Editorial

Introduction to the Special Section: The Domain and Intersection of Anticonsumption, Marketing, and Public Policy

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Defining key terms serves an important role in setting boundary conditions (Gundlach 2007). For example, when reviewing the table of contents for a book concerning marketing and public policy, interesting questions—and contested responses—might emerge regarding what subject matter should be included as well as excluded. In this introduction to the special issue on *anticonsumption*, *marketing*, and *public policy*, we provide a definition for these three key terms, which provide scope for what might be covered in a special issue on such subject matter. We also illustrate how the domains of anticonsumption, marketing, and public policy might intersect.

Anticonsumption is commonly defined as "a resistance to, distaste of, or even resentment or rejection of, consumption" (Zavestoski 2002, p. 121). Consistent with the notion of resistance, the prefix "anti-" indicates being opposed to something (Roux 2007), and anticonsumption research is focused on the reasons against consumption (Chatzidakis and Lee 2013). Not surprisingly, then, anticonsumption subject matter has pertained to brand avoidance (e.g., Lee, Motion, and Conroy 2009), boycotting (e.g., Klein, Smith, and John 2004), consumer movements and activism (e.g., Kozinets and Handelman 2004), consumer resistance (e.g., Mikkonen and Bajde 2013), culture-jamming (e.g., Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel, 2006), brand sabotage (e.g., Kähr et al. 2016), and brand dilution (e.g., Kucuk 2016). Such research has shown that oppositional activities can be at a brand- or corporate-specific level (e.g., anti-Monsanto, anti-Nike) or directed more broadly (e.g., anti–genetically modified organisms, anti–fast fashion, anti-advertising); in some instances, consumers may even attempt to escape the market and propose alternative exchange practices (Kozinets 2002).

Unlike Zavestoski's (2002) widely referenced definition of anticonsumption, "consumption" often goes unspecified. Consumption can be conceptualized as dynamics surrounding a purchase decision (e.g., Schiffman, Kanuk, and Das 2006) or, more colloquially, the depletion of resources. The multiple definitions of consumption can have implications for how scholarly work might be contextualized within the domain of anticonsumption. The examination of sharing practices, for example, can involve a

purchase decision in which there is a monetary exchange (e.g., Capital Bikeshare, as depicted in Figure 1) or acquisitions that do not necessarily involve monetary exchange (e.g., a public library). Regardless, for such examples, consumers do not obviously demonstrate being against the acquisition of something, and collaborative consumption, which is a highly related concept to sharing (Belk 2014), also does not suggest resistance. Nevertheless, Zavestoski (2002) does clarify that consumers making a purchase demonstrate a preference for one good while also deciding *against* other alternatives (see also Chatzidakis and Lee [2013]). Moreover, if consumers are motivated to rent bicycles as a sustainable alternative to other modes of transport or share and reuse books with an aim of less books being produced and reducing the amount of paper being printed, then we can more obviously see how scholarly work on sharing can be considered within the domain of anticonsumption. In the context of sharing and toy library users, Ozanne and Ballantine (2010) exemplify that some are motivated by anticonsumption reasons whereas others are not.

In conceptualizing consumption as concerning the depletion of resources, we can more easily see how anticonsumption research has evolved into the domain of voluntary simplification and being against excessive or overconsumption (e.g., Cherrier and Murray 2002, 2007), as well as the intersection and potential cross-relevance of scholarly work pertaining to anticonsumption, environmentalism, and sustainability (Black and Cherrier 2010; Cherrier, Black, and Lee 2011; Iyer and Reczek 2017). In particular, the end stage of consumption has

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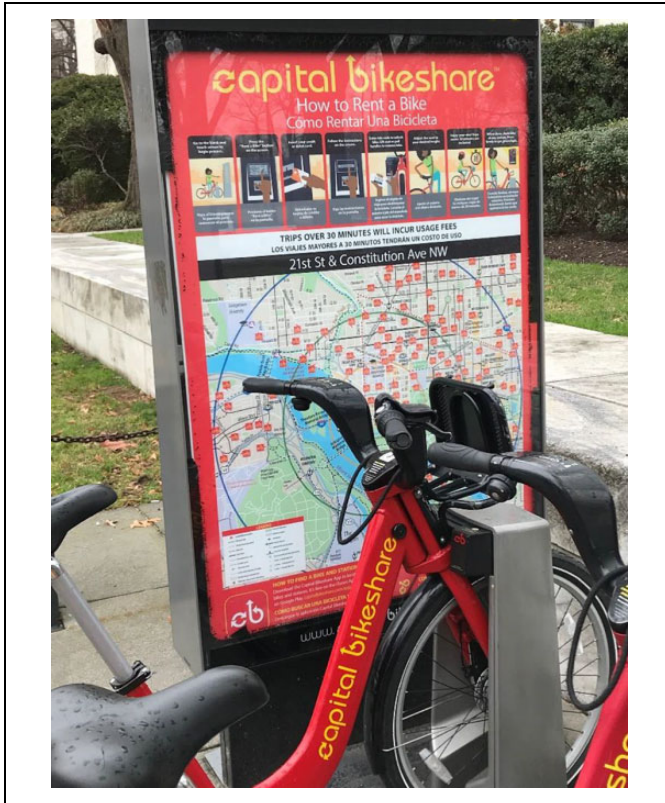
Figure 1. Capital Bikeshare offers a transportation option for visitors and residents to get from Point A to Point B within the District of Columbia where consumers are instructed about how to rent a bicycle.

been a much-neglected aspect of the consumption continuum, and further research from marketing scholars concerning waste, disposal, unmaking waste, reuse, repurposing, maintenance, and circulation would be welcomed. Questions that marketing scholars and public policy makers should find pressing include: What happens once we are finished with consumption? What can anticonsumption research contribute to our understanding of the end stage of consumption? And what are the implications of such insights for both marketing and public policy?

Although anticonsumption and marketing might initially seem contradictory, the late 1960s and early 1970s marked an important period when notable scholars presented the need to expand the scope of marketing, including its role in society (Kotler 1972a; Kotler and Levy 1969; Levy and Kotler 1969). Calls were made to reestablish attention toward the intentions and purposes of the buyer given that marketing was commonly viewed as a discipline largely limited to serving the interest of sellers (Kotler and Levy 1973). The importance of consumerism, demarketing, and social marketing entered marketing scholars' lexicon (Kotler 1972b; Kotler and Levy 1971; Kotler and Zaltman 1971). Notably, comparable debates persist regarding the suitability of how "marketing" is defined (Gundlach 2007; Wilkie and Moore 2012), and with calls for transformative consumer research that aim to inform policy and

improve well-being at an individual and societal level (Mick 2006; Mick et al. 2012).[1]

Kotler defined *consumerism* as "a social movement seeking to augment the rights and power of buyers in relation to sellers" (1972b, p. 49), when he also suggested that the creation of the Federal Trade Commission and the passage of key U.S. public policies, such as the Pure Food and Drug Act, are the result of consumer movements. Further exemplifying the push to expand how marketing should be conceptualized, Kotler and Levy offered the notion of *demarketing*, which they defined as "that aspect of marketing that deals with discouraging customers in general or a certain class of customers in particular on either a temporary or permanent basis" (1971, p. 75). Indeed, companies, nonprofits, and public organizations alike face problems concerning the need to reduce demand. Demarketing situations, for example, might include utility companies discouraging use, if there are difficulties meeting demand during periods of peak usage, or might also reflect larger societal concerns regarding commitments to environmental sustainability (e.g., Phipps and Brace-Govan 2011). Moreover, Kotler and Zaltman (1971) introduced the notion of *social marketing*, thereby demonstrating that marketing concepts and techniques were increasingly applicable to nonprofit and public organizations and could be useful to address social, environmental, and public health concerns, such as preventing or reducing instances of cigarette smoking (Dewhirst and Lee 2011). In many instances, underlying reasons against consumption are apparent with social marketing initiatives, with the prevention of certain behaviors or promotion of continued inaction being common goals (Andreasen 2012). Whereas conventional marketing typically aims to encourage particular actions, social marketing in many instances is aimed at stopping behaviors and decreasing primary demand (Lee, Fernandez, and Hyman 2009; Peattie and Peattie 2009).

Policy is defined as "a settled course of action to be followed by a government body or institution" (Patton and Sawicki 1993, p. 66). We acknowledge that there are many definitions of *public policy*, but a common core feature of policy definitions is that it deals with public *problems* (Stewart 2014). Like the aforementioned discussion on consumerism, demarketing, and social marketing, there are many instances of policies that aim to reduce particular behaviors and thereby serve as instruments or acts against consumption. For example, tobacco is an inherently harmful product (Dewhirst et al. 2016), and a global treaty has taken effect, known as the World Health Organization's (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which is legally binding for those countries that ratify the treaty. To date, 181 parties have signed and ratified the WHO FCTC, which "requires parties to adopt a

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1. Marketing is currently defined by the American Marketing Association as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large," which closely resembles the definition revisions discussed by Gundlach (2007, p. 249).

comprehensive range of measures designed to reduce the devastating health and economic impacts of tobacco" (for details, see http://www.fctc.org). In the context of anticonsumption, there are many possibilities for scholarly pursuit that integrate the role of public policy, with a timely example including calls for interventions concerning plastic waste (Elgot 2018).

Indeed, we are generally aware of the waste that accompanies the consumption-based lifestyle and society we have created, maintain, and struggle to sustain. We each contribute to the global waste problem in one way or another and lament about how wasteful we are on an individual and societal level. Yet there are still few marketing scholars actually conducting research on waste or looking creatively at how the end stage of the consumption cycle may be explored to yield useful knowledge about how we may improve markets and/or marketing, and how we may reject, reduce, or reclaim "waste" (Lee et al. 2011).

The motivation for anticonsumption does not need to be limited to the rejection of material possessions at the initial stages of consumption. There is already evidence of consumers who use material ownership as a way of countering mainstream consumption ideology. For these consumers, the reasons driving their anticonsumption is, paradoxically, their attachment to old possessions and their practices of keeping, restoring, maintaining, and extending the life of objects (Cherrier 2010). Whereas numerous instances and phenomenon of antiwaste practices are increasingly incorporated into consumers' lifestyle and identities, as is the case for inorganic collectors (Brosius, Fernandez, and Cherrier 2013), the ramifications of such antiwaste practices for public policy and mainstream marketing remain relatively unclear. One future direction of anticonsumption research could be exploring a much-neglected aspect of the consumption continuum, the end stage of consumption, and areas concerning waste, disposal, unmaking waste, reuse, repurposing, maintenance, and circulation.

In summary, providing definitions of *anticonsumption*, *marketing*, and *public policy* helps provide scope for what research is likely to be considered suitable for this special issue. As mentioned previously and depicted in Figure 2, there are many instances in which anticonsumption, marketing, and public policy are interrelated, but these scholarly domains do not always overlap, and each domain can be pursued independently. Therefore, a fitting way to introduce the articles accepted for this special issue may be to ask, "What are the public policy implications of anticonsumption?" Indeed, the seven articles in this special section offer promising approaches to this question. The first article directly delves into quantitative evidences, highlighting the environmental benefits of consumption reduction. Drawing on data collected from 245 European online surveys, Maren Ingrid Kropfeld, Marcelo Vinhal Nepomuceno, and Danilo C. Dantas (2018) demonstrate that voluntary simplicity and tightwadism, two prominent consumption reduction lifestyles, are associated with lower ecological impacts. Their findings rightly remind us that less is more and urge public policy makers to reorient their discourses toward efficiency
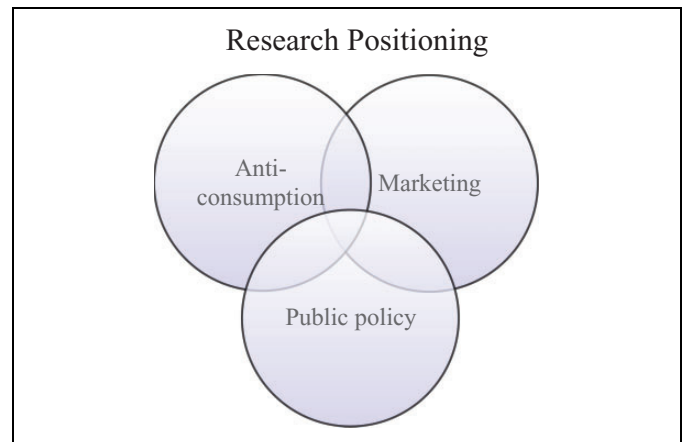

Figure 2. A Venn Diagram of Anticonsumption, Marketing, and Public Policy.

and to develop degrowth interventions. In keeping the focus on individual-level work, Utpal Dholakia, Jihye Jung, and Nivriti Chowdhry (2018) propose consumer reflection as a strategy to support anticonsumption. Through four instruction-based reflection experiments, the authors emphasize that reminding consumers of the functional things they already own and enjoy using can promote antishopping behavior. The study nicely complements Kropfeld, Nepomuceno, and Dantas's study showing how public policy makers ought to trigger consumer reflection on their day-to-day life in conjunction with promoting efficiency and degrowth.

The subsequent three articles greatly extend the scope of anticonsumption by focusing on the end stages of consumption. First, we learn how anticonsumption consciousness, defined as consumers' knowledge of object waste during the end stage of consumption practices, may influence antipurchase behavior. Drawing on home visits and in-depth interviews, Valérie Guillard (2018) explains four ways in which consumers become aware of their waste practices and describes comprehensive policy initiatives targeting cohorts based on their levels of anticonsumption consciousness. Kristin A. Scott and S. Todd Weaver supplement Guillard's work by highlighting how consumers and businesses actively engage in reducing waste through repurposing. Considering the different antecedents, processes, and outcomes of repurposing, Scott and Weaver reveal that repurposing, unlike consumption reduction, does not entail a sacrifice but is instead framed around fun and creativity and is consequently appealing to policy makers and marketers aiming to lengthen product life spans and promote sustainable behavior. Moving to high-involvement waste, Stephanie Anderson, Kathy Hamilton, and Andrea Tonner tackle the subjective nature of value regimes and inquire about the value that urban explorers ascribe to obsolete buildings. Through a three-year multimethod ethnography including sensory ethnographic fieldwork, interviewing, and netnography on urban explorers, the authors demonstrate the diverse, often conflicting, value regimes and provide insights to policy makers aiming to extend the life cycle of buildings.

The remaining two articles nicely follow the discussion on value regimes by highlighting how broad systems of practices and institutions may hinder or enable anticonsumption. Drawing on a three-year practice-based ethnography of emergent urban cycling in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, Klara Scheurenbrand, Elizabeth Parsons, Benedetta Cappellini, and Anthony Patterson brilliantly demonstrate how dominant practice arrangements may hinder anticonsumption and lock consumers into unsustainable consumption patterns. In highlighting the complex relations of material, competence, and meaning elements that form sustainable practices and their intersections with other elements of practices, the study informs policy makers about the importance of practice alignment within daily life and proposes interventions aimed at converting competitive and depriving relationships into supportive and nourishing relationships. While competing practices may hinder anticonsumption, Cherrier and Hill (2018) add that institutional subordination may act as a driving force to anticonsumption. Focusing on materially deprived consumers, their work establishes anticonsumption as tactics of survival for homeless people who are repeatedly misrecognized as "passive receivers," "placeless," and "other" within a system that subordinates them to the status of deficient and inferior.

While the seven articles in this special issue make a substantial start in linking anticonsumption with public policy and marketing, we are also hopeful that they will pave the way for additional research delving into the important intersection and overlaps highlighted in Figure 2. There is much that marketers, public policy makers, and anticonsumption researchers stand to learn and benefit from one another. Thus, as special issue guest editors, we look forward to many more studies building on the foundation set here.

Finally, we conclude this guest editorial by acknowledging the assistance of our double-blind reviewers listed next. Initially, we received 36 submissions for the special issue, with half of those submissions being desk rejected. Our reviewers helped provide invaluable feedback on the remaining 18 manuscripts. Without their informative assistance throughout the process, this special issue would not have been possible.

List of reviewers:
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