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## Introduction to the Special Issue: Alternative Imaginings

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## Markets, Globalization & Development Review



## **Introduction to the Special Issue: Alternative Imaginings**

The idea for this special issue on alternative imaginings came from the 14th International Society of Markets and Development Conference in Peru in 2016. The papers presented at the “imagining alternatives” track focused on modes of development that were alternative to the dominant mainstream ideologies and modes of production and consumption. The aim of this special issue was to invite scholars across a wide spectrum of social science and humanities disciplines to explore and present alternative visions of well-being and development that counter dominant, mainstream models forged in the context of globalization and predatory capitalism.

### **Articles in this Issue**

The articles and media reviews in this issue are eclectic in nature and cover a wide range of topics while staying true to the mission of MGDR of “examining the three core areas – markets, globalization and development – from interdisciplinary lenses.” The issue includes pieces from two historians, a master’s student from media studies as well as scholars of marketing who are the typical authors of this journal. The historians not only bring different theoretical perspectives from their disciplines, but they also bring different writing styles.

The opening article titled “Developing Shopping Abilities to Empower: An Ethnography of Moroccan Women in Supermarkets” by Delphine Godefroit-Winkel presents a new viewpoint, from a non-Western context, on a relatively old practice (old, especially in the Western context), viz., supermarket shopping. Contrary to what might be assumed, Godefroit-Winkel (2018) states that grocery shopping in the Arab context has been in the male domain – the traditional bazaar was considered a relatively rough place for a woman to venture into. With the proliferation of Western-style supermarkets, however, women have entered this male-dominant domain and are learning to shop for the first time. Nonetheless, the theoretical focus of the paper is not shopping per se. To the contrary, it is women’s empowerment through the practice of shopping.

Based on Malhotra et al.’s (2009) understanding of empowerment, Godefroit-Winkel (2018) also defines it as “the capacity to make strategic choices about matters that previously have been denied.” This contrasts with other approaches that emphasize women’s empowerment through literacy, education, and training. In the latter case, such approaches fall

short of explaining the phenomenon of highly educated Arab women being prevented from entering the labor force by their family members.

Through an insightful ethnography of Moroccan women and a triangulation of methods over a prolonged period of time; Godefroit-Winkel (2018) tackles the complex notions of gender-roles, public vs. private domains, empowerment, and consumer skills – at the intersection of markets, globalization and development. Godefroit-Winkel further reveals that it is often the unintended consequences of global capitalism that foster women’s empowerment in the Arab world. This phenomenon is illustrated by Moroccan women through the ritual of supermarket shopping and it is sometimes revealed through the conscious efforts of local governments such as the 2018 granting of the right to drive to women in Saudi Arabia. Both examples emphasize activities that have been taken for granted by millions of women all over the world for decades; but where globalization pressures are only now being felt in the Arab contexts.

The second article continues on the topic of gender-roles. It brings a fresh perspective to a global phenomenon that affects all countries and populations directly or indirectly – warfare. Emerald Archer is the inaugural Director of the Center for the Advancement of Women at Mount Saint Mary’s University in Los Angeles which serves as a hub for research, advocacy and leadership to promote gender equality. Archer’s (2018) article is derived from the original research related to her 2017 book entitled *Women, Warfare and Representation: American Servicewomen in the Twentieth Century* (Archer 2017). In her MGDR article, she explores women’s history in the United States military and raises some very important issues, especially in light of the ubiquitous presence and involvement of the U.S. military around the world.

More precisely, Archer (2018) advocates for (gender) diversity in the military and argues that “gender initiatives, if implemented seriously and uniformly across services, can be a game changer in twenty-first century military operations.” Indeed, she proposes, such diversity could lead to a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Through a brief history of RMA, she exposes a myriad of driving forces – technological, architectural, financial, operational, conceptual, political, social, and cultural. She then emphasizes the vital role women play in today’s military operations by providing thought-provoking examples from her research. In Afghanistan, for instance, military women were crucial for gathering intelligence from local Afghani women who were not allowed to be in contact with U.S. military men. While a world without wars would be an ideal place, that would no doubt be a utopia of sorts — a place that could not possibly exist in the context of today’s global conflicts. And so, in this

less-than-perfect reality, Archer's proposal for gender diversity in the military offers alternative imaginings of military operations that could change the very reality of warfare – and the more important reality of maintaining peace in strife-torn regions.

In the third article, Christina Nistor, Taylan Yalcin, and Ekin Pehlivan cover a topic that is very pertinent to today's political and media agenda – the phenomenon of duplicity in alternative marketing communications. In their article, the authors take an interdisciplinary approach at the intersection of marketing, ethics, journalism, and law. Nistor, Yalcin and Pehlivan (2018) question the ethical use of Alternative Marketing Communications (AMC) strategies which include consumer-generated content, native advertising, and influencer marketing. They explore duplicity in AMC through a conceptual framework previously created by Pehlivan et al. (2015). AMC are deemed to be more cost-effective and more efficient at active consumer engagement than traditional engagement. And so, the authors discuss various types of duplicity within the context of the conceptual framework by giving examples and bringing our attention to how the lines between consumers and producers/marketers of messages are blurred in alternative marketing communications.

Besides providing managerial implications and theoretical contributions, the authors, perhaps more importantly, offer ethical considerations. Since technology develops faster than the rules and laws to regulate them, contemporary debates on the ethics of alternative marketing communications continue to grow. For example, the Cambridge Analytica/Facebook scandal of March 2018, as well as the European Union's recent fines against Google (in the Android antitrust case) and then Facebook (over disclosures in their WhatsApp deal) exemplify the ethical magnitude of these debates. Nistor, Yalcin and Pehlivan's (2018) alternative imaginings call attention to both the dearth and depth of our knowledge gap on these pressing, contemporary concerns.

## **Reviews in this Issue**

The special issue also contains two book reviews by the same author and two reviews of the same film by two different authors. In the book review, historian James Robertson provides a review of two books that cover an alternative globalization, that of the Soviet Union and its satellites in Eastern Europe – combined under the term "Socialist World." Robertson (2018) points out that the history of globalization has been told mostly through the lens of either the industrialized First World or the developing countries of the Third World. Socialist globalization is a notion that is much

ignored in the Western context – where globalization is arguably synonymous with Westernization, and with the global spread of neoliberal capitalism. The books he reviews are *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev* by Oscar Sanchez-Sibony and *Markets in the Name of Socialism: The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism* by Johanna Bockman. His review and the following quote from his review deeply challenges our previous notions of the origins of globalization and provides an alternative lens through which to view them:

Read together, both of these ambitious books demonstrate that, rather than working within a separate and distinct socialist international economy, the Soviet Union and its satellite states in Eastern Europe were subordinate participants in the dominant liberal global order. The story of this entanglement reveals important and unexpected insights into the history of the second age of globalization.

Finally, Giana Eckhardt and Terri Bowles provide two different analyses of the 2018 Marvel superhero movie *Black Panther* directed by Ryan Coogler. *Black Panther*'s significance goes beyond its phenomenal commercial success at the box office as the highest-grossing superhero movie of all time (Box Office Mojo 2018); it will also leave its mark in the psyche of the audiences as one of the most influential movies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Black Panther* is a groundbreaking movie on many fronts: it is a celebration of black culture with its almost all-black cast and crew, its female characters, who are portrayed physically and intellectually as equal – if not superior – to its male characters, and its imagining of an alternative Africa.

Eckhardt (2018) approaches the movie from a postcolonial theory frame of reference. She argues that “the movie inverts common center/periphery narratives within globalization discourses by portraying an [imaginary] African country as having more advanced technology than the West.” She also draws parallels between the conflicts among the two main characters of the movie and the two different camps within the African American community – a pacifist revolutionary one vs. one advocating the use of any means including violence. Eckhardt's careful analysis reveals some incongruities within the movie as she points out the CIA being portrayed as a benevolent organization, in a movie which articulates the harm USA has done as a global power.

Bowles's (2018) stroll through *Black Panther*'s mythical country of Wakanda celebrates “messages of #blackexcellence” from a novel

perspective that introduces two settings – a “never-colonized, wealthy African nation” and “an urban American community of poverty and violence.” Through what Bowles refers to as the “divided heart” of the film, *Black Panther* challenges the contemporary stereotypes of the African diaspora, especially in the U.S. context, and adeptly provides a powerful alternate vision of the African continent and the possibilities of redemption in the postcolonial African American context. And, through an unexpected but no less refreshing lens, the film review by Terri Bowles underscores *Black Panther’s* alternate vision of women’s empowerment and female agency. In *Black Panther*, Coogler’s vision of women recognizes and celebrates them as experts and warriors who not only provide the film’s conscience, but also lead what may be cinema history’s first female-led car chase. As Bowles emphasizes, female characters are important to the survival of Wakanda. In short, Bowles’s multilayered review of *Black Panther* envisions an alternative imagining of Africa, cultural alienation, and women’s empowerment that provides a welcome respite from the postcolonial rage of the African diaspora. As a result, it serves as both a message movie and a superhero film.

### **Concluding Comment**

We hope you enjoy these “alternative imaginings” and would like to thank the editors of *Markets, Globalization, and Development Review* — Nik Dholakia and Deniz Atik — for inviting us to be guest editors for this special issue.

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