

# The Evolution and Investigation of Markets, Macromarketing and Systems: A Special Issue in Honor of Roger Layton

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## Abstract

Roger Layton (1934–2021) spent his career investigating (macro)marketing systems. He left macromarketing a canon of research on the development of provisioning systems that will serve as the foundation for many scholars to come. The following commentaries and papers honour Roger Layton with a special issue of the Journal of Macromarketing on the Evolution and Investigation of Markets, Macromarketing and Systems.

## Keywords

macromarketing systems, laytonian macromarketing, provisioning technologies, marketing systems, marketing and quality of life

At the centre of academic macromarketing is the recognition that (macro-level) market phenomena exist in a system (Wooliscroft 2021). Both context and time are important if we are to understand market phenomena. This special issue brings together twelve research papers and five commentaries on systems and macromarketing. The special issue is in honor of Roger Layton (1934–2021) a systems researcher/thinker and a leading macromarketer.

Roger's inquiry into markets and provisioning technologies was, at its essence, a deep interest in how markets form, grow and flourish, all seen through the lens of systems and with an eye on how markets contribute to quality of life. His work built on the systems thinking of Wroe Alderson (Wooliscroft 2006), George Fisk (Fisk 1961) and others, while bringing his own special insights.

Many scholars around the world can remember the first time Roger discussed the formation of a marketing system from the case of one person's excess production (often a lemon tree).

Roger came to macromarketing through researching international trade flows (Dixon and Layton 1971; Layton 1981, 1984, 1991). His self described research areas, from his UNSW webpage

- Marketing systems in macromarketing theory
- Evolution of marketing systems in ancient, transitional and contemporary societies
- Efficiency and effectiveness in the operation of marketing systems (links between structure, function and outcomes,

QOL and distributive equity concerns, and questions about resilience and possible collapse or failure)

- Marketing systems as complex adaptive systems (Layton 2021)

Roger Layton was a scholar and a gentleman, a renaissance man. A devoted husband, father, supervisor and sponsor of others; younger scholars and musicians. A keen sailor, drinker of fine wine, appreciator of music and a man with an enduring desire to learn. Roger was an exemplar of the macromarketing community's scholarly discussion with a focus on development, rather than point scoring as seen at some other conferences. He was an intensely positive scholar and a believer in the optimism that is associated with macromarketing study (Wooliscroft 2016).

Roger remained to his last days a loyal and engaged member of the macromarketing scholarly community. To visit Roger at home was to enter a world of books and papers, full of post-its and annotations. A scholar at work.

His contribution has been an extensive canon of writing on marketing, systems, macromarketing and the impacts of markets on society. There is no question that macromarketing will be different because of the contributions of Roger Layton, our path dependency has diverged (Layton and Duffy 2018).

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Roger's research can be seen to satisfy the call of Hunt (2020) for marketing to develop its own theories, providing more foundation to macromarketing as a field with significant promise (Hunt, Hass, and Manis 2021). His key contributions include:

- “Marketing Systems A Core Macromarketing Concept” (Layton 2007)
- “When the commons call “enough”, does marketing have an answer?” (Duffy, Layton, and Dwyer 2017)
- “Macromarketing: Past, present, and possible future” (Layton and Grossbart 2006)
- “On Economic Growth, Marketing Systems, and the Quality of Life” (Layton 2009)
- “Marketing systems, macromarketing and the quality of life” (Layton 2010)
- “Toward a theory of marketing systems” (Layton 2011)
- “Formation, Growth, and Adaptive Change in Marketing Systems” (Layton 2015)
- “Marketing systems—looking backward, sizing up and thinking ahead” (Layton 2019)
- “Path Dependency in Marketing Systems—where History Matters and the Future Casts a Shadow” (Layton and Duffy 2018)

This special issue contains twelve papers, indicative of the importance of the topic area and Roger's connection to many scholars and the applicability of systems to the breadth of macromarketing studies. The issue starts with five commentaries.

In the first commentary “Laytonian Writing: The processes and experiences of co-authoring with Roger A. Layton” Christine Domegan allows us inside the experience of Roger's writing process and co-authoring with him. Christine is a co-author of the first research paper in the special issue, with Roger Layton and has a number of publications with him.

Stanley J. Shapiro, another of the titans of macromarketing, considers the place of macromarketing in the wider marketing discipline and the threat to macromarketing from a loss of members. In “Toward a Sharper “Golden Anniversary” Focus for Macromarketing?” he gives us hope should we centre macromarketing around provisioning technologies/systems, connecting to Roger's work (Shapiro 2024).

Leenders, van Bueren, and Nguyen (2024) illustrate the importance of Layton to the Australasian region and the importance of a multi-level systems approach in “The Marketing Systems Approach for Designing Effective Marketing Interfaces and a Circular Economy”. It is not enough to look at a system, we need to look at the systems that they are embedded in and the connections between levels of systems.

Redmond (2024) considers the ubiquitous, yet relatively recent phenomena of social media in his commentary “A Note on Marketing Systems and Social Media”. New provisioning systems, information systems and markets are the type of phenomena that fascinated Roger.

Riley et al. (2024) consider the ground on which we stand, metaphorically, when they discuss the “United States Education Structure is Under Stress: Exploring the Destabilization of

Academia's System Settings”. Roger would likely have asked, what is the purpose of the system, how the structure has evolved and whether it needs to go through another transformation to serve the needs of the environment? This topic is close to many of our hearts, being the system that provides our employment, at least for those in the USA.

The first research paper in this special issue is Roger Layton's last publication. Rather than the end of a canon of publications, this will serve as the foundation of future research for a wide range of macromarketing scholarship. Layton, Domegan, and Duffy (2024) “Getting Things Right; Diagnose and Design in The Evolution of Community Provisioning Systems” addresses the important topic of purposeful system design within the context of community and provisioning.

In “Marketing Efficiency of Autarkic Systems: The Case of North Korea” Stoyanova, Stoyanova, and Stoyanov consider a different type of provisioning system, removed from the market economy with which we are familiar—the provisioning system, to a large extent, isolated from world trade. Roger's fascination with building markets from first principles would have seen his interest sparked by this different route to approaching the needs of society.

Hughes, Martin, and Coskuner-Balli (2024) don't shy away from the difficulties present in marketing systems, rather seek to understand how competing logics can be resolved in a purposeful marketing system in “Plural Logics in Marketing Systems: Managing Tensions Within the Social Matrix in an Ecovillage”

Kadirov et al. (2024) also consider conflicting needs of different systems associated with marketing systems in “The Marketing Ecoverse: A Sustainable Confluence of Business, Social, and Natural Ecosystems”. The self regulating nature of systems, including collapse, is highlighted in this paper.

Williams et al. (2024) continue the theme of conflict in systems with their paper “Layton's Marketing Systems at the Intersection of Provisioning Systems: Examining Failure”. Infant milk formula has long been a highly politicised product category and further examination of its provisioning system is welcomed. As is the furthering of our understanding of market failure, an all too oft overlooked aspect of markets.

Renton, Hooper, and Renton (2024) consider the historical case of a government's intentional market reorganisation from infrastructure to market based provisioning system in “Extending Layton's Marketing Systems for Future Transformation – Deepening Connections Between Marketing and Provisioning Systems: A Case-Based Approach”. Using the case of New Zealand has implications for other countries which may choose to follow this route, or to reflect and avoid it. This paper has wider implications for scholarship on provisioning systems.

Kelleci (2024) combines Follett's power dichotomy with Alderson's systems theory in “Power-Based Typology of Marketing Systems: Foundation for Alternative Marketing Theory in the Post-Capitalist Marketing Era”. Kelleci provides an alternative view of power in markets and how value might be shared in a co-creative system.

Stoyanov, Stoyanova, and Stoyanov (2024) bring a new metaphor to bear for markets “Chemistry of Marketing:

Application of Chemical Thermodynamics Laws to Closed and Isolated Marketing Systems". There have been several calls to consider systems closed, for ecological systems particularly, in the past (Lovelock 2000; Meadows et al. 1972). The authors extend that call and use their metaphor to stimulate our thinking on markets and marketing systems.

Hamish Simmonds' "Toward a Bhaskarian Metatheory for Marketing Systems" applies the insights of Roy Bhaskar initiator of the critical realism school of science when considering marketing systems. Our ontological perspective is necessarily important to understand the knowledge generated by our investigations.

In "Technology has Agency too! Disentangling Technology's Causal and Structural Agency in a Service System" Anderson, Hansen, and Laverie consider the impact of technology on provisioning systems. Using service dominant logic and actor network theory they investigate how technology can change value destabilising extant value creation systems, an evolution that would have interested Roger Layton.

Khizar et al. (2024) consider one of the key aspects of systems, equifinality (multiple routes to the same outcome) in "Sustainability Outcomes in SMEs: A Configurational View of the Interplay of Strategic Orientations and Environmental Conditions" using Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Too often marketing studies show the best/strongest/most significant route to a certain goal and fail to consider the other possible routes which can be revealed by QCA and random forest analysis. This paper provides an important exemplar of multiple routes to success in terms of sustainability in SMEs.

In "Boundary Interweaving: The Boundary-making Strategy for Multicultural Coexistence in Marketing Systems" Lim and French posit boundary weaving as a model for understanding cultures meeting in and around a market and how that boundary weaving might contribute to cultural and overall wellbeing. This metaphor is useful for considering this and many other boundary conditions in and around markets.

This special issue would not have been possible without authors who trusted their research to the *Journal of Macromarketing*, and the special issue, and reviewers who have generously engaged in a positive and growth focussed approach to reviewing, leading to improved manuscripts and authors who have responded positively to reviewer feedback. Thank you all.

From start to finish this special issue considers key questions, edge cases and stimulating ideas regarding systems and macromarketing. It is appropriate that Roger Layton inspired the call for papers for this special issue and a great shame that he is not with us to read it.

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