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International Human Rights and Consumer Quality of Life: An Ethical Perspective

Ronald Paul Hill, William F. Felice, and Thomas Ainscough

This article represents an attempt to expand understanding of and dedication to global social justice through presentation and extension of the Rawlsian philosophical tenets regarding the definition and provision of basic commodities. The first section provides a literature review of Rawl's outlook on distributive justice, modifying his conceptual frame to avoid pitfalls regarding the duties of nations. Following a discussion of these obligations, the current status of the global community is described using data collected by the United Nations Development Program. The last section is designed to show how additional progress can be made, with an emphasis on solutions that must be implemented across nations. It is the authors' hope that macromarketing researchers will take a leadership role defining, disseminating, and evaluating the moral obligations that significantly impact the quality of people's consumer lives.

Keywords: *human rights; ethics; consumption; marketing*

As the year 2000 approached, I was invited to speak at a major forum and asked to address this question: "What is the world's greatest challenge in the new millennium?" It was an interesting assignment, and I replied, with little doubt, that the greatest challenge we face is the growing chasm between the rich and the poor people on earth. There is not only a great disparity between the two, but the gap is steadily widening. At the beginning of the last century, the ten richest countries were nine times wealthier than the ten poorest ones. In 1960 the ratio was 30:1. At the beginning of this century, average income per person in the twenty richest nations was \$27,591 and in the poorest nations only \$211, a ratio of 131:1!—Former President Jimmy Carter (2005, 179).

The marketing field has a lengthy history of analyzing its impact on the larger society (see any issue of *Journal of*

Macromarketing for excellent examples), and the area of consumer behavior is no exception. A topic that is particularly germane to this investigation involves the consumptive lives of individuals who come from impoverished backgrounds (e.g., Andreasen 1975; Hill and Stephens 1997). Much of this research stream concentrates attention on the treatment such persons receive from a variety of unethical marketers and the tactics they employ to acquire sufficient possessions to survive within the material landscape (Andreasen 1993; Hill 2002b). The overarching goal across most of these studies is to rectify the imbalance in exchange relationships that favors sellers over buyers in such transactions (Alwitt and Donley 1996).

These abuses have existed through time and are chronicled within and outside the consumer literature. The classic U.S. study by Caplovitz (1963) demonstrates the ways unethical marketers of major appliances took advantage of the poor in neighborhoods where they had few or no alternatives to the high interest rates proffered. Other scholars reveal that such tactics are employed in several contexts in which inferior products are sold at above-market prices (Bell and Burlin 1993; Elliehausen and Staten 2004; Hill, Ramp, and Silver 1998). Andreasen (1975) suggests that these exchange inequities are caused by inadequate competition within impoverished neighborhoods, limited mobility and transportation barriers that bar poor consumers from shopping centers, and lack of traditional lending services that provide credit at reasonable rates.

While the judgments and policy solutions given in these publications have made important contributions to theory and practice, little has been done to provide an ethical framework within which to embed these ideas. One possibility that was

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presented in the *Journal of Macromarketing* involves societal expression of compassionate love that stems from the Judeo-Christian tradition of love-for-neighbor (Hill 2002a). Within this paradigm, other-centered love is posited as the basis for furthering the consumption adequacy of the poor on a global basis. However, this perspective may be considered Western-centric by many and lacking a universal appeal. An alternative that has received limited attention to date is a broadened philosophical approach to defining the obligations to the least advantaged among societies originally advanced by John Rawls (Hill 2005).

The purpose of this work is to expand understanding of global social justice through presentation and extension of the Rawlsian philosophical tenets regarding the definition and provision of basic commodities. The next section reviews literature on Rawls's outlook regarding distributive justice, modifying his conceptual frame to avoid the pitfalls noted by his critics. This revised approach to the ethical treatment of less-fortunate others asks for consideration of material opportunities behind a veil of ignorance that precludes individuals from knowing their relative position within the larger socioeconomic strata. Since much of the world's population suffers from a relative deprivation in most goods and services, few would willingly support this wealth imbalance without a mechanism for redistribution that ensures a reasonable quality of life for all citizens.

Once these obligations are presented, the global state of affairs in relation to this larger charge is given using data collected by the United Nations. Findings concentrate attention on several quality of life measures such as the Human Development Index and the Gender-Related Development Index, as well as measures of inequality and inequity including the Gini Index and factors associated with Official Development Assistance respectively. The final section is designed to show how additional progress can be made, with an emphasis on solutions that must be implemented across nations and possible contributions from the macromarketing community. The authors' hope is that macromarketers will take a leadership role defining, disseminating, and evaluating the moral obligations of institutions that significantly impact the quality of people's consumer lives.

THE MORAL MANDATE

Even a cursory examination of the global commitment to poor citizens reveals a lack of sincere interest in advancing the quality of their consumptive lives, both within and between countries of the world. For instance, in 2003 the United States dedicated only 0.15 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) to assist poor and marginalized citizens in other nations, and all of the remaining developed economies provided less than 1 percent each United Nations Development

Programme [UNDP] 2005). The rationale for such disinterest often comes from the belief that social spending on welfare programs inhibits economic growth. However, experiences in Scandinavian countries demonstrate that provision of universal benefits that concentrate on capacity-building programs like education and healthcare actually stimulate development (Felice 2006).

A more likely explanation for a lack of visible concern for the poor is a common belief among many academics and elites in developed nations in an ethos of individualism (Felice 2006). Using this normative framework, the most vulnerable consumers—"the disabled, the elderly, the impoverished inhabitants of badly-ordered regimes, criminals, addicts, slum-dwellers, and the mentally ill"—are viewed as at least partially to blame for their situations and thus lacking merit (Wilson 2003, 279). Therefore, individual rights to societal largess without concomitant ability, effort, and success is strictly limited and begrudgingly given in ways that are stigmatizing and infantilizing (Stark 2002). Even so, philosophers question the morality of punishing people for weaknesses or situations that are beyond their control or that appear to be a matter of bad luck (Biesenthal 1978).

Rawlsian Distributive Justice

To adjudicate this philosophical quagmire, John Rawls (1971) of Harvard University introduced his conception of distributive justice with a model termed "Justice as Fairness." His theoretical frame attempts to provide a set of standards by which the distribution system of goods and services within a society can be judged. The premise behind such a system is that a satisfactory existence for any individual is dependent on the cooperation of all members of society. Thus, the division of economic advantages should be acceptable to everyone, regardless of status or position (Hill, Peterson, and Dhanda 2001). Its guiding principles are derived from the original position and the veil of ignorance, a situation in which people are unaware of their standing among peers, so that they are unable to develop distribution schemas that favor their particular situations.

Implicit to this paradigm is a distinction between inequalities that are the end result of individual choices and inequalities that result from circumstances beyond individuals' control (Tan 2001). Dissimilarities in access to various goods and services that occur because of differences in the arduousness of labor or the selection of leisure activities relative to productive work may be defensible (Cohen 1997). Nevertheless, inequalities that are undeserved and stem from misfortunes of birth, discrimination, or other negative conditions must be compensated for by those who are better off socially or financially. Given the number of operational difficulties associated with such verdicts, determination of individual rights and societal responsibilities beg these questions: (1) who owes what to whom, and

(2) how is it best settled in the interest of all parties? (See Zanetti 2001.)

Rawls tackles this dilemma by suspending judgment since rational people in the original position would avoid downside risks by ensuring that societal members have a reasonable material quality of life regardless of their circumstances. He seeks this balance through the Difference Principle, which posits that distributive inequalities are fair if they have compensating benefits for everyone—especially the least advantaged or impoverished segments of society (Rawls 1971). This principle is clarified through the Maximin Criterion and its mandate that distributive justice exists only when inequities maximize the situation of those who subsist in the minimum societal position (Hill, Peterson, and Dhanda 2001). Therefore, the application of Justice as Fairness suggests respect for the dignity inherent to human beings and their unalienable right to basic social and economic goods.

A significant modification in the application of Justice as Fairness is found in the “Law of Peoples” (Rawls 1999). In this revision, Rawls calls on the international arena, especially the most-developed and economically advanced countries, to ensure that the consumption needs of the poor are met worldwide. Yet Rawls eschews use of the Difference Principle within a global context, and he replaces it with a non-egalitarian norm of mutual aid among nations (Hinsch 2001). His vision of mutual assistance is that it operates as a threshold below which aid is necessary rather than as a maximizing norm like the Difference Principle. Thus, the Law of Peoples is a fundamental requirement for distributive justice that places the onus on wealthy societies to support less fortunate peoples in the absence of applicable legal mandates (Jackson 1993; Tan 2001).

Some philosophers and applied ethicists believe that this perspective does not go far enough, suggesting that justice demands are applicable without regard for arbitrary borders. For example, Jackson (1993) posits a universal original position, which requires affluent citizens of the world to reflect honestly on how they would like to be treated if their social and/or economic situations were reversed. Confronted with the possibility of resource scarcity, malnutrition, and extended poverty, rational people would accept an adaptation of the veil of ignorance that resulted in the distribution of goods and services so that human suffering is minimized on a global level. Much like the initial Justice as Fairness model, this broadening is based on the belief that human beings are entitled to a share of wealth without regard for circumstances beyond their control (Hinsch 2001).

To determine relative provision, the concept of *global public goods* (described below) is advanced (Felice 2003). These commodities are designed for the benefit of humankind, without discrimination toward any present or future generation. The UN categorizes them as economic and social rights in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. A portion of these goods meets basic biological needs for safe drinking water, adequate foodstuffs, preventative

and emergency medical care, and secure and habitable shelter (Wilson 2003). Furthermore, citizens worldwide should have the right to free and unimpeded access to educational opportunities as well as meaningful work (Felice 2003). Together these liberties allow for a reasonable consumer quality of life and the possibility of a better tomorrow.

THE GLOBAL SITUATION

This article’s investigation of Rawlsian distributive justice within and among sovereign states involves data collected by the UNDP and its partners in preparation of the *Human Development Report 2005*. This volume is the sixteenth and latest issue, and it includes an annual update on the status of consumer quality of life across more than 175 nations (Hill and Adrangi 1999). Useful to this study are a number of indices and measures such as the Human Development Index (HDI), the Gini Index (GI), the Gender-Related Development Index (GDI), and measures associated with Official Development Assistance (ODA). Each is described below, emphasizing its component parts (if applicable) and calculation. Additional technical information is provided in the report (UNDP 2005) and elsewhere (Hill, Peterson, and Dhanda 2001).

The HDI is described as a conglomerative perspective of relative well-being that is used to make comparisons among countries of the world. This index is a composite of three consumption-related variables: longevity/life expectancy, which is a surrogate for available healthcare; knowledge/literacy, which measures access to and utilization of educational opportunities; and standard of living/wealth, which is defined as gross domestic product per capita. The three indicators are reduced to a scale that varies between zero and one, with one representing the highest possible attainment under current global conditions. Their combination—using a simple weighted scale—is expressed similarly, and each HDI value reveals the distance a nation’s government should progress to attain the best possible life circumstances for its citizens.

The GI measures the extent to which the distribution of income/consumption among individuals/households deviates from a perfectly equal sharing of resources within countries. A zero value demonstrates absolute parity, while a value of 100 shows complete inequality. The GDI parallels the HDI and is composed of longevity, knowledge, and wealth, but it adjusts average achievement to reflect inequities between men and women. Once again values for this statistic range from zero to one. Finally, the ODA variables include the percentages of Gross National Income dedicated to assisting struggling nations by the wealthiest Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries in 1990 and 2003, along with the proportions of this total provided to the least developed countries during the same two years.

To facilitate comparisons in and of countries, some UN recognized nation states have been organized according to their classifications as developed, developing, or least developed economies. (Because of difficulties with assigning designations, some former Soviet affiliates are not included.) The developed republics are located primarily in North America, Western and Southern Europe as well as portions of Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, and select areas of Asia. The developing countries are more likely to be in East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Arab States and Northern Africa. Finally, the least developed homelands are found in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Please see the Appendix for a complete listing of sovereign nations within these categories that are used in the analyses described next.

Findings and Inequities

The first set of findings involves the Human Development Index and examines the extent to which differences in access to basic commodities exist across countries at various stages of economic progress. The mean HDI value for developed nations is .911, with a range from .795 to .963 and standard deviation of .046. The means for the three variables of Life Expectance Index (LEI), Education Index (EI), and GDP Index (GDPI) are .873, .959, and .900, respectively. The corresponding values for developing nations are (HDI) .729 with a range from .333 to .916 and standard deviation of .120, (LEI) .711, (EI) .798, and (GDPI) .680; and for least developed nations are (HDI) .487 with a range from .281 to .776 and standard deviation of .115, (LEI) .448, (EI) .555, and (GDPI) .450. These averages and statistics expose variations worthy of additional analyses.

ANOVA reveals significant differences in mean HDI values across development categories ($F = 307.66$, $df\ 2/105$, $p < .001$; see the table for a more complete listing of all ANOVA results). *T*-tests for dyadic combinations (developed/developing nations, developed/least developed nations, and developing/least developed nations) also are significant beyond the .001 level. To determine whether these disparities are increasing, decreasing, or staying the same, mean HDI values for the period from 1975 to 2000 received further scrutiny. Trend lines for countries were estimated across five-year periods as positive (continuously increasing), mixed (increases with decreases), and negative (end values below starting values). A cross-tabulation run produced a significant chi-square statistic of 11.51 ($p < .05$), showing a downward trend for least developed countries compared to their developed and developing counterparts.

The second set of findings looks at Gini Index (GI) values across nation states. Results clearly indicate disparities in per-capita income and consumption opportunities worldwide, with a mean value of 41.07 ($SD = 10.48$) that represents a mid-range statistic between perfect equality (0) and absolute

inequality (100). The analogous statistics (means and standard deviations) for the development categories are: 31.29 and 4.49 (developed countries); 45.60 and 9.17 (developing countries); 43.84 and 10.45 (least developed countries). ANOVA statistics confirm significant differences across the development groupings ($F = 29.30$, $df\ 2/105$, $p < .001$). *T*-tests among the various combinations demonstrate that significant differences are caused by dissimilarities between developed and both developing and least developed countries.

The third set of findings investigates another area of potential inequities through use of the Gender Development Index (GDI). The mean value across countries is .731 ($SD = .174$) with a range from .271 to .960, indicating a lack of parity within any nation and regardless of economic status. Means across development categories parallel HDI findings, with the highest values for developed nations (.914, $SD = .038$) followed by developing (.704, $SD = .131$) and least developed nations (.450, $SD = .098$). Furthermore, ANOVA statistics confirm significant differences among development categories for GDI values ($F = 238.08$, $df\ 2/105$, $p < .001$), and *t*-tests for the three combinations of comparisons also are significant beyond the .001 level. Together, the GI and GDI analyses make evident impoverishment is exacerbated by development inequalities.

The last set of findings confirms the limited Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (The Appendix gives a complete listing of countries.) The 1990 ODA as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) has a mean value of .45, with a range from .11 to 1.17 ($SD = .30$). The 2003 counterpart has a mean of .42 and a range of .15 to .92 ($SD = .26$). *T*-test statistics show that there is no real difference between these mean numbers. Furthermore, the mean percentage of the 1990 total directed at the least developed nations is just 35 percent (range of 18 percent to 70 percent, $SD = 13.53$), and the mean percentage for 2003 is 36 percent (range of 17 percent to 64 percent, $SD = 11.42$). Once again, the *t*-test reveals a lack of significant differences.

These findings reveal the size and scope of inequality and the lack of Rawlsian distributive justice around the world. Human Development Index results verify the large disparities among nations in the most basic commodities associated with quality of life, and trend lines suggest that the situation is worsening over time. The Gini Index and the Gender Development Index statistics and analyses lay bare the growing disparity between the haves and have-nots and the widespread discrimination of women, with the situation particularly acute in nation states that have the fewest resources. Unfortunately, in direct conflict with Rawl's Law of Peoples the most affluent countries are responding to these inequities by providing a paltry percentage of their wealth, which has not changed in a meaningful way in decades and is far below the level established by the United Nations.

TABLE 1
ANOVA RESULTS

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Model	GDPI	2.461 ^a	2	1.230	178.564	.000
	GINI	4207.532 ^b	2	2103.766	29.296	.000
	GDI	2.651 ^c	2	1.326	238.082	.000
	HDI	1.929 ^d	2	.965	307.657	.000
Intercept	GDPI	51.999	1	51.999	7547.319	.000
	GINI	161370.665	1	161370.665	2247.162	.000
	GDI	51.078	1	51.078	9173.611	.000
	HDI	57.710	1	57.710	18406.679	.000
LOD	GDPI	2.461	2	1.230	178.564	.000
	GINI	4207.532	2	2103.766	29.296	.000
	GDI	2.651	2	1.326	238.082	.000
	HDI	1.929	2	.965	307.657	.000
Error	GDPI	.723	105	.006		
	GINI	7540.141	105	71.811		
	GDI	.585	105	.005		
	HDI	.329	105	.003		
Total	GDPI	61.734	108			
	GINI	193902.980	108			
	GDI	60.938	108			
	HDI	67.551	108			
Corrected Total	GDPI	3.184	107			
	GINI	11747.673	107			
	GDI	3.236	107			
	HDI	2.258	107			

NOTE: GDPI = GDP Index, GINI = Gini Index, GDI = Gender-Related Development Index, HDI = Human Development Index.

a. R-squared = .773 (Adjusted R-squared = .768)

b. R-squared = .358 (Adjusted R-squared = .346)

c. R-squared = .819 (Adjusted R-squared = .816)

d. R-squared = .854 (Adjusted R-squared = .851)

SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Alternative Perspectives

The analyses presented would be undermined if it could be shown, as other sources suggest, that the condition of the global poor is improving. Some economists argue that, although there is still too much material suffering in the world, the global capitalist system is helping both rich and poor nations. For example, the World Bank reports that the average proportion of people in developing countries living on less than \$1 per day fell from 43 percent to 25 percent between 1990 and 1999. Extrapolating this trend over the next decade, the world appears on target to meet the UN's Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015 (Vandemoortele 2002). In a controversial study, Columbia Professor Xavier Sala-i-Martin estimates that the purchasing power parity (PPP) used in his calculations shows that the proportion of people living on \$1 or less per day has fallen from 20 percent of the world's population a quarter-century ago to just 5 percent today, and the \$2 or less per day poverty rate has fallen from 44 percent to 19 percent (Friedman 2002).

Unfortunately for the world's poor, many of these reports are misleading and make it impossible to be sanguine and complacent about progress in overcoming world poverty. Pogge, Nye, and Reddy (2002) believe that the general PPPs utilized by the World Bank and Sala-i-Martin are based on average price levels for all commodities, weighted by their share in international expenditure. However, a poor person is not concerned with commodities such as airline tickets or pedicures. Poor households concentrate on basic foodstuffs and other necessities, and their poverty status should be determined by the local prices of such items (e.g., food, water, shelter, and clothing). While complete numbers do not yet exist that give an accurate view of the costs of commodities the impoverished actually buy, based on the price of bread and cereals, Reddy and Pogge (2003) estimate that the World Bank's analysis underestimates the number of the people living in absolute poverty by some 32 to 59 percent.

The human development approach utilized in this article provides an alternative and more accurate measure of poverty. Drawing on the work of Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, the United Nations Development Program's approach

incorporates a capabilities perspective such that poverty is described as the absence of opportunities to develop basic functioning. Sen's set of capabilities include being well nourished, adequately clothed and sheltered, able to avoid preventable morbidity, and able to partake in the life of the community. Thus poverty cannot be reduced to a single dimension, like the \$1 or less per day norm. This change in focus dramatically challenges the argument that progress is being made defeating preventable poverty.

Some Interpretation

As the first set of findings above demonstrate, the trend in human development for the least developed countries shows continued downward movement. Specifically, eighteen countries with a combined population of 460 million registered lower scores on the HDI in 2003 than in 1990 (UNDP 2005). The underlying statistics are well known and numbing: 850 million people, including one in three preschool children, go hungry every day despite food abundance; 1 billion people lack access to safe water; 2.6 billion lack access to adequate sanitation; 115 million children are denied even the most basic primary education (UNDP 2005). India illustrates these issues of human development. Despite its reduction of income poverty from 36 percent in the early 1990s to between 25 and 30 percent today, India has been unable to translate this income growth into an improvement in overall quality of life for the poor. One out of eleven Indian children dies in their first five years of life, and malnutrition affects one-half the country's children (UNDP 2005). Many argue that India failed to institute the necessary public policies that support human development, including regulations sustaining education, nutrition, sanitation, and health care.

An examination of the data reveals that the world community is not on its way to halving poverty by the year 2015 and that a vast disparity in wealth between the rich and the poor is reaching alarming proportions (acknowledged in the opening by former President Jimmy Carter). As the UNDP (2005) indicates, 40 percent of the global community represents a burgeoning underclass that daily confronts the reality of extreme poverty. The international economic order seems to perpetuate hardships and create intolerable living conditions. Sen (1999) concurs with these observations and asks for the removal of major sources blocking freedom—poverty, government tyranny, inadequate economic opportunities, systematic social deprivation, and the neglect of public facilities. The capabilities approach provides the metrics for the evaluation of human societies in terms of how well their members are able to achieve basic universal goods. As a result, development means more than industrial prowess and an increasing GDP since this myopic focus has failed to advance the basic wherewithal of millions of citizens in the developing world.

Nussbaum (2000) goes beyond this framework and provides a threshold level of capabilities that should operate as

the primary basis for public policy that all citizens have a right to expect from governments. This partial theory of social justice is not a primary characteristic of the work of Sen and the UNDP. Nor have they sought to ground their capabilities approach in the Marxian/Aristotelian idea of rightful human functioning that plays a central role in Nussbaum's argument. Her work is grounded in liberal political traditions that embrace the full realization of human potentiality, which includes broad areas of life like bodily health, bodily senses, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; play; and control over the political and material environment. Nussbaum's goal is to establish acceptable societal minimums, suggesting that the structure and function of community and political organizations should be designed to meet these needs at a threshold level. Such thresholds are central to her argument because basic universal rights trump claims of culture, family, or religion.

Another way to conceptualize Nussbaum's acceptable social minimums is with an understanding of the global public goods noted earlier. These commodities are goods and services all people enjoy in common and are non-rivalrous and non-excludable in consumption. Non-rivalry refers to those products that any number of consumers may enjoy without detracting from the gratification of others. Non-excludability means that no one can be excluded from enjoying a public good, such as clean air, which benefits all countries, population groups, and generations (Kaul, Grunberg, and Stern 1999). Global public goods represent the potential satisfaction of fundamental economic and social needs that are universal in their appeal and fundamental to human societies (Felice 2003).

Unfortunately, some public goods are perceived to be excludable and rivalrous with regard to consumption. However studies demonstrate conclusively that, for example, an individual's consumption of food will not necessarily reduce the amount available for others (see Kent 2005). In fact, there is enough food for all. The same applies to the provision of education, health care, sanitation, and shelter. Diverse technologies and distribution systems make universal availability of these public goods possible without detracting from the utilization and enjoyment of others (Felice 2003). Furthermore, the widespread exclusion of so much of human society from these goods not only endangers the lives of the affected individuals but also detracts from the well-being of the larger collective since greater total capabilities means better economic functioning.

Operational Details

There are a number of proposals outlining ways in which nation states can utilize international law and nongovernmental organizations to protect global public goods. Such proposals provide a way to envision the realization of Nussbaum's "decent social minimum." For example, the UN approved a

challenging agenda at the beginning of the twenty-first century by setting Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These superordinate goals were adopted by member states of the UN and by the world's leading development organizations and represent a human-rights based approach to advancement. The vision articulated in the eight MDGs calls on the world community to: (1) cut extreme poverty in half; (2) provide universal primary education; (3) promote gender equality; (4) reduce child mortality; (5) improve maternal health; (6) combat malaria, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases; (7) ensure environmental sustainability; and (8) establish a global partnership for development by 2015 (UNDP 2005; also see <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>).

The UN Millennium Project is led by Jeffrey Sachs (2005) and outlines pathways to achieving the MDGs within the timetable established. His proposal acknowledges that many poor nations are unable to meet their targets because they lack the requisite capital, so they must rely on development assistance to close this gap. The Millennium Project documents how typical African countries would need about \$110 per person per year to relieve abject poverty but only have approximately \$45 available after the mobilization of local financing. The balance of \$65 per person must be covered by the relatively wealthy donor countries discussed in this research, and the UN calls for their official development assistance to reach the targeted 0.7 percent of GNI by 2015. As the findings indicate, the ODA (as a percent of GNI) in the most recent reporting year of 2003 only has a mean of 0.42, a long way from the amount necessary to set a minimally just standard of living. Thus, Sachs and the UNDP emphasize the need to build public-private partnerships that leverage the full resources of the governmental-non-governmental organization (NGO)-corporation nexus of organizations.

With this rejuvenated funding base, impoverished nations would have resources sufficient for specific investments in health, education, and basic infrastructure. Under the dictates of the Millennium Development Project, poor nations must focus their combined resources and policies around seven clusters: (1) promoting rural communities by increasing the food productivity of smallholder farmers, raising rural incomes, and expanding rural access to essential public services and infrastructure; (2) promoting urban areas by encouraging job creation, upgrading slums, and providing alternatives to slum formation; (3) ensuring universal access to health services within a quality health system; (4) ensuring universal enrollment and completion of primary education as well as greatly expanded access to secondary and higher education; (5) overcoming pervasive gender bias; (6) improving environmental management; and (7) building national capacities in science, technology, and innovation (see www.unmillenniumproject.org).

To demonstrate the potential viability of this approach, the United Nations has established research villages in ten African countries. The project is an attempt to show how seven simple reforms can substantially advance human development. The

reforms include fertilizer and seed to improve food yields, antimalarial bed nets, safer water sources, diversification from staple to cash crops, school feeding programs, deworming care for all citizens, and the introduction of energy-saving stoves, mobile phones, and other new technologies. The results of these interventions in the Kenyan village of Sauri are extremely promising. Since the distribution of free bed nets, the incidence of malaria has dropped by at least 50 percent. Food yield has more than doubled during this period of change, and the school feeding program has caused children to stay in school longer and exam results have risen from 108th to second in their district (African Poverty 2006).

Rawlsian Justice and Macromarketing Implications

In a recent *Journal of Macromarketing* essay, Hill (2005) presents a radical approach to achieving Rawlsian social justice through provision of a guaranteed income for global citizens to ensure consumption adequacy. The individualistic ethic that pervades much of the developed world likely will preclude its implementation, especially in countries with limited resources that lack political influence among western nations. Yet its premise recognizes the inherent disparities across individuals and peoples that are the result of ill fortune and not a lack of effort. The deficits in this starting point make it difficult if not impossible for billions of human beings to reach levels of consumption adequacy that are necessary to attain a reasonable standard of living. One consequence is that close to half of humanity suffers regularly from the lack of basic commodities.

There is an important role for macromarketers in the resolution of these dilemmas within three interrelated domains: *poverty measurement*, *poverty alleviation*, and *poverty eradication advocacy*. For instance, the focus on quality-of-life measurement has led to an understanding of the ways goods and services add value to people's lives (see Sirgy and Lee 2006), and the work of the UNDP also has expanded awareness of the impact that healthcare, education, and opportunity have on longer-term prosperity of societies. Nonetheless, much of macromarketers' scholarly progress involves general instruments that are useful for understanding the material existences of affluent societies that have greater access to material abundance. It now is time to concentrate attention on consumers who exist at the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy and develop more targeted metrics.

One instrument that has received some attention in the macromarketing field is the Human Poverty Index (HPI) developed by the UNDP (see Hill and Dhanda 1999). This measure has been revised over time to reflect the societal differences in the way poverty manifests globally, yielding more differentiated and robust aggregated scales. Yet its focus on gross indicators may be too macro even for scholars interested in the larger view. Additionally, these factors have been linked in a causal chain that is supported theoretically but that has not been verified empirically (Hill and

Adrangi 1999). Thus, scholars need to consider the many ways in which poverty impacts consumer quality of life, the multidimensional factors that best predict their influence on various components of this construct, and appropriate indicators that capture their essence.

Poverty alleviation is another component of macromarketers' efforts, allowing us to inform debate using the 4Ps of marketing. For example, the product factor recommends that macromarketers help define the nature of the goods and services necessary to survive and thrive within the cultural contexts consumers face worldwide. Macromarketers' ability to understand the needs of diverse segments of citizens could provide input into how these commodities are bundled and disseminated. From the pricing perspective, macromarketers have long recognized the complex nature of transactional costs. The research presented in this article shows the importance of unrestricted aid and its rare provision between nations. Consequently, macromarketers may select to help policy makers and other parties such as NGOs devise acquisition strategies that bring together unique combinations of public and private assets to create such exchanges.

The promotional module of the marketing mix could be employed to ensure pervasive awareness of poverty conditions and possible solutions among impoverished citizens, government officials and organizations, and interested third parties. Targeted communications should be designed to

empower and embolden the poor within specific geographic areas to organize at a grass-roots level along with local advocates and NGOs interested in improving their quality of life. Place/distribution issues complete the set and present the greatest challenges. Coordination across the various constituencies concerned about positive change requires skillful management, especially when corruption and self-interest dominate the agenda of national leadership. As a result, movement of goods and provision of services are less of a logistical and more of an attitudinal concern.

Poverty eradication advocacy is the final domain for macromarketers, a terrain within which this community has played a rather minor role, especially in recent years. Nevertheless, the time may have arrived for macromarketers to exert collective influence and expertise by working on and providing answers to these essential questions. Such support will require aggressive agendas that go beyond developing and conducting research that examines the plight of impoverished consumers and publishing results in peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books. In addition to these activities, macromarketers must seek ways to engage actively the individuals and organizations that try to impede or improve the quality of life of lower-socioeconomic citizenry. Armed with the shared wisdom of the field, macromarketers should be able to demand proactive solutions that bring Rawlsian justice.

**APPENDIX
COUNTRIES IN THEIR UNITED NATIONS DESIGNATIONS**

Developed Nations	Developing Nations	Least Developed Nations
Australia*	Algeria	Afghanistan
Austria*	Antigua/Barbuda	Angola
Belgium*	Argentina	Bangladesh
Bulgaria	Bahamas	Benin
Canada*	Bahrain	Bhutan
Cyprus	Barbados	Burkina Faso
Croatia	Belize	Burundi
Czech Republic	Bolivia	Cambodia
Denmark*	Botswana	Cape Verde
Estonia	Brazil	Central African Republic
Finland*	Brunei Darussalam	Chad
France*	Cameroon	Comoros
Germany*	Chile	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Greece*	China	Djibouti
Hungary	Columbia	Equatorial Guinea
Iceland	Congo	Eritrea
Ireland*	Costa Rica	Ethiopia
Israel	Cote d'Ivoire	Gambia
Italy*	Cuba	Guinea
Japan*	Dominica	Guinea-Bissau
Latvia	Dominican Republic	Haiti
Lithuania	Ecuador	Kiribati
Luxembourg*	Egypt	Lao People's Democratic Republic
Malta	El Salvador	Lesotho
Netherlands*	Fiji	Liberia
New Zealand*	Gabon	Madagascar

APPENDIX (continued)

Developed Nations	Developing Nations	Least Developed Nations
Norway*	Ghana	Malawi
Poland	Grenada	Maldives
Portugal*	Guatemala	Mali
Russian Federation	Guyana	Mauritania
Slovakia	Honduras	Mozambique
Slovenia	Hong Kong (SAR)	Myanmar
Spain*	India	Nepal
Sweden*	Indonesia	Niger
Switzerland*	Islamic Republic of Iran	Rwanda
United Kingdom*	Iraq	(Western) Samoa
United States*	Jamaica	Sao Tome and Principe
	Jordan	Senegal
	Kenya	Sierra Leone
	Democratic Republic of Korea	Solomon Islands
	Republic of Korea	Somalia
	Kuwait	Sudan
	Lebanon	(United Republic of) Tanzania
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Timor-Leste
	Malaysia	Togo
	Mali	Tuvalu
	Marshall Islands	Uganda
	Mauritius	Vanuatu
	Mexico	Yemen
	Fed. Sts. Micronesia	Zambia
	Mongolia	
	Morocco	
	Namibia	
	Nauru	
	Nicaragua	
	Nigeria	
	Occupied Palestinian Territory	
	Oman	
	Pakistan	
	Palau	
	Panama	
	Papua New Guinea	
	Paraguay	
	Peru	
	Philippines	
	Qatar	
	Saint Kitts and Nevis	
	Saint Lucia	
	Saint Vincent/Grenadines	
	Saudi Arabia	
	Seychelles	
	Singapore	
	South Africa	
	Sri Lanka	
	Suriname	
	Swaziland	
	Syrian Arab Republic	
	Thailand	
	Tonga	
	Trinidad and Tobago	
	Tunisia	
	Turkey	
	United Arab Emirates	
	Uruguay	
	Venezuela	
	Viet Nam	
	Zimbabwe	

*Member of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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