

## Autobiographical accounts of scholarly stars, Part IV

The role of the true marketing scholar is to uncover myths and present reality in innovative ways (Gummesson, 1997, p. 58).

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### Introduction

This is the fourth installment of our collection of autobiographical accounts of scholarly stars. And what a journey it has been. We have ranged across the disciplinary spectrum, publishing material from managerially oriented scholars, conceptually dedicated researchers, interpretively focused consumer culture pioneers, committed service academics, marketing and consumption historians and historians of marketing thought and some people whose output is simply not easy to categorize since they literally shifted from one trajectory to the next. Advice has been provided about the development of research programs, the value of service to the academy, business community and wider society (e.g. via expert witness duties).

So, whatever perspective you take in terms of your own research, at whichever level you find yourself and where you envisage heading in the future, there has been sage advice for all. We have certainly learned a great deal and that – we would respectfully submit – is one of the reasons for editing a special issue. You will see the backstage of academic life, meet fascinating people, and watch the maturation of a paper from its origins to the final finished product. Of course, the underlying reason most of us undertake research, we would hope, is not just for the paycheck, but rather for the transformational opportunities it provides. Through our research, we grow, identify possible connections and contributions and hopefully, just hopefully, leave a mark on the discipline. Not all will reach the rarefied heights of the scholars found in the pages of the previous three issues and included in this one, but we can all at least aim for the stars.

In this issue, once again, we have a variety of perspectives. There are contributions from those at the cutting edge of technology and marketing; pioneers who helped us understand the relationship between marketing and development; those who have invigorated critical and radical perspectives; one who has journeyed through a great deal of intellectual terrain and helped set up foundations and institutions along the way; combined with pioneering service researchers and journal editors. To repeat what we said above a little, there is something for everyone in this issue.

The first contribution by Ruby Roy Dholakia is truly fascinating. We gain an insight into the global flows of academic scholars via Ruby's detailed narrative. It begins in Calcutta, India, where Ruby was born into a substantial Indian family. Throughout the narrative, it is hard not to see Ruby's life trajectory as extraordinarily unusual and familiar at the same time. Like many of her fellow travelers in academia, Ruby was an avid reader – a little too much into books for her family, who worried that her focus on reading and lack of interest in household chores (and who can blame her!) might not make her the most attractive package for another family seeking a wife for their son. From her very earliest years, then, the reader is presented with Ruby's rebellious streak (Dholakia, 2016) – an approach to life that has made it interesting, productive, and progressive at the same time. She is, of course, well known for pioneering research in marketing and development, the issue of choice and choicelessness – the latter signifying a departure from the time honored, if grossly incorrect



interpretation of marketplace dynamics – as well as a consistent and impactful series of publications on technology and marketing. She has literally been a pioneer in many fields.

Serendipity seems to have played a major role in Ruby's life. Initially, this is witnessed in her first journey to the USA as a 15 year-old. This trip was partly a function of sibling need, parental openness, and her own virtuosity. A highly talented student, but somewhat of an unusual figure striding along the sidewalks of Hollister, CA, Ruby underlines that cultural and racial difference was and remains a powerful force in our society. People, she explains, would literally stare at her, having, presumably, rarely seen a young Indian girl wandering through their town; none guessing that this was an academic star in the ascendant.

Ruby entered multiple, highly regarded institutions in the United States, working with some of the leading figures in our subject. From Hollister, she moved to Berkeley, living there as the 1960s sprang into life. She admits that her life was fairly straitlaced. Once again, she was in the stacks, reading course content, and being taught by the impressive roster of, among others, David Revzan, E.T. Grether and Franco Nicosia. Ruby explicitly notes that two professors who had internationally oriented, somewhat macromarketing backgrounds, devoted their time to her, citing the influence of Jim Carman (a key author of influential macro-writing) and a former businessman with the rather excellent name of Mr Burns.

Not only did Ruby work hard academically, she had to supplement her income undertaking a variety of jobs. These included teaching Peace Corps Volunteers her mother tongue, Bengali. In addition, she undertook exactly those chores, albeit paid this time that she had assiduously sought to avoid at home, whilst working for a Jewish family. This was a good experience, with the family welcoming her into their lives, and helping her understand the cultural climate into which she was being immersed. But such time away from home, at a young age, must have been hard. Even so, she persevered. Within half a decade, Ruby was the proud possessor of multiple degrees, had secured her first major position at Wells Fargo Bank, as well as unfortunately suffering a serious accident. Like many people, no doubt, who leave their homes at such an early age, experience the highs and lows of life a substantial distance from their relatives, at a time when communication technology was expensive and much less accessible than today, Ruby did want to return to her family, something she did in 1970. For her, this was a culture shock. A young woman who had defied various conventions, treading a path through rigorous business education programs, she was now somewhat of an anomaly in her home country.

As she writes, her life path had deviated from the norm. Looking for an anchor, she found a new job, but appreciated fairly quickly that a return to academia had its appeal, managing to secure a position at one of the best universities in India, the Indian Institute of Management in Calcutta. Even there, her position was unusual; a highly trained young woman was teaching older, more experienced men. With the benefit of living an independent life, combined with tenacity and resolve, she managed her more senior cohorts successfully. This is not to suggest that life upon return to India was easy for Ruby, far from it. There were trials and tribulations awaiting her there, just as she had confronted others in the United States.

One of the benefits of being at a prestigious university was the access it provided to the business world in a “developing” nation and the contrast this provided with what Ruby was reading in the marketing literature of the time. The narratives being relayed were not especially commensurate, indeed riven with a combination of disinterest, misunderstanding and misinterpretation (Dholakia, 2016) – a point with which Nik Dholakia (2019) concurs in his own autobiographical reflections. Wanting to explore these and related issues in more depth, led her back to the United States and the renowned PhD program at Northwestern at

the time when – as Fuat Firat (2019) points out – this department was moving marketing beyond its more managerial boundaries (Dholakia, 2016).

Courtesy of the experience Sidney Levy had while working for Social Research where he registered that marketing was often being conducted by many non-traditional firms like charities, Ruby, Nik Dholakia (2019) and Fuat Firat (2019), were all about to align on a campus where deviation from the norm was often permitted, but within circumscribed boundaries. This is best reflected in the PhD dissertations that both Ruby and Nik undertook; issues of development, technology and social responsibility were all broadly speaking what they wanted to study, but marketing was not apparently ready for such radical topics. Their initial dissertation proposals were sidelined.

For those well versed in the literature, Firat's (1978) dissertation on the structuring of consumption patterns – a topic which he, Ruby and Nik have all progressed in extremely important directions (Dholakia and Firat, 2018; Dholakia *et al.*, 2018; Firat and Tadajewski, 2009) – adopted a more radical stance, arguing that marketing is premised on the idea that needs are innate to the individual and merely waiting to be understood. Our discipline, he believed, failed to ask the far more salient question from a critical standpoint, namely, how is it that our needs and the consumption patterns that are generated across communities, classes and societies are formatted by wider institutions including marketing? Firat presented his thesis as an “epistemological break” with received wisdom. He was not going to accept at face-value one of the core premises of our subject. As he writes:

Being interested in consumers as individual buyers only, consumer behavior is a micro discipline. It lacks an interest in macro processes, such as societal structures that tend to equate demand and supply (Firat, 1978, p. 16; emphasis in original).

For a PhD student, his willingness to break with convention demonstrates considerable intellectual originality and breathtaking self-assurance much in the vein of Hamilton's (1931) challenge to the historical lineage of caveat emptor in legal history. There is more than a little element of agreement between Hamilton and Firat:

At best a seller's words have a limited currency in court; salesmen are not limited to a simple recital of bare fact, and advertising has not ceased to be a creative art. The ordinary man who ventures forth to market with only his senses as his chapmen finds himself face to face with the great collectivism of salesmanship, with its serried ranks to batter down resistance and render impotent his will. As an individual he cannot be sure the article he was induced to purchase satisfies a need he really feels (Hamilton, 1931, p. 1187).

In Firat's hands:

[...] we do not accept needs as a given in the process of formation and transformation of consumption patterns. Neither do we accept the premise that needs are outcomes of internal processes in man, either psychological or biological. Instead, we treat needs as a problem to be understood – i.e., how do needs develop and change? We do not readily and without scepticism accept the classical assumption that economic activity and organization in society are results of an urge on the part of man to satisfy his consumption needs and that, therefore, the motivating force in an economy are the needs of man. We assume needs to be subject to change according to the changes in man's social, economic, and political environment, and try to explain the reasons and basic relationships in this change (Firat, 1978, pp. 16-17).

Her time at Northwestern, as we have already hinted, was a pivotal period in Ruby's life, both academically and personally. It is the location at which she met the second contributor to this volume, Nik Dholakia (2019), where she secured two *Journal of Consumer Research* acceptances and had been active on the research front in other areas. A quick return to India

is met with an equally speedy journey back, and with a minor detour in Kansas under their wings, Ruby and her burgeoning family, found themselves welcomed into the arms of a school that had a focus on macromarketing at the time, the University of Rhode Island, where Ruby spent the rest of her formal academic years. And busy years they were. Ruby's macromarketing related research expanded, the focus on development that was hovering in the background of her and Nik's minds was permitted to find an outlet; and Ruby tackled the types of socially oriented issues that can be associated with her early interest in electric cars, with a focus on consumer energy consumption being one major study pursued during this period. Among the most important, but grossly under cited papers she produced, was a macromarketing account of social marketing. Published in the *Journal of Macromarketing* (Dholakia, 1984), this is a landmark account that should figure prominently in the genealogy of critical social marketing. Not content with a substantive range of outputs, her focus became increasingly technologically oriented. Beyond this, institution building and work as the inaugural President of the International Society on Marketing and Development (ISMD) came calling.

And Ruby, as ever, answered admirably and it was a further linkage between the "rebel group" constituted by Ruby Roy Dholakia, Nik Dholakia and Fuat Firat who used their institution building skills to foster (with others) an international conference focused on nations traditionally outside of the attention of marketing thinkers who might actually have much to learn when exposed to the countries, scholars, public policymakers and research emerging from understudied locations (Dholakia, 2016). This institution, the publication (*Markets, Globalization and Development Review*) and the material peppering its pages is a source for serious insight. For starters, it is open-access, thereby ensuring that the voices of many different groups are heard (see: <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/mgdr/>). Moreover, it provides us with backstage knowledge that those unable to attend the conference may find slightly amusing. Grönroos (2017) has, for example, articulated how he challenged Philip Kotler's ideas on services marketing whilst driving with Kotler. Most of us would have avoided such a direct confrontation (apart from Stephen Brown (2017) we should add). But, Dholakia (2016, p.9) relates a story of an exchange at the ISMD conference in India, when Kotler faced a challenge from a worthy adversary:

When I co-chaired the India conference in 1991, the Prime Minister of India, after many attempts, agreed to inaugurate the conference [...] it offered a moment of awe and inspiration; at least for me. As conference co-chairs we were asked to write a speech for the Prime Minister (PM). After many days of consultation, a version was provided to the PM's office. At the podium, the PM – Mr Chandra Shekhar – listened intently to the opening remarks of Dr Philip Kotler, and then got up to basically tear apart Kotler's points with his own perspective on marketing and development, based not on his textbooks but on his political field experience in the low-income context of India. It was impromptu, unrehearsed, but offered by a very knowledgeable and powerful policymaker. I am sure half the audience agreed with the PM and the other half with Dr Kotler. We have to allow for multiple points of view.

The next paper would agree with this perspective, arguing that we do need to pursue multiple points of view, just that we need to do so in a way that encourages greater levels of critique in the discipline, rather than adherence to a managerial ideology and subservience to the needs of the business community. Nik Dholakia has, for a considerable period of time, been a leading figure in radical and critical marketing studies (Dholakia and Firat, 2019). With Johan Arndt, Fuat Firat and a host of other luminaries, he has sought to encourage marketing to take a critical and reflexive look at itself. Embedded within a great deal of his work is an acute awareness of the historical sedimentation of capitalism, the role of financial institutions and financialization in buttressing and extending the reaches of capital across

the planet and deeper within the subjectivity of the individual. Let us be clear, Dholakia is no fatalist. His writing is composed in a spirit of hope, in the desire to identify alternatives that encourage us to look beyond the “chains of illusion” (Fromm, 1962/2006) that bind us to corporate capitalism, to socially constructed patterns of consumption, and find alternatives that may make life more meaningful, rich and ecologically viable.

This is well illustrated in his most recent publication with Fuat Firat, where they evaluate the rise of heteromation for marketing. Basically, heteromation is defined by the increasing interaction, inter-dependence and possible substitution of human and machine life (Dholakia and Firat, 2019). Their thinking in this vein is highly critical of marketing, stressing its role in responding only to effective demand, that is, demand that can be paid for; they highlight its surveillance function (i.e. accumulating large amounts of data about consumers, using their knowledge and culturally circulating knowledge often without compensation); and the shifting nature of the employment relationship. With the rise of automation, many people will be unemployed or underemployed which indicates the possibility of severe structural dislocation, material deprivation and possibly a crisis of capitalism itself. After all, if machines replace workers, then who is going to buy the goods being ever more efficiently produced?

Reading this material, it is possible to see the intellectual development of Dholakia and Firat – the latter being another contributor to this special issue – come full circle. First, they were highly radical, often infusing their publications with various forms of critical social theory. Secondly, they entered a more postmodern phase, where their writing stressed a greater degree of agency for the consumer. However, they have both often been misread as stressing the liberatory aspects of consumption. Charitably, this misinterpretation can only be attributed to the reading of a complex series of publications through the prism of a title of a paper authored by Firat and Venkatesh (1995). In the 1995 *Journal of Consumer Research* paper, Firat and Venkatesh were actually quite cautious, underlining that the conditions of possibility for capitalistic reproduction continued to frame consumer practice. So, agency is being foregrounded to a greater extent, but agency that is formatted and facilitated within the existing regime of economic exchange (Tadajewski, 2010b). In their latest paper, Dholakia and Firat (2019) are explicit about the assumptions undergirding their view of the world (Atik and Firat, 2013):

We observe that corporations, as the key agents constructed by capitalism and now increasingly in control of determining trends and social choices, are in possession of and employ general social knowledge or general intellect for their own aggrandizement and interest, thereby continuing to exploit – even while sidelining it – historical human labor that created the ‘general intellect’. We, as authors located in the critical marketing stream, are not convinced by the “dystopian socialist” visions of a lazy, indolent, uninspired and non-innovative humankind in the era of pervasive automation – essentially a doped humanity wasting away, earning guaranteed basic incomes, served by machines (Dholakia and Firat, 2019).

They have higher hopes for humanity, seeing it as a potentially creative force, developing methods of access-based consumption where need and fair access to products and services override corporate greed. Even with this optimistic picture in mind, they remain aware that the market and society is trending in the opposite direction, with “increasing concentration of the means of production and wealth” (Dholakia and Firat, 2019). Nonetheless, they provide a roadmap of alternative perspectives, some dystopian, some more utopian, and encourage us to make the correct choice to prevent ecocide. They are, as such, still at the cutting edge of marketing theory and practice.

Dholakia grew up in Delhi, the son of a rather famous radio host, and literally existed within the interstices of Cold War dynamics. This, as he remarks, had its own benefits. Since

India and its vast population were being courted by both the Soviet Union and America as part of their expansionist and encircling agendas, as a young child he and his friends used this ideological power-play to secure access to US resources, their nice air conditioned libraries, with free cold water, at the same time as they could gather well produced reading materials for free from Soviet embassies.

We can see Dholakia's later reading strategy contained in emergent form at the start of his life, when he recalls that the literature of Karl Marx was available very cheaply in Delhi. Watching these Cold War dynamics play out and reading the material being produced meant that he became steadily more aware that the accounts on offer were social constructions of the highest order, presenting each social world in the best possible light. Consumerist cornucopia from the American side; glossy images of socialist equality from the USSR. Interestingly, Dholakia states that the influence of Gandhi through the conduit of his father was of some importance for his personal and intellectual development.

For Dholakia, his father's commitment to wear only a specific type of Indian fabric through to his dying day, underscored the fact that one's devotion to a cause will – most likely – come with attendant costs. Resistance, Dholakia writes, requires commitment. It is something we need to value and never forget. After all, beneath apparent social change, it is often the case that the value system that created previously corrupt regimes persists in a new form.

Dholakia was a highly successful student, joining a prominent institute, albeit not in business. Chemical engineering was his option. He actually had little knowledge of chemical engineering but appreciated that there were potential jobs in the area, some of which were interesting and well paying. The problem was that there were few of the latter available when he graduated due to the recession. Those available were not in the highly desirable areas of research and development, but in sales. This was not the career path he had in mind, although it did offer him decent remuneration. However, instead of accepting the sales role he was offered, Dholakia had a back-up plan, namely, entry into an elite institution to study marketing and management.

Compared to chemical engineering, non-specialist readers might reasonably be inclined to believe that his subject move would lead to an easier work load as well as ultimately a higher salary. While the latter was potentially true, the former was not. The faculty demanded assignment after assignment; a work ethic that has served Dholakia well over the course of his career. No one could deliver his prodigious output without rising early and staying up late. Much the same can be said of all the academics featured in the four issues published in this series. His studious approach was noticed by peers and faculty alike, with the latter providing the resources for Nik to move to the United States to study at Northwestern, learning from the greats including Kotler, Levy, Zaltman, Stern, Sternthal among many others. This heady atmosphere would serve up intellectual sustenance, life-long friendships and work relationships (with, most notably, but not exclusively, A.F. Firat). And he would meet and marry Ruby Roy (later Ruby Roy Dholakia), one of the stars we have already introduced above.

Embedded in Dholakia's text is a statement published by the Kellogg School of Management in 2008 (i.e. the business school). It seeks to applaud the contributions made by the scholars at the institution from the 1960s onwards. To be sure, there were many ideas issuing forth from this school, but they do not merit the effusive language included in this promotional document. For instance, the claim that Kotler "introduced" the notion that marketers should adopt the perspective of those they sought to influence is implausible. Historical research has demonstrated that this idea is threaded throughout a great deal of early marketing thought (Tadajewski and Saren, 2009). Marketing management was a



concept coined well before Kotler, thanks to Harry Tosdal (Tadajewski, 2016). The same goes for the idea that the consumer was the main player in the marketplace, that is, the boss (Tadajewski and Jones, 2016). Bringing the customer into the process of product development and refinement is certainly not attributable to these highly influential academics (Jones, 2013; Jones and Tadajewski, 2011; Tadajewski and Jones, 2012). Finally, the idea that people outside of the commercial world have been drawing upon a marketing logic to promote non-profit aims (e.g. social causes) has a long heritage that Kellogg would do well to register.

Why mention all the above apart from citational self-aggrandization? The answer is simple: Nik Dholakia and Fuat Firat have emphasized our constant need to be alert to the reasons why certain perspectives and people gain attention and adulation and others are elided (Firat and Dholakia, 1989). As they remind us, "History is extremely important in understanding the present, the current character and nature of institutions, where they stand, and their meanings in society" (Firat and Dholakia, 1989, p. 107). Certainly, when an institution of the stature of Kellogg is promoting its perspective so vocally, we must be attentive. But skeptical. Dholakia would want us to do no less.

This is exactly the kind of intellectual awakening that he and his colleagues started to experience once the allure of scholarly celebrity wore off. They began to question the theories, concepts and ideas being promoted by their lauded professoriate, with their questioning culminating in a series of important contributions that encouraged scholars to look at the American-centric nature of marketing thought and question its applicability beyond the borders of the USA. Equally pertinent and still too often uncritically asserted is the notion of consumer sovereignty and the extent of actual consumer decision-making and influence within the market; ideas that Dholakia, Firat, and others have subjected to critique from multiple directions. Beyond their own work, detailed literature reviews can be found (Tadajewski, 2018) and historically relevant concepts like the compromising consumer (Tadajewski, 2016) used which undermine, quite firmly, the idea of the customer as king or sovereign.

It is simply time that we reflected more critically on consumer sovereignty in our teaching. Dholakia would stress the same about the extent to which choice is available in the market, whether this is a good thing or not, and ask us to think about how our "choices" are structured (Atik and Firat, 2013). The central element of Dholakia's autobiography provides an excellent survey of pertinent material that should, nay, must, be included in introductory and advanced courses of marketing if we are to be taken seriously as a social science.

When Dholakia (2016) reflects on the fruitful relationship of Nik with Fuat, she points out that they were writing radical material, scrutinizing the foundations of marketing theory, and asking searching questions about business practice. She writes that their "Marxist perspectives" were provocative and they were vocal, even when – as Fuat has noted in other places – they were not always treated with respect. Consistent with the values inculcated by Dholakia's father:

They continued to present not only at the macromarketing conferences but also at the American Marketing Association (AMA) to influence the scholarly community's thinking. Examples include "The De-Americanization of Marketing Thought: In Search of a Universal Basis" (Dholakia, Firat and Bagozzi, 1980) at the 1980 AMA conference and "When Dr Marx read Dr Kotler: A dialectical look at American markets" (Wish, Dholakia and Rose, 1982) at the 1982 macromarketing conference. Those early years were vigorous. The discussions at the macromarketing conferences were particularly spirited, and sometimes quite forbidding. Undaunted, the rebels reached out to sympathetic others to spread their ways of thinking. The European scholars were more receptive. Nikhilesh Dholakia teamed up with Johan Arndt and invited others (Dholakia, 2016, p. 2).

Similar to Ruby, Nik explains that his dissertation choice processes were channeled away from those that intrigued him most, namely, topics that focused on developing countries. We wonder if this structured choice-process was an unconscious inflection point for their extensive writings on choicelessness? Perhaps they will enlighten us in later writings. As anticipated, Nik's literal journey back to India reflected Ruby's as did his return to the United States and the institution-hopping they pursued through to the University of Rhode Island, which became a home for two hardworking, progressive, radical thinkers.

Mirroring Ruby's account, Nik underlines their involvement in association building with the International Conference on Marketing and Development. Dholakia explicitly flags up the centrality of Firat and Erdoğan Kumcu in leading this endeavor. Similar arguments about developing appropriate infrastructures to support new and alternative perspectives in consumer research have been well articulated by [Sherry \(2014\)](#) in relation to Consumer Culture Theory and he makes many valid points that junior and senior scholars alike should consider in terms of their own commitment to our field, its present status and possible future directions.

In leading up to the conclusion of his paper, Nik provides some guidance to students and established academics seeking to leave their imprint on the discipline by pioneering in highly novel directions. It is a potentially dangerous career strategy. The work being pursued may not meet with the anticipated recognition, but apathy; it may have to appear in less visible journals (a strategy that Hunt (2019) reminds us is nevertheless valuable to the discipline and potentially liable to be archeologically recovered by future scholars); or may have to be abandoned as a lost cause. Like Hunt, we would encourage all those reading this to never let material languish in their filing cabinets. It will find a home, even if this is an unorthodox outlet, outside marketing, or simply appearing as a working paper on a website. In his conclusion, Nik provides the reader with a sampling of his future research and it is a formidable list of intended accomplishments. No doubt he would welcome others to follow in his footsteps in these directions and appreciate hearing from those that do.

Our next paper comes from Fuat Firat, one of the most productive critical marketing scholars publishing today. His work – and that conducted in concert with Nik Dholakia, Ruby Roy Dholakia and Alladi Venkatesh – forms the intellectual backbone of much contemporary critical marketing thought. Even if people do not realize their scholarly debt to Fuat, it is probably there, operating in the background. As his autobiographical account reveals, he was brought up in a well-educated, governmentally connected family environment, ruled by a matriarchy, rich with practical wisdom. It was within the context of his upbringing in Istanbul, Turkey that his progressive, radical, critical, ideals were first honed. Courtesy of a close relationship with his grandfather, Firat was immersed in the waters of progressive modernism, taught to question power and exploitation. Little did he know how much these early impressions were to refract the course of his life and publication output.

We learn to question received wisdom in many different ways. For Fuat, a source was – as mentioned – his grandfather, but his parents were quick to question Fuat whenever he strayed off paths they deemed appropriate. This kind of criticism can be soul destroying if delivered inappropriately. In Firat's case, it appears to have been an almost Derridean form of critique, delivered with love, and meant to inform self-development. We can all recall figures in our lives whose careful scrutiny of our actions – however embarrassing this may have felt at the time – which nevertheless made us better people. His closely connected and seriously voluminous family gave him ambitions to make the world a better place and to believe he could do so. Fuat is the only person we know within academia who has made the



world a better place by helping facilitate the conditions of possibility for the production of a James Bond scene. That is pretty cool. And he did so while still young.

In his youthful days, his critical stance was starting to coalesce via his involvement with other children in the local neighborhood. It is here that disparity is often first noticed. One identifies the child whose parents do not work; cannot afford the requisite symbolic currency associated with certain types of clothing and footwear or who speaks and acts oddly. Knowledge of the stratification of wealth in his environment came to Firat early. While he signals that his family were firmly middle-class and reasonably affluent, Fuat was still acutely aware of his positional status. Neither wealthy nor poor, he engaged in the types of redistribution of wealth available to small children, pinching money from his mother and sharing it with less financially endowed children so that they could purchase chocolate. This is what we have enjoyed greatly about reading these autobiographies: seeing how the axiology of an individual emerges in many different ways, some small (“borrowing” money for redistribution), some large (engagement with the student movement of 1968; involvement with the union of assistant professors), some informal (extensive personal reading from multiple academic disciplines and peer to peer discussion of radical literature) and some more formalized through scholarly reflection (i.e. Fuat’s (1978) highly independent and unorthodox PhD thesis).

In his manuscript, though, we are given detailed insight into his maturation process, with Fuat highlighting how he would be shy unless something triggered his moral and ethical compass. Debating stimulated him. This was no doubt developed at home, with a father whose career rise was meteoric – Firat’s father (Fehim Firat) ultimately became the Chancellor of Istanbul University between 1955 and 1957 – and whose act of defiance against a governmental dictate that sought to remove considerable academic freedom secured it for some time. Unfortunately, later political changes (i.e. a military coup) would ultimately restrict intellectual freedom.

Through all these twists and turns, Fuat describes how he came to develop what he terms his “social ideology”, that is, a commitment to progressivism, equality, justice and a relentless scrutiny of the cultural context in which he was embedded. By the time he was at university, Fuat was deeply politicized, engaging in the debates of the day. He successfully negotiated the degree process and was a fortunate recipient of a Ford Foundation scholarship to undertake PhD study in the United States. As the reader can probably guess, while Firat applied to a number of high profile institutions, and attracted an initial offer from Indiana, he ultimately committed to Northwestern. One attraction was Philip Kotler, as Fuat had closely studied his work; secondly, it was the most highly ranked marketing program in the country.

Like Ruby Roy Dholakia and Nik Dholakia, Fuat speaks extremely highly of his time on the PhD program at Northwestern. He enjoyed the place, people, and the bookshops. Always a reader, Firat used his time extremely wisely, consulting a large range of seminal critically oriented texts from across the social sciences, dipping into economics (Marxist, institutional), sociology (i.e. social constructionism), philosophy (with a focus on ideology and the culture industries), along with material that straddled these borders like David Caplovitz’s work in sociology that deals with marketing related issues including why the poor pay more for their goods and who personally sought to advance consumer protections against predatory practices. Given what we know about Fuat’s emerging political and social philosophy, it is not difficult to see the appeal of Veblen, Caplovitz, Marx, Althusser and many others which became part of the bedrock of his PhD thesis (Firat, 1978).

Interestingly, like Witkowski (2019), Shaw (2019) and Gould (1991), Fuat is also extremely candid about his military service (this was a reason he had to return to Turkey

after his thesis). It was limited and he was actually court marshaled, ending up under house arrest for a very short period. It is fair to say that most readers will not be overly surprised to hear that Fuat's background and education had hardly set him up to follow "senseless orders". In 1979, he returned to the United States to work with Nik Dholakia. This was only meant to be a short trip, but life does not always run to plan.

Firat met his future wife and additional collaborators (i.e. Erdoğan Kumcu with whom he formed the International Conference on Markets and Development, along with Alladi Venkatesh and Cliff Shultz). Fuat has been an inveterate institution builder. He started another conference series (i.e. Heretical Consumer Research) and was the co-founder and editor of a journal (*Consumption Markets and Culture*). So, while he does indicate that remaining in the United States is a decision that was a concern, it has still been extremely productive, enabling him to shape the field in considerable ways – and he is extremely modest about his contributions – as well as travel the world, forming friendships along the way.

Jagdish Sheth is a name that is world renowned. He is the author of an extensive number of publications and books. In addition to his personal intellectual contributions, he has supported the academy in various ways – all of which he enumerates in his autobiography. Sheth hails from Burma (i.e. Myanmar) and was born into a family of merchants. As he highlights in vivid detail, this was not an easy life, environmental turbulence in terms of war and the upheaval that accompanies it, meant that his early years reflected a considerable degree of material privation. The Sheth family later moved to Chennai (India) where his scholarly trajectory begins its upward path. At the same time, he was fortunate to receive exposure to real world business practice, courtesy of a brother who owned a manufacturing plant. By the early 1960s, the two worlds of academic learning and business practice were fused, with Sheth wanting to learn more about various disciplines to assist his brother in making his operations more efficient at the same time as expanding the firm. This led him to the United States.

Throughout his paper he reveals the extent of his debt to his teachers, those who have supported him, and how he worked to develop marketing theory and practice in ways that advance our knowledge, improve practice and contribute to societal betterment. He is among the fortunate to have had John Howard as teacher and mentor. Morris Holbrook (2001, 2015), we might recall, signals his gratitude to Howard, praised his contributions, but indicated where they – notably the Howard–Sheth model of buyer behavior – were, for him, a little problematic, downplaying issues of emotion and sexuality and overly elevating rationality. But this was all in the future for Sheth who describes the process behind the production of this model, the labors that went into it and how pursuing your academic dreams can mean relatively frequent dislocations.

After all, what is academic work if not a process which involves inevitably changing your subjectivity and world view. For Sheth, the changes were literal – moving across the country – and cognitive, expanding his view of marketing theory, notably, buyer behavior. And this led to numerous path-breaking and well-cited publications. But what Sheth's list of publications also reveals is the extent to which networking is important in enabling an academic to express their ideas to colleagues through some of the most prestigious journals available. It can facilitate a career, but only hard work, ideally surrounded by supportive and interesting colleagues, students and administrators can ensure some degree of longevity. Sheth had all of these in spades.

He recalls the now well-known individuals that he came into contact with, the extensive number of student dissertations he supervised, across a range of disciplinary areas, and how this helped shape his own thinking, whilst keeping his name visible via the publication

machine he was operating. What we knew much less of was the degree to which Sheth has been active in terms of service within his institutions. Again, there is much evidence of hard work on this front as well. He established the Center for Telecommunication Management at the University of Southern California, the Center for Relationship Marketing at Emory University, and all during the time-frame he was constructing these edifices, he was publishing at a rate which suggests he wasn't reading airport fiction while traveling around the world but hammering at his keyboard on flights.

While Sheth does not seem to be slowing his pace, he does stress that he plans to devote a great deal of his time going forward to his philanthropic efforts. For this, he deserves considerable kudos. He could have rested on his laurels, continued lucrative consultancy work, dialed in his lectures, but no, not Sheth. He and his wife are extremely generous patrons of three charities. One is focused on the marketing academy and provides support to most of the major institutional groups operating at present (e.g. the American Marketing Association, Association for Consumer Research and so forth). The second is a personal foundation set-up by his family. This assists groups and charities based around Atlanta as well as more sizeable non-governmental organizations. Importantly, they want to reaffirm the social values that sit at the core of Sheth's system of ethics, namely, that of the need to engage in activities that contribute to societal betterment, with awards made to specific individuals on the basis of their disciplinary contributions. We really do wonder how he has managed to accomplish all this in the space of a single lifetime.

The final paper in this issue is by Evert Gummesson. He has operated extremely successfully between the worlds of academia and business practice over the course of his career. He grew up in the World War II period in a lower middle class family. This, however, was a family with aspirations for their son. They wanted him to pursue educational opportunities well beyond the norm. As a student, he admits, he was, at least initially, a little mediocre, but through application, reading, long nights and hard work systematically improved his skill levels and started to receive the recognition that he deserved. Beyond his academics, Gummesson sometimes wrote for the local newspaper, penning film reviews (he remains a fan of the cinema to the present day). At one point, he avers, he did consider journalism as a possible career. His systematic intellectual style, though, made him less comfortable about the quick and dirty nature of the research he would have to undertake to be an efficient writer in this venerable profession.

Ultimately though, Gummesson applied to the Stockholm School of Economics – a premier institution in Sweden. It appears the financial remuneration that their graduates reputedly received may have been a motivator in this choice. And that, of course, is fair enough. Underlying interest is still perhaps the best way to maximize the chances of successfully completing any program of education. In Gummesson's case, he had long been interested in advertising, and this led to him studying distribution economics – a label that was later replaced by the term “marketing”. Gummesson freely admits that he was not exactly an ideal student, spending a great deal of his time involved with student union-related activities. Nevertheless, he graduated and moved into a position with *Reader's Digest*.

Gummesson appreciates that this famous organization was not involved with the kinds of one-shot transaction marketing that had been assumed to be the major form of interaction by theorists in our subject prior to the discovery of relational perspectives in the 1970s (Harker and Egan, 2006; cf. Tadjewski, 2015b). What *Reader's Digest* was doing that was seemingly novel was focusing on its current customer base – rather than constantly seeking new customers irrespective of profitability – using the information they had collected to better target their offerings in future. This, many marketing historians will appreciate, is a

breath of fresh air. For far too long, ahistorical arguments about relationships in marketing have been propounded. There is now a large literature on exactly the development of these ideas, that is, relationship formation; the importance of profitability in the determination of relational prolongation or dissolution; as well as much discourse on cross and upselling (Tadajewski, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2011, 2015a, 2015b; Tadajewski and Saren, 2009), with practitioners engaged in these activities and thinkers theorizing them for a very long time.

Gummeson, like Sheth, provides us with an excellent insight into the importance of social networks in enabling career moves, in his case it was a friend who introduced him to the world of consultancy work – an environment in which Gummeson has flourished whilst maintaining his academic ties. He has been involved with a variety of firms, often world leaders, and it is fair to say the experience taught him a great deal; indeed, one of the lessons was that a large amount of the content appearing in the pages of our textbooks is not especially relevant to practitioners. This led him to the writings of the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing Group (IMP). Eventually, feeling that having both feet in the business camp and heading to the upper echelons of a firm was not the career option of choice for him, but remaining unsure of his direction, Gummeson returned to the university to take evening courses in business and management studies. There was one practical problem here that required careful negotiation: to attend, a student had to be enrolled on a PhD.

Never one to be deterred by an obstacle, he started the courses in the early 1970s. Having reentered the sphere of academia, the notion that he might secure a PhD was increasingly of interest. This ultimately revolved around strategic planning. While his thesis was a success, securing high honors, it was the process itself which was most valuable to Gummeson. It sensitized him to his strengths and weaknesses. The former (i.e. case study research and qualitative methods), Gummeson has parlayed into multiple papers, well received books, and his exposure to the IMP literature has led him to generate a stream of contributions on relationship marketing. Continual engagement with practitioners has fertilized his research, with conceptual contributions emerging from these interactions. If we have the skill set, interest and connections to meet regularly with marketing practitioners, it can – if we are lucky – lead to innovative research, conceptual contributions, journal articles, books and a prominent place in the pantheon of scholars (Jaworski, 2018). Gummeson has exerted considerable effort to earn his place, but earn it he has.

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### Further reading

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