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THEORY/CONCEPTUAL

A stakeholder systems approach to the marketing discipline's troubled trajectory

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Abstract

In what has been termed the "manifesto conversation," the question has been raised as to "how the marketing discipline will successfully use its human and institutional resources to reverse its troubled trajectory, renew itself, and meet its responsibilities to its stakeholders" (Hunt et al., 2022, p. 139). This research question is the focus of this paper. Herein we draw on stakeholder theory amplified by concepts from systems and institutional theory, to offer an approach to address this question. Using stakeholder systems theory we argue (a) that competitiveness among sub-fields operates to invoke mutual improvements for the marketing stakeholders of each sub-field, and (b) that due to the constitutive nature of systems, each necessary contribution by a given sub-field can be identified and included in sufficiently serving marketing's stakeholders. We offer three contributions. First, we develop theory to suggest how multiple marketing constituencies might continue to pursue novel research while remaining true to the foundations of each constituency. Second, we suggest a theoretical mechanism for integration across sub-fields. Third, we offer ideas whereby marketing-discipline actors can work proactively to create, maintain, and in some cases disrupt the institutions that presently constrain the development of marketing as a core field of study in a dynamic business environment. It therefore is our hope that our analysis in this paper can serve an effectuating purpose as the marketing discipline seeks to use its human and institutional resources in connection with its troubled trajectory, to renew itself, and meet its responsibilities to its stakeholders.

Keywords Marketing discipline · Marketing's stakeholders · Central focus · Stakeholder systems theory · Marketing theory · Marketing manifesto · Institutional work

Introduction

There is a deep connection and natural compatibility between the discipline of marketing and stakeholder theory, despite any differences that may exist between them. For example, Shaw's (1912, p. 706) observation of the "tremendous social waste" due to the "chaotic condition of distribution"—one of the initial justifications for the marketing discipline—does so in terms of social impact, that is, in terms of impact on what we now term stakeholders. The early view that marketing is a set of functions that make up a "marketing system" (e.g., Maynard et al., 1927) implies the study of the stakeholders who are connected in the buying, selling, transportation, storage—even risk bearing—that comprise a marketing system. Even GE's (1952) "advanced concept of marketing," which relates marketing managers to stakeholder needs (e.g., "what the customer wants in a given product, what price he is willing to pay, and where and when it will be wanted," p. 21) is stakeholder-centric.

Marketing and stakeholders have continued to go together as the discipline has matured to provide explanations for stakeholder constituencies that include academe, managers, public policy makers, and special interest groups (Monroe, 1988); despite developing along a troubled

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trajectory—fragmenting into "four separately institutionalized sub-fields of study: consumer behavior, quantitative/modeling, marketing management/strategy, and macromarketing" (Hunt et al., 2022, p. 145). Little wonder that recently in this journal, in what has been termed the "manifesto conversation" (2022, p. 139), the question has been raised as to "how the marketing discipline will successfully use its human and institutional resources to reverse its troubled trajectory, renew itself, and meet its responsibilities to its stakeholders?" (2022, p. 153)—the research question that is the focus of this paper.

Accordingly, in this paper we draw on stakeholder theory amplified by concepts from systems theory and institutional theory, to offer an approach that can help to address this question. The question is somewhat complex, in that it must address a problem that is part competition (e.g., four presently separating sub-fields), and part collaboration (e.g., successfully using the human and institutional resources of marketing scholarship to meet its responsibility to stakeholders). Stakeholder theory offers concepts of pluralism whereby reconciliations among competing interests can be resolved within an "intracorporate marketplace among multiple stakeholders and bundles of objectives" (Mitchell et al., 2016, p. 265). Systems theory offers ideas that explain how complexes of elements can stand together in interaction as integrated relations (László, 1972; von Bertalanffy, 1968)—a useful way to ascertain which parts of a system are necessary to produce synergistic results. And institutional theory can help to explain how the institutional work (e.g., Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) of marketing scholars can suggest possibilities for influencing the trajectory of the marketing discipline. Essentially through the theory development in this paper, we identify a pathway of institutional work along which contestation can become reconciliation. Specifically, we explain how competitive elements refine each other, and collaborative elements support each other, together suggesting a stakeholder systems approach to the marketing discipline's troubled trajectory.

We hope to make three contributions to this 'manifesto conversation'. First, we develop theory to suggest how multiple constituencies might continue to pursue novel research under the marketing disciplinary banner, while remaining true to the foundations of each constituency. This contribution responds to the call by Hunt et al. (2022) to safeguard marketing's substantive richness and sense of community in the face of fragmentation into separately institutionalized sub-fields, and also to calls by others for an integrative theory of marketing (e.g., Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021), and for a re-formulation of marketing's foundation (e.g., Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Second, we suggest a theoretical mechanism by which integration across the marketing sub-fields can be accomplished. This contribution addresses the suggestions by Moorman et al. (2019) that breadth and integration across sub-fields are vital given the inherently interdisciplinary nature of most marketing problems, and that marketing advances when its 'tribes' work together rather than remain in separate camps, since integration creates more innovative and impactful research. Third, we offer ideas whereby actors within the marketing discipline can work proactively to create, maintain, and in some cases disrupt the institutions that presently constrain the development of marketing as a core field of study in a dynamic business environment. In this way, it becomes possible for researchers to view the marketing discipline through an institutional lens (e.g., Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Wilkie & Moore, 2006), which then can contribute to the enactment of a deliberate program of change that restructures the institutions of the discipline—from publication criteria to doctoral education—in ways that sustain marketing as a core field of study as called for by Key et al. (2021, pp. 448, 452).

Conceptual development

In the strategic management and organization literature, stakeholder theory mobilizes the idea that an organization exists to create value among actors in a nexus of agreements (Hill & Jones, 1992) without whose support the organization would cease to exist (Barney, 2018; Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2014; Donaldson & Walsh, 2015; Freeman et al., 2010; Harrison & Wicks, 2013; Stanford Memo, 1963, as quoted in Freeman & Reed, 1983, p. 91). Managers thus have the responsibility to serve the interests of a wide variety of stakeholders in the organizational nexus as its member stakeholders work to create value (Bundy et al., 2018; Lange et al., 2020)—interests that may be either in conflict and/or in congruence, with those of other participants. For managers, a simpler approach is to focus on salient stakeholders, or salient issues only (Bundy et al., 2013; Mitchell et al., 1997). This approach is appealing for the marketing discipline, especially where stakeholder interests are congruent (see e.g., Crilly et al., 2012).

But when stakeholder interests are not aligned due to competition among them (Harrison & Freeman, 1999; Ogden & Watson, 1999; Venkataraman, 2002), the resolution of competing claims by focusing on salient stakeholders or issues is not so simple (Tantalo & Priem, 2016). While some have been skeptical about the promise of stakeholder theory to reconcile conflicting stakeholder interests (e.g., Jensen, 2002; Orts & Strudler, 2009); others remain hopeful. For example, Bundy et al. (2018) call for research to "consider how managers of organizations coordinate and prioritize internal and external demands and reconcile multiple (possibly competing) … needs to better understand value (in)congruence and strategic complementarity/incompatibility in organization-stakeholder relationships" (2018, p. 496). What is less-developed in the stakeholder literature is theory explaining "a more complex and dynamic form of decision making" (Mitchell et al., 2016, p. 260) that enables pluralistic management of competing, yet integrated, interests among stakeholders in value creation. Thus arises the more-complex problem of managing both problems of competition and problems of collaboration.

It might be said that problems of competition can be addressed by markets (e.g., Smith, 2012 [1776]); and that problems of collaboration can be addressed by integration (e.g., Holzner, 1967). In the case of reconciling competing stakeholder interests using a pluralistic view, Mitchell et al. (2016) have suggested that such reconciliations can be accomplished through the functioning of an intracorporate marketplace. In the case of integrating a wide variety of stakeholder interests to accomplish a synergistic result through collaboration, Harrison (2020) has suggested that such integration can be accomplished using a systems view (e.g., László, 1972; von Bertalanffy, 1968). In this section we therefore lay out the conceptual foundation for an approach to the research question that can begin to speak to how the marketing discipline might, with at least some possibility of success, use its human and institutional resources to adjust its trajectory such that it can create new opportunities to renew itself, and thereby continue to meet its responsibilities to its stakeholders. As noted, this problem partly concerns competition, and partly concerns collaboration.

Reconciling competing interests—the intracorporate marketplace

The notion of the intracorporate marketplace as a means whereby competing stakeholder interests might be reconciled within an organization was first advanced by Mitchell et al. (2016). This conceptualization is distinct from and is not to be confused with the idea of a talent-development intracorporate marketplace within an organization (e.g., McDonnell et al., 2017; Walker, 2020). An intracorporate marketplace for stakeholder claims within an organization has been conceptualized with Pareto optimality in mind—whereby an optimal allocation of resources means no further beneficial reallocations are possible (Jones & Harrison, 2019). Although not extensively specified by Mitchell et al. (2016), it can be inferred from their theorizing that reconciliations among competing stakeholder interests using a marketplace are accomplished through competition (see also Priem et al., 2022). And as a result, it can further be inferred that market benefits—i.e., that market competition reduces prices and increases quality (e.g., Smith, 2012 [1776])—can inure to each competitor.

In such situations, at least three 'market-like' options for reconciling competing interests are illustrative. First, there are context-specific situations where the results of competition among stakeholder interests follow patterns that are relevant to the context within which they appear. These stakeholder prioritization patterns have been theorized, for example, to depend upon the level of stakeholder power, legitimacy, and/or urgency that managers of an organization attribute to a given stakeholder (Mitchell et al., 1997). The manner in which a reconciliation is achieved can be described according to these patterns. Second, there are situations that can be characterized by their usefulness. For example, where reconciliations among competing stakeholder interests are needed, where relative resources costs are lower or at least equal to those of other competitors, and where relative benefits are greater than or at least equal to those of other competitors, it can be expected that there will be a positional advantage created (Hunt, 2000), and that refinement-focused reconciliations among competing interests turn upon the usefulness to all concerned. Or third, where the norms and values of various competitors are considered, integrated social contracts theory suggests six priority-setting "rules of thumb" choices to be made among "competing legitimate norms" (Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999, pp. 184–190). In each case, the direct comparison of competing interests—akin to shopping within an 'intracorporate' marketplace—can produce workable ways to reconcile competing claims.

From a stakeholder theory perspective, the foregoing three options correspond to three possible conceptual pathways for reconciling competing interests within the marketing discipline: descriptive, instrumental, and normative stakeholder decision-making pathways (e.g., Mitchell, Agle, & Mitchell, 2021). As first suggested by Donaldson and Preston (1995), descriptive stakeholder theory captures the "actual" ways that stakeholders interact among each other; instrumental stakeholder theory addresses the "useful" ways that managers interact with stakeholders in order to provide a particular benefit for the concerned parties; and normative stakeholder theory invokes norms (e.g., what "ought" to be done, or what "should" be done in fulfilling ethical obligations among stakeholders). Accordingly in this paper, given the objective of reconciling competing interests within the marketing discipline, where, for example, relative resource costs and benefits figure strongly, our use of the instrumental approach using the resource-advantage theory of competition seems to be appropriate.

Thus, in the case of the 'manifesto conversation', the term 'intracorporate' (with respect to the term intracorporate marketplace) could then be replaced with 'marketing discipline emphasis' to define the nature of the 'stakeholder-interests' marketplace. Hunt et al. (2022) suggest that currently, the marketing discipline is composed of stakeholders that include marketing academics, society, marketing practice, social science research, consumers, and public policy makers (2022, p. 142). And as previously noted the four institutionalized sub-fields of study within the marketing discipline include: consumer behavior, quantitative/modeling, marketing management/strategy, and macromarketing (e.g., see Hunt, 2018, 2020; Wilkie & Moore, 1999, 2003, 2006). Thus, the intracorporate marketplace approach could offer refinement of the contributions of each sub-field to each stakeholder, "with the intracorporate invisible hand leading to improved multi-objective allocations" (Mitchell et al., 2016, p. 266), thereby contributing to the reconciliation of competing interests. In a later section, our argument enables us to specify this undertaking in more depth.

Reconciling collaborative interests—a systems perspective

Admittedly, though, use of the intracorporate marketplace as a tool for reconciling competing stakeholder interests addresses only competition—which is but one part of a two-part problem. As we have noted previously, the solution also involves the reality that stakeholder interests often are congruent, because they overlap, complement, and/or interrelate. And since we are concerned with multiple stakeholders acting in concert in a nexus of agreements, we argue that a systems/integrative perspective also can be helpful. In this sense, perhaps, the marketing discipline can be envisioned like an airplane which, according to a popular saying among aviators, is "just thousands of spare parts flying in close formation." From this perspective, a key problem within the marketing discipline is that presently its respective parts are not necessarily seeking to fly in close formation in a way that can integrate a wide variety of stakeholder interests to accomplish a synergistic result through collaboration. Accordingly, we offer a few concepts under the umbrella of systems and integration theory to contribute further to answering the research question.

Where an organization is conceptualized as a nexus of agreements among actor/stakeholders that bring resources into the nexus to create value, then it is axiomatic that as organizations acquire, develop, and utilize tangible and intangible resources, each of these resources is inseparably connected to the stakeholders that control them. Such interconnectedness is an integral principle in systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968). According to Freeman et al. (2020, p. 217), "in an interconnected and interdependent system, each stakeholder must be both a means and an end. Each contributes to collective flourishing, and each must also benefit for the system to continue flourishing." The goal of each part of an effective system is to make the entire system better (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972), such that a system becomes much more than the sum of its parts. In this respect a system can be described as "constitutive," in the sense that its "constitutive characteristics are not explainable from the characteristics of isolated parts" (von Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 55) due to the integration that occurs as the parts interrelate.

These conceptual foundations of integration draw from prior research that specifies how the integration process works. Holzner (1967), for example, explains that integrating different "parts that do not share any of the attributes of the whole … can be [specified] by means of a theory explaining the attributes of the whole as a result of the interrelations among the attributes of the parts. [An example is] an automobile engine whose performance characteristics result from the design" (1967, p. 52). In this regard, Hernes (1998) argues that a theoretical mechanism describes how "a set of interacting parts—an assembly of elements—produc[es] an effect not inherent in any one of them" (1998, p. 74). So if we want to specify a theoretical mechanism that explains how the ever-more-separate sub-fields of the marketing discipline can yet remain parts of an integrated whole, we can specify: (a) the focal attributes[1] of the whole, (b) the focal attributes of the parts, and (c) how the attributes of the whole result from the interrelations among the attributes of the parts. We thus can utilize a systems perspective to conceptualize reconciliations among collaborative stakeholder interests.

These general relationships can be envisioned parsimoniously as illustrated in Fig. 1. Figure 1 shows (1) a triangle (ABC) as the whole with its focal attributes, that includes (2) the three separate points of the triangle (A, B, C) as the parts, each with their respective focal attributes, which then illustrates (3) the attributes of the whole as resulting from interrelations (A-B-C) among the attributes of the parts represented with dashed lines. Thus, as general systems theory describes the foregoing principles as "constitutive" (von Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 55)—that is, as it suggests that understanding the operation of a given system depends upon understanding both the parts of a system, and the relations among them—by extension, then, it follows that the collaborative notion in stakeholder systems theory explains how the operation of a 'whole' depends upon the contribution of each of the parts in the relationship. A systems perspective thus suggests that the reconciliation of collaborative interests invokes synergistic results, at least because 'no stakeholder is left behind'.

[1] We note that, for application in this paper, we define attributes as qualities or features that are characteristic of, or inherent in, a given element. While recognizing the possibility of multiple attributes, we use "focal" to designate the most relevant attribute(s) for this analysis, thereby to provide theoretical parsimony.

{Insert Figure 1 about here}

Thus, in the case of the 'manifesto' conversation, the marketing discipline also is seeking to integrate a wide variety of stakeholder interests to accomplish a synergistic result through collaboration (conceptually denoted **(1)** in the figure). And, consequently, where collaboration is engendered amongst the four institutionalized marketing sub-fields (A, B, C, etc.[1])—consumer behavior, quantitative/modeling, marketing management/strategy, and macromarketing (e.g., see Hunt, 2018, 2020; Wilkie & Moore, 1999, 2003, 2006)—each with its own attributes (conceptually denoted **(2)** in the figure), we can expect synergy through the interrelation among each (conceptually denoted **(3)** in the figure), thereby contributing benefits from the reconciliation of collaborative interests. In a later section, our argument enables us to specify the details of the integrative possibilities conceptualized and illustrated in Figure 1 in more depth.

Using institutional resources—institutional work on a troubled trajectory

Next, we address the following question: Of what use is the development of frameworks for reconciling the competing and collaborative interests surrounding the troubled trajectory issue in the marketing discipline (i.e., the intracorporate marketplace for accounting for competition, and systems/integration theory for collaboration), without also providing a suggestion for use of its results? The analysis thus returns to the research question: "how the marketing discipline will successfully use its human and institutional resources to reverse its troubled trajectory, renew itself, and meet its responsibilities to its stakeholders?" (Hunt et al., 2022, p. 153). Interestingly, the call to use human and institutional resources begs the question as to how a 'discipline' can be expected

[1] We acknowledge that the three-part representation used for parsimonious illustration of the part-to-whole relationships being described is conceptual only; and that in practice this theoretical model can apply to relationships among many more parts.

to take action. Given the notion of an organization—in this case a discipline—being conceptualized as a nexus of agreements, it then is clear that such action-taking will depend upon the emergent influence of individual and collective actors within the marketing-discipline nexus. The concept of institutional work, as briefly described below, offers a foundation for considering how taking such action among marketing-discipline stakeholders can be conceptualized.

The notion of an institution arises from the idea that there are "enduring elements in social life—institutions—that have a profound effect on the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individual and collective actors" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 216). Akin to most social settings, in the marketing discipline we also can expect institutional effects to influence the field. Defined variously, as "cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative elements that ... provide stability and meaning to social life" (Scott, 2001, p. 48), and as "rules and shared meanings . . . that define social relationships" (Fligstein, 2001, p. 108), institutions have been cast both as the values, norms and beliefs that arise within an organization to shape behavior of its members (e.g., Selznick, 1957)—sometimes referred to as 'old institutionalism', but also as a kind of 'iron cage' that pressures organizations to become isomorphic to gain and retain legitimacy (e.g., DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)—often referred to as the new institutionalism. In this latter sense the role of institutions is to shape the norms, values, and beliefs of various individual and collective actors affected.

But then, more recent research has built on Giddens' (1984) notion of reflexivity, to suggest various ways that individual and collective actors utilize resources to do the reverse—to engage in 'institutional work' whereby actors undertake a variety of activities to create new institutions, maintain existing institutions, and/or to disrupt them (Battilana et al., 2009; Garud et al., 2002; Maguire et al., 2004; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Oliver, 1991, 1992; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

The forms of possible institutional creation work have been suggested to at least include "advocacy, activity defining, vesting, identity construction, changing normative associations, constructing normative networks, mimicry, theorizing and/or educating" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, Table 1.6.1, p. 221). The forms of possible institutional maintenance work have been suggested to at least include "enabling work, policing, deterring, valourizing and demonizing, mythologizing, and embedding and routinizing" (2006, Table 1.6.2, p. 230). And the forms of possible institutional disruption work have been suggested to at least include "disconnecting sanctions, disassociating moral foundations, undermining assumptions and beliefs" (2006, Table 1.6.3, p. 235).

A framework for analysis

Given the foregoing conceptual development, it now seems possible to outline possibilities for the analysis of the 'troubled-trajectory' by framing the discussion in terms of stakeholder interests and marketing's sub-fields, using stakeholder systems theory.

Stakeholder interests and marketing's sub-fields

As noted earlier in this paper, it has been suggested that the focal stakeholders of the marketing discipline include at least marketing academics, society, marketing practice, social science research, consumers and public policy makers (Hunt et al., 2022, p. 142). The interests of these stakeholders may vary, depending on the emphasis of each of its four sub-fields as suggested by Hunt et al. (2022, p. 139)—consumer behavior, quantitative/modeling, marketing management/ strategy, and macromarketing. Since it seems reasonable to expect that the point of this analysis should be to address the interests of stakeholders, in this analysis we outline (from a stakeholder researcher's perspective) what we can observe to be 'representative' interests of the focal stakeholders suggested to be relevant by Hunt et al. (2022), relative to the four presently existing sub-fields of the marketing discipline (e.g., see Hunt, 2018, 2020; Wilkie & Moore, 1999, 2003, 2006). This analysis can be found in Table 1.

{Insert Table 1 about here}

Specifically in the table, we have provided an illustrative precis of the marketing research literature—hopefully with reasonably sufficient detail—to enable us, for the sake of this exercise, to ascertain both the distinctive (competitive) aspects of each marketing sub-field, as well as to enable us to ascertain how each such aspect contributes to given stakeholders' (collaborative) interests. For example, the title row of the table suggests an 'illustrative emphasis" (based on our reading of the literature), for each marketing sub-field.[2] Then, we have utilized the first column of the table to, in this case, suggest a collaborative conceptual gestalt across marketing's sub-fields to further suggest/illustrate the common interests of the six previously-noted marketing-research stakeholders.

This exercise produces two fundamental observations concerning the distinctive (competitive) aspects of each marketing sub-field. First, *each* of the marketing sub-fields provides essential information to *all* stakeholders (columns 3-6). For example, for the Quantitative/ Modeling sub-field (Column 4), this information consists of research that helps to increase analytical precision and resource allocation efficiency for marketing purposes. For the Marketing Management/Strategy sub-field (Column 5), it is research that extends, creates, and strengthens managerial relevance through marketing and strategic frameworks/logics, and so forth, as shown in the table. An analytical extension of these observations can provide additional understanding. If

[2] Our apologies to experts in each research sub-field whose work is characterized in this table for illustrative purposes, but with no intention or claim to be dispositive.

we look at the comparative advantages offered by each sub-field we can see that the refinement of each sub-field is made possible by the concomitant added competitive advantage it brings. For example, by extensively elaborating a key focal object of marketing—the consumer—the Consumer Behavior sub-field enables the Quantitative/Modeling sub-field to enhance research veracity through its emphasis on precision; and the Marketing Management/Strategy and Macromarketing sub-fields can better keep practice and society (respectively) in the research conversation. Using the information provided in Table 1, other such refinements can be envisioned by extension.

Second, *each* of the marketing research sub-fields provides essential information to *each* stakeholder (columns 3-6, row-by-row, summarized row-by-row in column 1). This outcome results because of the process of integration. As we have explained earlier in this paper, systems/integration theory suggests that integrating various elements that do not share the attributes of the whole becomes possible by explaining the attributes of the whole as a result of the interrelations among the attributes of the parts, as shown in Figure 1. Thus, Table 1 column 1 illustrates how this process can apply in the case of ascertaining the integrated stakeholder interests of each of the six marketing stakeholder groups shown. For example, for marketing academics (Row 2) the 'whole' is the advancement of marketing knowledge through analyses and insight, which results from explaining these attributes of the whole by imputing, for illustrative purposes, the interrelations among the attributes of the parts. For consumers (Row 5) it is the concentration on market choice and value; and so forth.

As a result, if we then look further at both competitive and collaborative advantages that each sub-field brings to the research conversation, we can see other useful analytical extensions. First, stakeholder systems theory as applied in Table 1 provides a means to address possibilities for the institutional work that might advance both the distinctive (competitive) aspects of each marketing sub-field, as well as to enable us to advance given stakeholders' (collaborative) interests. But second—by having identified the (illustrative) stakeholder interests served by each of the sub-fields (Table 1, column 1)—it now seems possible to make an attempt to extend the analysis in a way that might address the three 'candidates' for marketing's 'central focus' (Hunt et al., 2022): service-dominant logic, GFIM (General Framework of Integrative Marketing), and R-A (Resource-Advantage) theory. Thus, together, the entries in Table 1 provide the springboard that then can enable us to more closely examine possibilities for the institutional work that can help the marketing discipline to successfully use its human and institutional resources to address its troubled trajectory, renew itself, and meet its responsibilities to its stakeholders. To do so, it thus becomes important to delve more deeply into the foregoing analysis by examining both the possibilities for institutional work on each marketing research sub-field, and the possibilities for institutional work on each candidate for marketing's central focus.

Possibilities for institutional work on each marketing research sub-field

As we previously have noted, the research using the idea of institutional work has built on Giddens' (1984) notion of reflexivity. Essentially, some organization theory scholars have suggested various ways that individual and collective actors can mobilize resources to engage in 'institutional work' whereby organizational actors undertake various activities to create new institutions, maintain existing institutions, or to disrupt them (Battilana et al., 2009; Garud et al., 2002; Maguire et al., 2004; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Oliver, 1991, 1992; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). The information provided in Table 1 suggests that there are agentic actions that can be taken to create, maintain, and/or disrupt the troubled trajectory of research in the marketing discipline. In the following paragraphs we address each type of institutional work.

Institutional creation work on marketing's troubled trajectory As we previously have noted, possible forms of institutional creation work include "advocacy, activity defining, vesting, identity construction, changing normative associations, constructing normative networks, mimicry, theorizing and/or educating" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, Table 1.6.1, p. 221). Each of these agentic actions has the possibility for application in the troubled-trajectory conversation, as frameworks for reconciliation among competing interests, and for using the systems/integration perspective as a tool for collaboration produce actionable results.

For example, as individual agents, scholars concerned with the future of the marketing discipline, or groups of such scholars, are invited to select from among the list of possible agentic actions, those that may be especially relevant to their present role in this community. Individuals or collective actors therefore might use academic meetings or other communications to advocate, might engage in conference-based dialogue that leads to the construction of networks of like-minded colleagues, and/or might further theorize consonant directions in future research articles.[3]

Institutional maintenance work on marketing's troubled trajectory As we previously also have noted, possible forms of institutional maintenance work have been suggested to at least include "enabling work, policing, deterring, valourizing and demonizing, mythologizing, and embedding and routinizing" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, Table 1.6.2, p. 230). Each of these agentic actions focused on institutional maintenance work also has the possibility for application to advancing both competing and collaborative interests in the troubled-trajectory conversation.

[3] Since this sentence presents only one of many options, we commend to readers the article by Lawrence and Suddaby (2006), which develops in some detail the agentic actions possible for each suggested activity.

Again, interested agents are invited to select from among the list of possible actions suggested as institutional maintenance work—those that may be especially relevant to their present role in the marketing research community.

For example, individuals or collective actors therefore might continue to use the enabling institutional work offered by the marketing journals (e.g., *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*) that span the four sub-fields. These actors might also embed and/or routinize within the marketing journals that focus on each sub-field (e.g., *Journal of Consumer Research*, or *Quantitative Marketing and Economics*), their contributions to the refinement of their 'sister' sub-fields, and thereby the marketing discipline as a whole.

Institutional disruption work on marketing's troubled trajectory As, again, we previously have noted, possible forms of institutional disruption work have been suggested to at least include "disconnecting sanctions, disassociating moral foundations, undermining assumptions and beliefs" (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, Table 1.6.3, p. 235). Each of these agentic actions that is focused on institutional disruption work also has the possibility for application to advancing both competing and collaborative interests in the troubled-trajectory conversation. Once again, interested agents are invited to select from among the list of possible actions suggested as institutional disruption work, those that may be especially relevant to their present role in the marketing research community.

For example, individuals or collective actors therefore might seek to undermine the assumptions and beliefs that 'trouble' the trajectory of marketing research. In this way, reconciliation might replace contestation to promote the idea that the competitive elements of each marketing sub-field refine each other, and that their collaborative elements support each other, together adopting a stakeholder systems approach to the trajectory of the marketing discipline.

Summary In this sub-section we together have examined possibilities for the institutional work that can help the marketing discipline to successfully use its institutional resources to address the troubled trajectory/manifesto research conversation to suggest possible ways institutional work can enable marketing to renew itself, and meet its responsibilities to the stakeholders by considering their interests (Table 1). We also have suggested possibilities for institutional work on each of the marketing sub-fields. But given the foregoing foundation-laying, it also seems possible for this analysis to be extended even further, to apply its principles to each of the three candidates for marketing's central focus, which analysis follows.

Possibilities for institutional work on each candidate for marketing's central focus

As previously noted, Hunt et al. (2022) suggest three 'nominees' as the potential central focus of the marketing discipline: service-dominant logic, the general framework of integrative marketing (GFIM), or resource-advantage (R-A) theory. So in the context of reconciling competing stakeholder interests, the notion of an intracorporate marketplace responds to the suggestion by Demichelis & Ritzberger (2011) that a multiple or plural objective function of a nexus of stakeholders could benefit 'intracorporate' resource allocation. And in the context of collaborating to integrate congruent stakeholder interests the nexus can benefit from the synergistic effects of collaboration around a vision of the 'whole' that utilizes systems theory to identify points of coalescence around which inclusion efforts can focus. Accordingly, we next suggest a thought experiment, whereby each of the three central-focus nominees are analyzed according to the stakeholder systems approach previously developed herein as to the institutional work possible to address marketing's troubled trajectory.

Thought experiments are useful in that they enable the evaluation of various theoretical possibilities prior to making a commitment to one in particular. Thought experiments are of several types (Brown, 2011); and in this case we briefly engage in a *mediative*-type thought experiment to theorize broadly in comparing the three candidates. A mediative-type thought experiment is useful in this analysis, because it enables us to observe the effects of variations in parameters through 'manipulations' that, for purposes of this paper, are *comparative descriptions* relative to the three candidates for marketing's central focus (rather than imaginary scenarios). The theoretical possibilities to be evaluated would then be the types of institutional work implicated by the various provisions offered by each of the three candidates for marketing's central focus. In this way we utilize a simple analytical frame that nevertheless provides a novel perspective for suggesting the institutional work implicated for each candidate relative to the interests of the six key stakeholders of marketing research we have been using in the analysis. This analysis is provided in Table 2.

{Insert Table 2 about here}

The analysis represented in Table 2 takes as its point of departure the reality that each of the three candidates: (a) has a specific way that it serves the interests of the six marketing stakeholders that we are using as illustrative in this paper (i.e., How?), and (b) has institutional strengths and opportunities relative to the interests of marketing's stakeholders (i.e., Institutional Strengths and Opportunities), and (c) is susceptible to various types of institutional work—the utilization of various institutional arrangements, some of which need to be created, others, maintained, and still others disrupted (i.e., What institutional work is implicated?), as shown in each cell of the table. Table 2 provides summary answers to each of the foregoing three questions using relevant literature to provide pertinent points of reference.

The analysis provided in Table 2 produces four fundamental observations. First, *each* of the candidates provides *certain* of the stakeholders with superior advantages. Second, *some* of the candidates provide more advantages than others. Third, *none* of the candidates emerges as a clear 'winner'. Fourth, since it remains the task of the marketing research community as a whole to further develop ways to use its human and institutional resources to address its troubled trajectory, renew itself, and meet its responsibilities to its stakeholders, we offer the analysis in Table 2 as a point of reference for such development.

Discussion

In this paper we have suggested a stakeholder systems-based approach in response to the research question: How can the marketing discipline successfully use its human and institutional resources to reverse its troubled trajectory, renew itself, and meet its responsibilities to its stakeholders? In the foregoing analyses we have adopted three ideas that define our approach. First, it has seemed to be important to recognize that the question of 'reversing' a trajectory is likely to suffer from practicality problems because (a) both the text and subtext of the term trajectory—an object *moving* in response to given forces—suggest that motion is expected to continue, and (b) a reversal suggests that motion would stop, in order to reverse; and this seems to be impractical. Second, both the text and subtext of the term reversal suggest that in some sense repudiation, antithesis, and opposites are to be expected. It seems more reasonable to suggest that the *adjustment* of a trajectory is both more practical and more positive in its aspiration. Third, in the stakeholder context, where both competition and collaboration coexist, it also seems reasonable to expect complete agreement among individual and collective actors to be elusive.

Thus, because there is a deep connection and natural compatibility between the discipline of marketing and stakeholder theory, it has been possible in this paper to advance a stakeholder systems approach to the marketing discipline's troubled trajectory that offers three primary contributions. These include (a) building theory that can help to enable the four primary sub-fields of the marketing discipline to continue to pursue novel research under the overall marketing disciplinary banner while remaining true to the foundations of each constituency; (b) suggesting a theoretical mechanism by which collaboration through integration across sub-fields can be accomplished; and (c) offering ideas whereby actors within the marketing discipline can work proactively to create, maintain, and in some cases disrupt the institutions that presently constrain the development of marketing as a core field of study in a dynamic business environment. In this section we both further elaborate these contributions, and identify the possible opportunities for further research they suggest.

Theory building

The literature In 2021, Parvatiyar and Sheth incorporated several dominant subdisciplines in marketing—which included market orientation, R-A theory, and service-dominant logic—into a relatively broad integrating theoretical framework to offer possible directions for future research (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021). Although they explicitly did not advance a "formal theory" (2021, p. 443), their framework offered theoretical constructs that could be inclusive and possibly lead to an "integrative general theory of marketing" (2021, p. 443). Still others, for example Vargo and Lusch (2004), asserted that the fragmentation of marketing was evidence that the field was evolving toward a new worldview, with a new dominant logic—in this case service-dominant logic (e.g., Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). Taken together, these approaches and others, suggest that the focus has been on the productive arrangement of various elements of theoretical *content* as the means to address disciplinary fragmentation. But the question about "how-to" accommodate them—i.e., the *process*—has remained relatively open, as indicated by the question posed by Hunt et al. (2022) "*how* [emphasis added] the marketing discipline will successfully use its human and institutional resources" relative to its research trajectory and responsibilities to its stakeholders (2022, p. 153). Accordingly, in this paper we have advanced a way to utilize stakeholder systems theory to provide a process logic to help to address this open question.

Further research The process logic of stakeholder systems theory offers several advantages in that it invokes a level of explicitness regarding both how to amplify the distinctive features *within* each sub-field, and how to engage the features that can unite them *between* sub-fields. It also offers explicit pathways for agentic action for marketing stakeholders to work "on" the institutional framework of the marketing discipline, through various types of institutional work, while continuing to work "in" the institutional framework of the marketing discipline. Within the stakeholder systems process framework in place, further research concerning the manifesto conversation can be considered.

In particular, stakeholder systems process logic lays the foundations for potentially programmatic theory building research around important areas: (a) stakeholder-specific formalization of the three major candidates for marketing's central focus in terms of key constructs and their attributes that include at least (i) the classification of relevant entities, phenomena, and structures/frameworks of interest, and (ii) possibilities for the operationalization of focal constructs, and for development and/or testing of mid-range theories of relevance, and associated causal claims; (b) a foundation for the development and/or testing of integration mechanisms, interventions, boundary conditions, and sub-field specific or boundary-spanning constructs; and (c) suggestions for actionable constructs, guidelines, and strategies for different stakeholders of relevance. Given the importance of constructs, foundational premises, classificational schemata, and nomological networks for theory development cumulatively, future research can build such theoretical foundations using the conceptual framing offered in this paper.

Integrative mechanism

The literature In 2019, Moorman et al., argued that the marketing discipline is stronger when its 'tribes' unite to tackle problems. In our paper, we have advanced a general theoretical mechanism by which collaboration through integration across sub-fields can be accomplished. In particular, we have suggested that understanding integration in a given system depends upon understanding both the parts of a system, and the relations among them. A great example of the use of this principle appears in Moorman and Day (2016)—the influential MARKORG paper that provides at least two examples of integration using both parts, and relations among them. In this regard they state:

> One approach is to treat each MARKORG element as an integrating force for the alignment of the other elements. Marketing leaders are integrating agents that facilitate coordination by directing the development or deployment of capabilities, the selection of metrics and incentives, the cultivation of cultural values, and the design of structure. A market-oriented culture reflects integrating values that align mindsets, motivations, and behaviors to a set of deeply held values. A firm's marketing capabilities are integrating processes that facilitate coordination by dictating action steps, communicating cultural values, and producing organizational structures to get work accomplished. Integrating configurations such as organizational structures and control systems coordinate action by directing attention and facilitating information flows (2016, p. 26).

Here the parts are the elements: marketing leaders (human capital), market-oriented culture, marketing capabilities, and configurations; and the relations among them align through the integrating force within these relations among them fostered by coordination, values, processes, and directing attention.

In this same regard, Moorman and Day (2016) also state:

> Another approach is to identify integrating mechanisms that influence the selection or operationalization of each MARKORG element. The voice of the customer serves as an integrator that drives fundamental strategy decisions and aligns people, processes, and structure around the customer (Griffin and Hauser 1993). The customer value proposition serves as an integrator because it sets the strategic direction regarding target markets, the offering, and the firm's competitors. The business model integrates the organization by aligning firm choices in capabilities, partnerships, and strategies to create customer value, capture economic value, and protect that value from competitors (Porter 1996). Finally, marketing doctrine, defined as a "firm's unique principles, distilled from its experiences, which provide firm-wide guidance on market-facing choices" (Challagalla, Murtha, and Jaworski 2014, p. 1), may serve as an integrating mechanism by guiding the selection of people, capabilities, reward systems, and even structures (2016, p. 26).

Here the parts are the MARKORG elements: capabilities, configuration, human capital, and culture; and the relations among them align through the integrating force of relations among them, fostered by customer voice, the offering itself, alignment among leaders and employees, and uniquely distilled principles.

In each of the foregoing two cases, the helpful notion that we have suggested operates in stakeholder systems theory—which explains how the operation of a 'whole' that depends upon the contribution of each of the parts in the relationship—can serve as an integrating mechanism among marketing's sub-fields. And using both Figure1 and Table 1, we have attempted to demonstrate how both the collaborative and competitive interests of marketing's sub-field stakeholders can be considered integratively by conceptualizing the composition of an illustrative part-to-whole assembly grounded in the marketing literature.

Further research A step beyond the part-to-whole conceptualization within stakeholder systems theory—which suggests that elements and their relations work together to foster integration—is to imagine an even more tightly integrated solution. This further step stems from the suggestion by Hernes (1998), who argues concerning the nature of theoretical mechanisms, but in such a way as to enable us to envision a more deeply-rooted version of integration. Specifically, he suggests that a theoretical mechanism describes how "a set of interacting parts—an assembly of elements—produc[es] an effect not inherent in any one of them" (1998, p. 74). Furthermore, Holzner (1967) has specified three types of integration: same with same (all the oranges in the bin), similar with similar (all the food in the grocery store), and different with a common purpose (all the retail establishments that sell products to customers—with the common purpose being product sales). Where each marketing sub-field can be considered different, but with each having its own purpose, then the challenge for future research is to identify that focal purpose. As we previously have noted, there are several nominees to serve this function; and in Table 2, we have outlined a framework for moving part-to whole-based integration forward. However, we previously also have noted that future research, and the research dialogue surrounding the use of the systems/integration perspective as a tool is warranted. But how could this next step be undertaken?

Helpfully, classification theory—as what we believe to be an important explanatory branch of systems theory—has developed to suggest a mechanism. One of the more in-depth approaches to classification within systems has been pioneered in library science. Ranganathan (1965, pp. 34-35) states:

> "The crucial problem of knowledge classification is the choice of *Invariant* [emphasis in original]. In the phenomenal level, all the myriads of classes stare at us. Each of the myriads of the "Immediate-Neighborhood-Relations" (i.e. similar classes) plead for its being kept invariant in preference to all the others. Each pleads with more or less equally valid reasons … thinking about the mapping of the n-dimensional space of the Universe of knowledge on the one-dimensional space implied by Classified Sequence should not be started at the baffling, phenomenal level crowded with myriads of Immediate-Neighborhood-Relations, each claiming the status of *Invariant*. The more we recede from the Phenomenal Level towards the Seminal level, the less the number of claimants to the status of Invariant will

> be; the more amenable to grading the nature of the claimants will be; and the less complicated the problem will become."

Based on the idea of an 'invariant', a more tightly-specified result from integration becomes possible, as participants in the stakeholder system of the marketing discipline seek to identify as a focal point (common purpose)—the phenomenon by which other closely related phenomena will be classified. In systems theory, participants in the system thus seek to identify what has been conceptualized as a point of dynamic equilibrium—a situation in which all parts of the system are operating optimally (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). (This aspiration is, however, somewhat idealistic because, as the external environment is constantly changing, it is well accepted that complete dynamic equilibrium can never truly be reached in an open system.) Nonetheless, as we approach the point where more parts of the system also are moving toward operating optimally, it stands to reason that more congruence will be created. Fortunately, as a nexus of stakeholders within an open system, we can learn from feedback in this quest for dynamic equilibrium (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). It therefore appears to us that a three-step process of refinement could be possible: (a) selecting one of the major candidates for marketing's central focus as the common objective for the marketing discipline, (b) specifying the focal attributes of its parts, and (c) demonstrating how the attributes of the whole result from interrelations among the attributes of the parts. It seems reasonable to expect that the candidate that most effectively relates the attributes of its parts to the attributes of the whole (Figure 1) could serve a classificatory function in the further adjustment of marketing's troubled trajectory. In this way, further research can begin to address the puzzle that has been refined and posed in Table 2.

Institutional work

The literature It has been suggested that where researchers view the marketing discipline through an institutional lens (e.g., Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Wilkie & Moore, 2006), that the conceptualization and enactment of a deliberate program of change can help to restructure the institutions of the discipline in ways that sustain marketing as a core field of study (e.g., Key et al., 2021). In response to this suggestion, we have developed the analysis presented in Table 2, which offers ideas for the kinds of creation, maintenance and disruption institutional work that are implicated depending upon the various interests of marketing's stakeholders. Table 2 explicitly characterizes institutional strengths and opportunities associated with each of the three major candidates for marketing's central focus. Implicitly characterized is the further opportunity for each candidate to become the central focus. One of the simpler ways to compare the efficacy of the creation, maintenance, and disruption institutional work suggested, flows from the idea that productive courses of action will undertake the institutional work that magnifies the effectiveness of sub-field strengths on its focal opportunities. Examination of the literature supporting this analysis suggests possibilities for the institutional work implicated (Table 2). It appears likely that the tendency of the marketing discipline toward one or another major candidate for marketing's central focus will depend on the level of engagement in the institutional work associated with each such strategic action of the actors in the major-candidate literature stream.

Accordingly, given that engagement operates through people in roles, two important questions follow: (1) what challenges and opportunities shape their work, and (2) what do those in leader roles do to activate these part-to-whole linkages? In this setting, when we view leadership as role-based, rather than person-based, we then can use upper-echelons theory (e.g., Hambrick, 2007; Neely et al., 2020) to develop a leadership-role-based approach to a discussion of the foregoing two engagement questions. As such, the outcomes of actions taken by leaders in the marketing discipline are expected to be shaped by institutions, that is, by the expectations, incentives, information, norms and routines of the marketing discipline. An illustrative list of those types of actors who are influential in the discipline would include at least journal editors and editorial board members, academic society officers, doctoral program directors, academic conference program chairs, and so forth. When considering role-based leadership, then, we are suggesting that the challenges of conducting institutional work to address the manifesto conversation are inherently structural. By this we mean that both field leaders and followers in that field work within an institutionalized research context with challenges and opportunities characterized by, for example, fragmented subfield incentives, review norms that reward single-tribe novelty, siloed conference tracks, and career risk for junior scholars who attempt integrative/cross-siloed work (e.g., see Wang et al., 2016).

We therefore suggest, for example, that editors and editorial board members can create integration expectations in journal purpose statements, review standards, and selection of special issue topics; societies can disrupt silo cues by shifting to problem-led tracks and formats (e.g., Registered Reports) that evaluate design quality rather than results; doctoral programs can maintain shared standards that lower the cost of cross-subfield replication and reuse; and conference program chairs can create sessions that group papers to emphasize both competitive and collaborative interests within the marketing discipline. By configuring these upper-echelon roles around creation, maintenance, and disruption, stakeholder interests are aligned with the integrative mechanism that we propose, and leadership is made visible as enacted practice. As an even more targeted example, in Table 3 we have catalogued some of the institutional work presently underway within the marketing discipline, and have characterized it according to type: creation, maintenance, and disruption work.

{Insert Table 3 about here}

As Table 3 illustrates, we believe that the context for the institutional work that can help to reshape marketing's troubled trajectory is presently in operation. We therefore are quite confident in suggesting that to the extent that upper-echelon leader-actors choose to engage, the road is open. We also note the somewhat well-documented actuality that substantive changes in social outcomes can be effected by a determined/ committed minority (e.g., between 4 and 15 percent, [McLeod et al., 1997; Xie et al., 2011]). Hence, by viewing adjustment of the troubled trajectory of the marketing discipline through an institutional lens—and especially by contemplating the possibilities for leader-actors to engage in the types and forms of institutional work suggested by our stakeholder-systems-based analysis—we can suggest some very practical actions that marketing thought leaders can take to address the implications of the manifesto conversation. And we say practical, because, in framing the possibilities conceptually, we have tried to advance good theory, understanding, as suggested by Lewin (1943, p. 118), "nothing [is] as practical as a good theory." Our approach, then—one map … many travelers—offers opportunities to all marketing research stakeholders to meet the challenges ahead.

Further research Since the foregoing exploration of the institutional work implications for each major sub-field is quite speculative—with the intention to be helpful at least in direction-setting—further research would be very helpful in firming up these specific speculations into research hypotheses, and then to test them within the discipline. Each of the 54 suggested institutional work actions provided as speculative in Table 2, for example, constitutes grounds for an untested hypothesis. Also, there is room for debate and further dialogue on the 18 'how' assertions in Table 2, as well as on the 18 assertions concerning institutional strengths and opportunities. Again, this analysis has been provided as a foundation for analysis of marketing's troubled trajectory, and thus is really not intended to be dispositive.

This said, a particularly useful next step in addressing the aforementioned untested hypotheses would be to design a staged agenda. That is, future research could, first, prioritize the actions laid out in Table 2 according to their feasibility and expected impact(s). Second, running a number of small pilots with pre-registered outcomes would be warranted. This then could be followed by simple before-after comparisons that would yield estimated effects on the integration quality, replication practices, and review efficiency. Third, researchers could then be enabled to standardize a baseline set of metrics and a reporting template to document mechanisms and constructs comprehensively. Together, these steps could convert the untested nature of Table 2 contents into evidence, which stakeholders in the marketing field can compare, and from which they can learn.

Conclusion

In this paper, we first identified a deep connection and natural compatibility between the discipline of marketing and stakeholder theory. It likely now is evident that the competitive and collaborative attributes of the four marketing sub-fields also ‘go together’. Using stakeholder systems theory, we have argued both (a) that competitiveness among sub-fields operates to invoke mutual improvements for the marketing stakeholders of each sub-field, and (b) that due to the constitutive nature of systems, each necessary contribution by a given sub-field can be identified and included in sufficiently serving marketing’s stakeholders. The former utilizes a comparative logic (necessary to improve), the latter a completeness one (sufficient to accomplish). But in addition, we have taken a somewhat creative leap by further extending the analysis to offer a means to evaluate the three candidates for marketing’s central focus—both as to their capabilities to serve marketing's stakeholders, but also as to the institutional work that is implicated in the charge for the marketing discipline to "successfully use its human and institutional resources" to *adjust* its troubled trajectory.

Such undertakings—those that seek to reconcile competitive and collaborative stakeholder interests, where there is substantive stakeholder pluralism—are not new (c.f., Mitchell et al., 2016). Organization theory, for example, has developed multiple lenses that offer various ways to see such decision making. The stakeholder salience view suggests prioritizing stakeholders based on their attributes, specifically power, legitimacy, and urgency (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997; Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnefeld, 1999). The corporate governance (strategic) view suggests a shareholder-based focus (e.g., Jensen, 2002; Harrison, Bosse, & Phillips, 2010). The organizational design view suggests using a hybrid-organization approach that emphasizes the design of organizational structures and the cultivation of organizational identities such that the multiple institutional logics that accompany stakeholder pluralism can be accommodated effectively (e.g., Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Besharov & Smith, 2014). The moral engagement view suggests the adjudication of morally diverse stakeholder claims using dialogue, sensegiving, and coalition-building, which can redirect conflict constructively (e.g., Bundy, Vogel, & Zachary, 2018; Donaldson & Dunfee, 1999; Ganson, He, & Henisz, 2022; Mitchell et al., 2016). And, as previously noted, the intracorporate market approach is useful in conceptualizing how competing stakeholder interests can be reconcilable.

But rather than seeking to challenge any of these views, in this paper we have offered the stakeholder systems approach as a means whereby the competitive and collaborative context of contested organizational terrain within the marketing discipline can be made more explicit, and as a tool for enabling the reconciliation process to be better supported as it continues. Accordingly, as we conclude the paper, we believe that it is appropriate—and will likely be of great benefit—to issue a call for both additional discourse on the research question, and on our response to addressing it; and also for action that extends, tests, and amends our arguments. To put this invitation in stakeholder systems terms, we call for work that contributes to the continuing development of an effective *solutions nexus* among all of marketing's research stakeholders. It therefore is our hope that our analysis in this paper can serve this effectuating purpose well, as the marketing discipline seeks to use its human and institutional resources to [adjust] its troubled trajectory, renew itself, and meet its responsibilities to its stakeholders.

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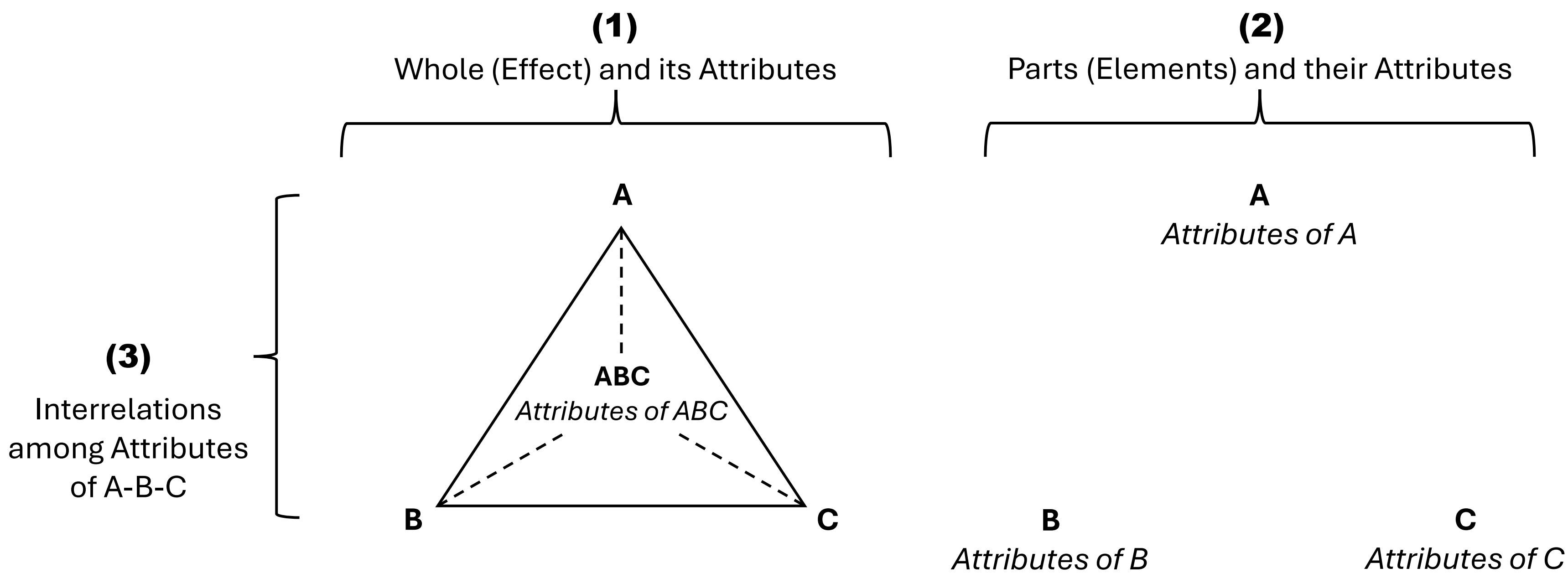

Figure 1. Attributes and their integration

Table 1. Competitive and collaborative stakeholder interests by marketing's sub-fields (with illustrative emphases)

1 ***Collaborative*** **Interests of Marketing's Sub-field Stakeholders ↓**	**2** ***Competitive*** **Interests of Marketing's Sub-field Stakeholders →**	**3** **Consumer Behavior** **Illustrative Emphasis: Produces research to enhance, inform, & enrich understanding of consumers by developing psychological insights (e.g., biases and vulnerabilities)**	**4** **Quantitative / Modeling** **Illustrative Emphasis: Produces research to increase analytical precision and resource allocation efficiency for marketing purposes**	**5** **Marketing Management / Strategy** **Illustrative Emphasis: Produces research to extend, create, and strengthen managerial relevance through marketing and strategic frameworks/logics**	**6** **Macromarketing** **Illustrative Emphasis: Produces research to broaden and integrate awareness of marketing impacts on societal well-being e.g., sustainability and/or CSR**
1 Advance marketing knowledge through analyses and insights	**Marketing academics**	Advance psychological insights into consumer decisions and experiences through theory-driven inquiry and measurement (Hamilton, 2016; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).	Increase analytical precision through decision-calculus and diffusion/ response modeling (Hanssens & Pauwels, 2016; Rust & Verhoef, 2005).	Strengthen marketing management's relevance through market-driven capabilities and competition theory (Hunt & Morgan, 1995; Katsikeas et al., 2016).	Integrate marketing with societal aspects through marketing-systems and societal-impact frameworks (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Hunt, Madhavaram, & Hatfield, 2022).
2 Emphasize marketing's social purpose and social responsibility	**Society**	Enhance consumer welfare through evidence on vulnerabilities and decision contexts (Baker, Gentry, & Rittenburg, 2005; Mende et al., 2024).	Provide evidence-based market views through market-response analytics (Hanssens, Parsons, & Schultz, 2001; Hanssens & Pauwels, 2016).	Align value creation with responsible growth through market-oriented strategy and stakeholder focus (Day, 1994; Varadarajan, 2015).	Advance sustainability and inclusion through market-driving approaches and systems thinking (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Hunt et al., 2022).
3 Focus on practice relevance, results and integration	**Marketing practice**	Inform behavior-based design through brand-knowledge and experimentally grounded insights (Keller, 1993; Hamilton, 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).	Better targeting and resource-allocation efficiency through experiments/ response models (Hanssens, Parsons, & Schultz, 2001; Wedel & Kannan, 2016).	Improve strategy execution through capability development and cross-functional alignment (Moorman & Day, 2016).	Enhance legitimacy with stakeholders through CSR/sustainability integration into market action (Wilkie & Moore, 2006; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021).
4 Emphasize importance of scientific rigor and breadth	**Social science research**	Enrich behavioral theory through integrative perspectives on consumer experiences (Hoffman & Novak, 2018; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).	Advance rigorous methods through econometrics and structural/time-series modeling (Hanssens, Parsons, & Schultz, 2001; Wedel & Kannan, 2016).	Extend marketing management knowledge through theory-informed, practice-relevant research (Hunt & Morgan, 1995; Varadarajan, 2015).	Broaden marketing's scientific scope through societal-level analysis that connects micro behaviors with macro outcomes (Wilkie & Moore, 2006).
5 Concentrate on market choice and value	**Consumers**	Understand needs and choice through models of biases and information processing (Hamilton, 2016; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).	Personalize value through estimating heterogeneous treatment effects and using analytics to target the right action to the right customer (Ascarza, 2018; Wedel & Kannan, 2016).	Create mutual value through market orientation and co-creation/service-dominant logic (Day, 1994; Vargo & Lusch, 2004).	Better well-being and equity through sustainable, inclusive market design (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Wilkie & Moore, 2006).
6 Furnish market evidence for policy and regulation	**Public policy makers**	Inform consumer protection through evidence on biases and vulnerabilities (Baker, Gentry, & Rittenburg, 2005; Kumar et al., 2024).	Provide evidence for regulation through measurement of market impact and welfare effects (Hanssens & Pauwels, 2016).	Align firm strategy with policy goals through social-marketing and stakeholder frameworks (Hunt, Madhavaram, & Hatfield, 2022; Varadarajan, 2015).	Improve policy alignment with market systems through sustainable-marketing frameworks (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Key et al., 2021).

Table 2. Possibilities for stakeholder-system-based institutional work on three major candidates for marketing's central focus

1 Stakeholder Interests (see Table 1 rows) / Three Major Candidates	**2 Service-dominant logic:** **Marketing focused on 5 service axioms: (1) Service, (2) value cocreated, (3) all actors are resource integrators, (4) value is beneficiary determined, (5) value cocreation coordinated by actor-generated institutions & institutional arrangements (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, 2016)**	**3 GFIM (General Framework of Integrative Marketing)** **GFIM integrates the elements of "the most dominant marketing thinking,… market orientation, R-A theory, and service-dominant logic" as the central focus of the marketing discipline (Parvatiyar & Sheth 2021, p. 443)**	**4 Resource-advantage theory** **Advances 9 premises that constitute a general theory of competition (Hunt & Morgan, 1995) that is both cross-disciplinary as well as a general theory of marketing—based on five detailed arguments for R-A theory being a general theory of marketing (Hunt, 2010, 2013).**
1 Marketing academics: Advance marketing knowledge through analysis and insights	***How?*** Uses S-D Logic as an integrative, transdisciplinary frame to link the four sub-fields via service-ecosystem and institutions lenses; develops mid-range theories and "oscillating foci" across levels of analysis (Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2016, 2017).	***How?*** Uses GFIM as a unifying frame that links the four sub-fields by (i) centering fundamental marketing processes and (ii) explicitly connecting them to evolving contextual forces in order to reduce fragmentation and restore a shared disciplinary lens (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021).	***How?*** Uses R-A theory as a dynamic, evolutionary theory of competition to integrate the four sub-fields into a single process view (Hunt & Morgan, 1995; Hunt, 1999, 2011).
	Institutional Strengths and Opportunities? S: Broad, general theory of value cocreation. O: Inherent abstractness would benefit from evidence and mid-range elaboration for specific domains (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, 2017).	***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Offers an inclusive, integrative framework that addresses the field's splintering and identity concerns; positions an overarching architecture to cover mid-range theories. O: Breadth and present lack of clarity suggests that constructs and causal claims be operationalized and embedded (e.g., in doctoral training and editorial norms, Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021).	***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Clear foundational premises (P1–P9) and disequilibrium, innovation-endogenous view; embraces institutions and cross-disciplinary literatures; strong explanatory/predictive program. O: Inherent abstractness could benefit from careful operationalization and continued empirical testing across sub-fields (Hunt, 2011; Hunt & Morgan, 1996).
	What institutional work is implicated? Creation: theorizing/educating to diffuse S-D axioms; Maintenance: embed S-D topics in doctoral curricula/journal scopes; Disruption: goods-dominant/firm-centric assumptions about "delivering" value (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, 2016).	***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: cross-subfield doctoral modules and special issues explicitly building GFIM-aligned mid-range theories; Maintenance: shared language on core processes across sub-fields; Disruption: siloed, method-first gatekeeping that sidelines theory integration (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021).	***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: doctoral seminars/theory courses and special issues that develop mid-range tests of R-A; Maintenance: cross-disciplinary bridges that R-A already respects; Disruption: static-equilibrium assumptions in curricula and reviewing (Hunt, 1999, 2011).

1 Stakeholder Interests (see Table 1 rows) / Three Major Candidates	2 Service-dominant logic: Marketing focused on 5 service axioms: (1) Service, (2) value cocreated, (3) all actors are resource integrators, (4) value is beneficiary determined, (5) value cocreation coordinated by actor-generated institutions & institutional arrangements (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, 2016)	3 GFIM (General Framework of Integrative Marketing) GFIM integrates the elements of "the most dominant marketing thinking,… market orientation, R-A theory, and service-dominant logic" as the central focus of the marketing discipline (Parvatiyar & Sheth 2021, p. 443)	4 Resource-advantage theory Advances 9 premises that constitute a general theory of competition (Hunt & Morgan, 1995) that is both cross-disciplinary as well as a general theory of marketing—based on five detailed arguments for R-A theory being a general theory of marketing (Hunt, 2010, 2013).
2 Society: Emphasize marketing's social purpose and social responsibility	***How?*** Frame well-being, ethics, environmental and social sustainability as service-ecosystem viability/resilience problems coordinated by institutions; pursue institutional innovations that improve societal outcomes (Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2008, 2017).	***How?*** Treat marketing's purpose as advancing societal well-being by aligning firm actions with sustainability and stakeholder goals and specify how marketing practice and policy jointly steer systems (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021).	***How?*** Use R-A to evaluate how competition based on heterogeneous, imperfectly mobile resources yields positions of competitive advantage, innovation, quality and productivity, which links firm-level competition to growth and societal well-being (Hunt, 1999).
	Institutional Strengths and Opportunities? S: Multi-stakeholder orientation surfaces externalities and context; links micro–meso–macro. O: Implementation complexity and measurement at societal level still developing (Vargo & Lusch, 2017).	***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Provides policy-related vocabulary (aggregate marketing system; guided markets) and a pathway from marketing actions to societal outcomes. O: Resolve vulnerability to "green/SDG washing" without transparent metrics and accountability (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021).	***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Provides explicit welfare/competitiveness tests and recognizes ethical constraints and the role of institutions. O: Distributional/inequality questions may require complementary frameworks beyond R-A's performance focus (Hunt, 1999, 2011).
	What institutional work is implicated? Creation: ethical-practice and sustainability standards (institutional innovation); Maintenance: ecosystem-health metrics; Disruption: old rules that prioritize output volume over the value people actually get in use (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, 2017).	***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: standardized, public-facing well-being and sustainability indicators tied to marketing processes; Maintenance: cross-sector partnerships that track ecosystem health; Disruption: firm-centric success narratives in evaluating marketing's value (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021).	***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: research tying R-A processes to sustainability/wealth-of-nations outcomes; Maintenance: institutions that improve information, protect property/innovation; Disruption: simplistic 'market-share = monopoly' mentality in public discourse (Hunt, 1999).

1 Stakeholder Interests (see Table 1 rows) / Three Major Candidates	2 Service-dominant logic: Marketing focused on 5 service axioms: (1) Service, (2) value cocreated, (3) all actors are resource integrators, (4) value is beneficiary determined, (5) value cocreation coordinated by actor-generated institutions & institutional arrangements (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, 2016)	3 GFIM (General Framework of Integrative Marketing) GFIM integrates the elements of "the most dominant marketing thinking,… market orientation, R-A theory, and service-dominant logic" as the central focus of the marketing discipline (Parvatiyar & Sheth 2021, p. 443)	4 Resource-advantage theory Advances 9 premises that constitute a general theory of competition (Hunt & Morgan, 1995) that is both cross-disciplinary as well as a general theory of marketing—based on five detailed arguments for R-A theory being a general theory of marketing (Hunt, 2010, 2013).
3 Marketing practice: Focus on practice relevance, results and integration	***How?*** Shift from "make-and-sell" to "sense-and-respond"; compete via value propositions, resource integration, and service-for-service networks with beneficiaries as cocreators (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008, 2016).	***How?*** Operationalize GFIM by redesigning offerings, orchestrating value chains, and building dashboards that link Consumer Behavior views and modeling to strategy choices and Macromarketing outcomes (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021).	***How?*** Manage and combine basic resources into bundles that are hard to imitate in order to obtain positional advantage; use alliances to access complementary resources and develop new ones (Wittmann, Hunt, & Arnett, 2009; Hunt & Madhavaram, 2012).
	Institutional Strengths and Opportunities? S: Advantage from operant resources and knowledge flows across the ecosystem; coordination through institutions. O: Develop cross-actor governance and better and novel KPIs (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016).	***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Actionable guidelines that can raise performance and legitimacy. O: Conceptualize cross-functional governance, new KPIs, and culture change that many firms currently lack (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021).	***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Actionable constructs with demonstrated links to competitive advantage and performance; provides tool-like frameworks for managers. O: Resolve implementation/measurement challenges and boundary conditions; and possible empirical limitations (Wittmann, Hunt, & Arnett, 2009; Hunt & Madhavaram, 2012).
	What institutional work is implicated? Creation: cocreation routines and platform governance; Maintenance: beneficiary-oriented, relational KPIs; Disruption: siloed, product-centric planning and "value delivery" language (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016).	***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: ecosystem-level KPIs, supplier codes, and sustainability-by-design processes; Maintenance: routines for partner enablement and reporting; Disruption: short-term, response-metric-only management and "deliver value" pipeline views (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021).	***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: alliance competence, top-management support, trust/commitment; Maintenance: routines that continually reinvest in advantage-producing resources; Disruption: static structure-only thinking by taking advantage of R-A-grounded frameworks (Wittmann, Hunt, & Arnett, 2009; Hunt & Madhavaram, 2012).

1 Stakeholder Interests (see Table 1 rows) / Three Major Candidates	2 Service-dominant logic: Marketing focused on 5 service axioms: (1) Service, (2) value cocreated, (3) all actors are resource integrators, (4) value is beneficiary determined, (5) value cocreation coordinated by actor-generated institutions & institutional arrangements (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, 2016)	3 GFIM (General Framework of Integrative Marketing) GFIM integrates the elements of "the most dominant marketing thinking,… market orientation, R-A theory, and service-dominant logic" as the central focus of the marketing discipline (Parvatiyar & Sheth 2021, p. 443)	4 Resource-advantage theory Advances 9 premises that constitute a general theory of competition (Hunt & Morgan, 1995) that is both cross-disciplinary as well as a general theory of marketing—based on five detailed arguments for R-A theory being a general theory of marketing (Hunt, 2010, 2013).
4 Social science research: Emphasize importance of scientific rigor & breadth	***How?*** Adopt levels-of-analysis plus structuration to study value-in-context and institutional coordination; build cross-disciplinary bridges (Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016).	***How?*** Use GFIM as a bridge across sociology/economics/management by situating marketing in a contextual, multi-actor system; consolidate scattered sub-field insights into cumulative programs that track the desired outcomes (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021).	***How?*** Use R-A's view to connect marketing with sociology/economics by showing that social structures, networks, and culture shape economic action; R-A explicitly views institutions and public policy within competition (Hunt & Arnett, 2003; Hunt, 2011).
	Institutional Strengths and Opportunities? S: Integrative systems/ecosystems lens facilitates/encourages importing theory. O: Opening for mid-range theories and evidence-based designs is explicit (Vargo & Lusch, 2017).	***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Encourages comparative accumulation, theory pluralism, and level-of-analysis clarity. O: Opening for construct discipline and stronger causal identification to avoid becoming purely narrative integration (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021).	***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Bridges the extremes; recognizes embedded ties and trust can strengthen competition. O: Work to resolve difficulties in outlining measurable resource advantages (Hunt & Arnett, 2003).
	What institutional work is implicated? Creation: interdisciplinary methods/centers on service ecosystems; Maintenance: programs that accumulate meso-/macro data; Disruption: single-level reductionism that ignores context (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, 2017).	***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: joint methods consortia and shared datasets for testing cross-level GFIM propositions; Maintenance: citation and review norms that encourage integration; Disruption: siloed, one-level approaches that miss system effects and contexts (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021).	***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: interdisciplinary programs and joint studies on embedded resources; Maintenance: pluralistic, cross-field citation practices; Disruption: isolated theories that ignore institutions/social structure (Hunt & Arnett, 2003; Hunt, 2011).

1 Stakeholder Interests (see Table 1 rows) / Three Major Candidates	**2 Service-dominant logic:** **Marketing focused on 5 service axioms: (1) Service, (2) value cocreated, (3) all actors are resource integrators, (4) value is beneficiary determined, (5) value cocreation coordinated by actor-generated institutions & institutional arrangements (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, 2016)**	**3 GFIM (General Framework of Integrative Marketing)** **GFIM integrates the elements of "the most dominant marketing thinking,… market orientation, R-A theory, and service-dominant logic" as the central focus of the marketing discipline (Parvatiyar & Sheth 2021, p. 443)**	**4 Resource-advantage theory** **Advances 9 premises that constitute a general theory of competition (Hunt & Morgan, 1995) that is both cross-disciplinary as well as a general theory of marketing—based on five detailed arguments for R-A theory being a general theory of marketing (Hunt, 2010, 2013).**
5 Consumers: Concentrate on market choice and value	***How?*** Treat consumers as cocreators in holistic, networked experiences coordinated by institutions; emphasize value-in-context (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016, 2017). ***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Empowers participation and recognizes contextual/value-in-use variability. O: Work on accountability/measurement when value is institution-dependent (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). ***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: participation/access norms and shared design practices; Maintenance: consumer-protection standards suited to cocreation; Disruption: the idea that firms deliver value unilaterally (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2016, 2017).	***How?*** Map consumer outcomes (experience, well-being, vulnerability) explicitly into the framework: direct demand toward responsible consumption, design for life-cycle value, and measure value-in-use beyond immediate response metrics (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021). ***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Aligns Consumer Behavior with macro well-being; legitimizes consumer-centered sustainability. O: Address the attitude–behavior gap and measurement challenges through more standardized consumer outcome indicators (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021). ***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: reporting standards for consumer well-being, vulnerability, and life-cycle impacts; Maintenance: current knowledge of successful demand-shaping interventions; Disruption: tactics that reward volume without outcome accountability (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021).	***How?*** Ground Consumer Behavior in R-A premises: intra-industry demand is heterogeneous; consumers have imperfect, costly information; firms compete to deliver greater relative value/efficiency, improving quality/innovation over time (Hunt, 1999, 2011). ***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Competition and innovation-based process tends to enhance consumer value; acknowledges ethics. O: Address the limitation that consumer vulnerabilities still depend on institutions and information patterns and availability (Hunt, 1999). ***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: market-orientation and transparency that lower information costs; Maintenance: consumer-protection standards that preserve healthy competition; Disruption: equating quick price or share wins with welfare, ignoring resource positions (Hunt, 1999).

1 Stakeholder Interests (see Table 1 rows) / Three Major Candidates	2 Service-dominant logic: **Marketing focused on 5 service axioms: (1) Service, (2) value cocreated, (3) all actors are resource integrators, (4) value is beneficiary determined, (5) value cocreation coordinated by actor-generated institutions & institutional arrangements (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, 2016)**	3 GFIM (General Framework of Integrative Marketing) **GFIM integrates the elements of "the most dominant marketing thinking,… market orientation, R-A theory, and service-dominant logic" as the central focus of the marketing discipline (Parvatiyar & Sheth 2021, p. 443)**	4 Resource-advantage theory **Advances 9 premises that constitute a general theory of competition (Hunt & Morgan, 1995) that is both cross-disciplinary as well as a general theory of marketing—based on five detailed arguments for R-A theory being a general theory of marketing (Hunt, 2010, 2013).**
6 Public policy makers: Furnish market evidence for policy and regulation	***How?*** Consider markets as service ecosystems; design/adjust institutional arrangements across levels in order to guide coordination and well-being (Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2016, 2017). ***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Handles externalities and multiple stakeholders; links local/global and micro/macro. O: Address the difficulty in operationalization/ enforcement at this level of breadth possibly with mid-range usable forms (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2017). ***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: co-regulatory frameworks and standards for ecosystem viability; Maintenance: legitimacy/monitoring routines; Disruption: product-centric, firm-only policy defaults which ignore institutions (Vargo & Lusch, 2016, 2017).	***How?*** Position GFIM within an aggregate marketing system where government interventions complement corporate action which in turn provides templates to align regulation with sustainable development and market functioning (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021). ***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Clear role for policy alongside firms/consumers; supports SDG-level coordination. O: Work to address implementation complexity because GFIM requires multi-level data and inter-agency coordination (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021). ***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: co-regulatory frameworks, science-based targets, and policy briefs that turn GFIM into actions; Maintenance: monitoring systems and partnerships among different sectors; Disruption: no-intervention or KPI-only defaults that ignore or undermine system-level effects (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021; Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2021).	***How?*** Use R-A's tests for "when strategy is pro-competitive" and its focus on resource heterogeneity/competitive advantage to inform antitrust and regulation; adopt a dynamic, process view rather than static market-share one (Hunt, 1999, 2011). ***Institutional Strengths and Opportunities?*** S: Offers operational questions for assessing sustained superior performance and its sources. O: Address potential complexity of application, which likely requires evidence on resources and positions, not just structure (Hunt, 1999). ***What institutional work is implicated?*** Creation: policy guidance that aligns antitrust analysis with R-A's process view; Maintenance: protection using intellectual property and rule of law, but without creating dominance; Disruption: structure-only presumptions that ignore resource-based competition (Hunt, 1999, 2011).

Table 3. Examples of Institutional Work Underway Within the Marketing Discipline

	Example	Sub-field	Institutional Work Types	Institutional Work Forms	Action(s) Taken	Reference
Creation	AMA-wide Journals Research Transparency Policy (2025)	Cross-field (CB/QM/MMS/Macro)	Creation	• Changing normative associations • Constructing normative networks • Educating	Cross-journal policy aligning JM/JMR processes; explains data availability statements and verification.	https://www.ama.org/research-transparency-policy
	Journal of Marketing: Special Issue "Better Marketing for a Better World" (BMBW)	Cross-field (Macro)	Creation	• Constructing normative networks • Educating • Theorizing	SI organized around multi-stakeholder societal problems.	https://www.ama.org/journal-of-marketing-special-issue-better-marketing-for-a-better-world
	Journal of Consumer Research: Expands formats to include Registered Reports (effective Jan. 1, 2025)	CB	Creation	• Changing normative association • Defining • Educating • Mimicry	JCR now accepts Registered Reports (methods reviewed before data/results) and brief commentaries.	https://consumerresearcher.com/more-options-for-authors-expanding-the-paper-formats-considered-at-jcr
	International Journal of Research in Marketing: Special Issue "Generative AI, Synthetic Data, and Synthetic Respondents in Marketing Research" (2025)	Cross-field (CB/QM/MMS/Macro)	Creation	• Constructing normative networks • Defining • Educating	Launched a problem-led SI linking methods and societal issues; co-organized with MSI.	https://www.sciencedirect.com/special-issue/324829/generative-ai-synthetic-data-and-synthetic-respondents-in-marketing-research
Maintenance	Journal of Marketing Research: Research Transparency Policy Workshop (May 16, 2024)	Cross-field (CB/QM/MMS/Macro)	Maintenance (with Creation elements)	• Defining • Educating • Embedding/ routinizing	Live workshop explaining JMR's transparency policy; Q&A and guidance for authors.	https://www.ama.org/jmr-research-transparency-workshop/
	Academy of Marketing Science: Research Data & Source Code Policy	Cross-field (CB/QM/MMS/Macro)	Maintenance	• Deterring • Enabling • Policing	Society-level rule: editors may require data/source code; non-disclosure can disqualify publication.	https://www.ams-web.org/data-policy
Disruption	Journal of Marketing: Research Transparency Policy (effective 2023)	QM/MMS	Disruption (with Creation elements)	• Defining • Educating • Embedding/ routinizing • Policing	Introduced a transparency policy; some papers undergo Data Editor verification pre-acceptance. Closing transparency gaps and ensuring safe data retention	https://www.ama.org/journal-of-marketing-policy-for-research-transparency
	International Journal of Research in Marketing: Registered Reports (editorial/news, 2024)	QM	Disruption (with Creation elements)	• Defining • Educating • Mimicry • Theorizing	Opened Registered Reports track; peer review before data collection.	https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/international-journal-of-research-in-marketing/about/news/registered-reports-international-journal-of-research-in-marketing
	Journal of Marketing: New policy for reporting empirical results (announced Feb. 11, 2025)	Cross-field (CB/QM/MMS/Macro)	Disruption (with Creation elements)	• Changing normative associations • Defining • Educating	JM adopts a comprehensive reporting policy (beyond dichotomous p-values) aligned with McShane et al.	https://www.ama.org/2025/02/11/change-in-journal-of-marketings-policy-for-reporting-results