWF) can be inspiring for students to derive implications for sustainable development.

Pedagogical Challenges and Assessment

Increasing student diversity (including cultural diversity) poses an important challenge to instructors. Students vary not only in terms of their sociocultural background but also in their academic background. For example, some may have already studied business-related subjects in compulsory education, while others may not; and some may already be oriented towards adopting a deep approach to learning, while others lean towards a surface approach. From the outset, we recognise that not every student will be equally interested in learning (or be prepared to learn) about sustainability issues and developing a personal and critical perspective of marketing. We also acknowledge that a growing number of our students come from emerging economies where sustainability issues are not necessarily of a major concern. Nevertheless, we try to encourage our students to engage with such issues through the various classroom interventions we have described earlier.

Another challenge is the impact of cohort size on the design and planning of students' learning activities. We have found that the increasing size of the cohort (from just under 300 students in 2014/2015 to more than 400 students in 2017/2018) limits the opportunities for our preferred learning activities (e.g. small-group discussions, debates, and students' presentation of essays) and assessment methods that would befit the sustainability-related topics we cover. Notwithstanding this problem, we try to engage students in the classroom via frequently inviting their participation in class discussions and activities over a period of 11 weeks and use two sessions of small-group tutorials (groups of about 20 students) to explore selected areas covered in the large-group lectures in more detail. Throughout the course we encourage students to adopt a deep approach to their learning and routinely give formative feedback in the classroom to support learning. For pragmatic reasons, we have opted for summative assessment by one 1.5-hour examination, which takes the form of a choice of two essay questions out of five. We provide practice exam questions on our virtual learning environment.

A third challenge is that there are still only a relatively small number of textbooks and little other pedagogical material dedicated to sustainability

and marketing for educators wishing to engage students with these conversations. This is especially the case for those of us who wish to address these matters in macro and critical ways throughout the whole marketing curriculum. We find that combining pedagogical material from mainstream marketing textbooks (e.g. Kotler et al. 2017), readings from specialised books on sustainability and marketing (e.g. Belz and Peattie 2009) and selected journal articles, can help to overcome such deficiency in balanced and useful ways.

Thus far, our efforts seem to have been recognised in students' evaluation of teaching and the course, as well as in their own performance, which have been very encouraging. Overall, students have been able to articulate social and ecological concerns in their interventions in the classroom (especially in tutorial sessions), with some being especially keen to learn more about these matters in the context of marketing. Some have also formally (and informally) commented on how they enjoyed this course and the teaching approaches employed. Results of students' examination performance have also been positive and in line with the results obtained in other courses in their degree. Equally, the course seems to help students as they progress in their studies. For example, by the time many of students from the first cohort had taken an elective course in "Consumer Behaviour" in their final year in 2016/2017, one of the authors observed a more informed and deeper level of student engagement with sustainable consumption issues.

Final Thoughts

We believe that the social, environmental, and economic problems we face globally and the perils they represent for the sustainability of the planet (both for humans and other species) require us, as educators in higher education (and especially in marketing), to treat sustainability as an integral part of our curriculum. This urges us to move beyond superficial discussions of the topic and contextualise sustainability within the historical and ideological framework (Pepper 1997) that underscores social assumptions about markets and marketing. Our ability to convince students of the urgency of sustainability lies largely in the "power of

stories" we tell and the ways in which they fit students' prior beliefs (see Fisher 1989; Heath and Heath 2016, 812). Students may fail, at first, to appreciate both the intrinsic importance, and the business implications, of the sustainability agenda. They may view these concerns as overly pessimistic (in our experience, students sometimes do express such views). Up-to-date information and evidence from multiple sources, and real-life case studies and examples from practice and the press, guided by reflective discussion of relevant scholarly work, help to build the case for sustainable development.

We note that our scholarly efforts are somewhat thwarted by the limited and mostly managerially oriented work published in mainstream marketing journals, which gives the impression that sustainability is still mostly taken as a micro and managerial issue, and of a relatively minor importance (McDonagh and Prothero 2014). This problem is evinced in, and exacerbated by, a significant proportion of the journals that have engaged with the sustainability agenda in marketing still only being rated two stars in the Chartered Association of Business Schools' most recent Academic Journal Guide 2018 (e.g. *Journal of Macromarketing*, *Journal of Marketing Management*, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*). Such ratings and their impact on scholars' opportunities for progression may discourage many of us from researching sustainability, which, together with a preference for research-based teaching in many institutions, make it less likely that this subject will feature centrally in curricula.

Education is a core site in which "inroads into environmental value formation can be made" (O'Brien 1995, 168). Changing ingrained ways of thinking, however, necessitates consistent messages and integrated efforts at institutional, personal, political, and economic levels (O'Brien 1995). As Gordon et al. (2011) remind us, the need for dramatic action on climate change and other sustainable-related issues is still a live political issue about which people need to be convinced. Many, including crucially the current President of the United States, have cast doubt on the very idea of climate change, while others, as discussed by Monbiot (2018), are overly eager to adopt the most optimistic possible prediction in environmental matters.

Marketing is the means by which organisations enable and shape consumption of goods and services. This means that it will inevitably play a central role in the task of trying to establish sustainable practices for production and consumption, if not as a tool for good then as an obstacle to be overcome. Thus, it is vitally important that our students, as future marketers or campaigners for sustainability, are exposed to a broad and contextualised view of marketing, which is attendant to its effects. For these reasons, shunting sustainability to the margins of marketing curricula should no longer be an option.

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