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Laudato si' – A Macromarketing Manifesto for a Just and Sustainable Environment

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Laudato si' – A Macromarketing Manifesto for a Just and Sustainable Environment

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Abstract

This paper posits that Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical on environmental climate change, Laudato si' ("Praise be to you, my Lord"), or LS for short, provides a compelling and multi-faceted framework for co-creating a just and sustainable environment. LS includes considerable commentary about how markets and marketing impact the physical and social environment. Additionally, the document provides religion-inspired ethical norms for market conditions, actions, and performance that reflect both (a) the social teachings of the Catholic Church as they have evolved over the past 125 years and, as we will explain, (b) a foundational predicate of macromarketing scholarship – that is, a recognition of market systems as the primary mechanism for effectively and efficiently provisioning goods and services in contemporary society. The intent of this paper is also to harmonize two perspectives of business purpose regarding ecological issues (i.e., ethical efficacy vs. economic efficiency),

commonly seen as conflicting and mutually exclusive. Absent that harmonization, those perspectives appear to force a choice between “social values and norms” and “economic incentives and circumstances” – a dichotomy that is neither optimal nor practical. Rather, we recognize that key themes in Laudato si’(LS) - environmental stewardship, concern for social justice, and a “common good” orientation that supersedes economic advantage - also correspond to issues addressed by macromarketing scholars since that sub-discipline emerged. LS is foremost a powerful “Call to Action” for those who care about protecting the ecological environment. However, LS is intentionally vague about specific solutions. It defers to analysts, academics, and policy experts to provide those. This paper outlines how macromarketing researchers are powerfully positioned to suggest the specific market and policy adjustments called for in LS.

Keywords

environmental stewardship, vulnerable consumers, distributive justice, catholic social thought, sustainability, marketing ethics, market fairness

Introduction

This article analyzes the Roman Catholic 2015 encyclical, *Laudato si’* (subtitled, “On Care for Our Common Home”), comparing its concerns related to environmental stewardship with norms and issues represented in macromarketing scholarship. It scrutinizes relationships among marketing, markets, and society implied in that document, not simply ecological cautions. Consistent with Klein and Laczniak (2009), *LS* represents Catholic Social Thought, which applies a blended ethical theory to marketing, the roots of which are anchored in religion but also can be justified in secular moral philosophy.

This literature-based analysis begins with a very brief background on Abrahamic religions and Catholic Social Thought (CST), summarizes the key points of *LS*, and reflects on its connection to issues regularly examined in macromarketing scholarship. Next, important benchmarks of macromarketing scholarship that reflect key criteria for market system performance – e.g. efficiency, innovation, consumer outcomes, participant equity, ecological protection, and fairness – are brought to bear on environmental questions. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of how these macromarketing perspectives are capable of cross fertilization, are inherently consistent with one another and, together, provide a more “authentic anthropology” regarding sustainable economic development--the ultimate objective of *LS*.

The most publicized theme of *LS* demands greater *environmental stewardship*, recognizing it as a matter of *distributive justice*. *LS* calls for a reformation of market capitalism, to improve current policies and practices that threaten environmental sustainability. The encyclical argues that environmental degradation – pollution and resource depletion – are influenced by human activity that adversely and disproportionately affects both the poorest nations and the most vulnerable in wealthy nations while threatening the health and survival of all. *LS* further observes that sometimes markets facilitate unbridled consumption and resource exploitation, threatening the very sustainability of human life. In response to such a devastating critique, business scholars might well ask: Is LS a valid criticism of market capitalism? What are the ingredients of an amended market system that would address that concern? How do the themes of LS square with concerns of macromarketing scholarship? To what extent does macromarketing thinking provide solutions amenable to environmental stewardship?

To quickly answer the last two questions first (elaborating later), these perspectives echo those of macromarketing scholars since that sub-discipline emerged circa 1975 as an effort to differentiate its scholarship from that devoted to micro (managerial) marketing. Instead, macromarketing conceives of marketing activities and institutions as aggregated and intersecting systematically, i.e., both influenced by and influencing the broadest concerns of society. A question raised as a by-product of our analysis is whether *LS* provides a worthy

menu of concerns for assessing the interaction of marketing, markets, and society, especially as connected to ecological issues and concerns. We answer in the affirmative.

We argue that *LS* supplies religious-themed norms and ethical values that should influence secular as well as ecclesiastical discussions of economics, politics, social inequality, and human development and well-being (Berry 1999; Repiso, Ahedo, and Montero 2018). *LS* potentially offers a path that blends ethical precepts with a market-oriented economic analysis. This path also provides a longer-term systems perspective, which runs counter to the *shareholder theory* implicitly accepted in many contemporary corporations (Smith 2003). It also may reflect one manifestation of Lee's (2018) and Singer's (2019) call for a new theory of the firm, one with "a greater moral dimension."

This moral dimension inevitably evokes scholarly interest in 'the role of religion' in guiding business conduct as evidenced in recent business literature. For a literature review focused on the religion-CSR relationship, see Van Aaken and Buchner (2020 and Vaidyanathan (2020). It seems notable to recognize that this relationship is not limited to Catholic or even Christian scholarship. For example Murphy and Smolarski (2020) as well as Elamer, Ntim, and Abdou (2020), offer Islamic perspectives on this subject. Nor is this line of inquiry limited to the context of advanced economies; for an African perspective, see Nakpodia, Shrives, and Sorour (2020). This diversity in focus also extends to organization theory Gumusay (2020). See also Van Buren, Syed, and Mir (2019) for a religion-business research agenda. However, the particular focus of *this* examination proceeds to consider the following:

1. The theological framework provided by Catholic Social Thought (CST), particularly as it has evolved since the publication of Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* ("Of new things") on the rights and duties of capital and labor. It also comments briefly on more recent documents that spell out a more extensive range of social concerns and principles, especially CST's justice perspective;
2. The specific themes advanced in *Laudato si' (LS)* (2015), the most recent of the papal encyclicals; it is the launch point for this commentary;
3. The connection of themes covered in *LS* to macromarketing scholarship;
4. A discussion of how these literatures (CST and macromarketing) are in parallel and provide an opportunity for the cross-fertilization of insights about sustainable economic development.

Catholic Social Thought (CST): A Brief Synopsis

It seems notable that the influence of the Roman Catholic Church on economic activities dates at least to the 15th century (Coate, Mitschow, and O'Connor 2020). From a modern perspective, CST originated in response to injustices recognized in 19th Century labor-management relations (Pope Leo XIII 1891). It is imperative to note that CST reflects scripture-based precepts advanced by *all* Abrahamic religious traditions - Moslem and Jewish as well as Christian sects (see Caux Round Table 2010, pp. 9-10, and Klein, Laczniak, and Santos 2017, p. 105). Thus, while this body of writing is called "Catholic" Social Thought, it is rooted in the doctrine of many of the world's religions. These social commentaries have been historically developed through various religious documents and other interpretations over the past century (Compendium 2005; Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith 2018; Ladaria et al. 2018; Pope Pius XI 1931; Pope Benedict XVI 2009; Pope John XXIII 1963; Pope John Paul II 1981 and 1987; Turkson and Toso 2014; U.S. Catholic Bishops 1986) including *Laudato si* (2015). Collectively, these materials provide the primary framework for the analysis and conclusions presented below. This, of course, reflects a larger thesis that supposes religion-based moral norms can be applied productively to contemporary social problems, including those that call for global attention (Sekerak 2016). (A quite different perspective is that "religious nationalism" challenges peaceful relations among nations around the globe

(Poruthyil 2020)). Our position is that religious values are culturally salient and, thus, shape the resolution of difficult ethical issues (Benton 2015; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Assuming the validity of applying religiously grounded ethical principles to commercial endeavors, CST provides a comprehensive directory of socio-economic principles, most recently summarized for macromarketers in Dann and Dann (2016, pp. 413-14). CST can be seen as a "blended" ethical theory composed of virtues, precepts, and teleological ideals applicable to business practice, e.g. comparable to *stakeholder theory* (Retolaza, Aguado, and Alcaniz 2019). In *LS,* the featured ethical principles applied to the ecological problems facing society are: (a) environmental stewardship, (b) preference for vulnerable populations, and (c) the concept of the common good.

As modern technology and economic processes have exploited (and thereby stressed) the natural environment in terms of pollution, habitat destruction, and resource depletion, the moral implications for production, distribution, and consumption have entered significant public debate. As *moral* debates invite religious participation, the Roman Catholic Church added *environmental stewardship* to its list of social principles (*Compendium*, 2005). The core philosophy of this principle counsels, "Always respect the integrity and cycles of nature and fastidiously avoid environmental exploitation [466]." (Because such documents are translated into many different languages, manuscript quotations are customarily referenced by paragraph number, which remains consistent across all versions. This paper follows that protocol.)

In the 21st Century, another document, *Caritatis in Veritate* ("Charity in Truth"), also called attention to the special implications of environmental concerns for economically disadvantaged nations (Pope Benedict XVI 2009), notably but not exclusively, in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (Laczniak and Klein 2010). However, *Laudato si*' (2015) is the first papal encyclical *focused* on *protecting* the physical environment. This message of this document is not directed merely to Catholics or even others having strong religious convictions, but to all persons of goodwill who care about the future of planet earth - our mutual home.

Laudato si' (*LS*): Its Essentials

This encyclical letter by Pope Francis was published in June of 2015. Its title, "Laudato si" ("Praise to you") – words taken from the first sentence of the document - quotes the opening lines of a prayer by St Francis of Assisi that exalts the bounty of the earth. Significantly, the papal letter is sub-titled, "On care for our common home" and was eagerly anticipated in many circles (Zaroya 2015).

In profile, the document is a relatively hefty 184 pages (in English), over 40,000 words, and consists of 246 paragraphs. The science-informed letter - the Vatican consulted multiple climate researchers and other scientists (Naik 2015) - condemns global environmental degradation and calls for a new philosophy of ecological stewardship based on the common good [156].

The most quoted sentence from *LS*, which captures the passion and urgency of the encyclical letter, is "*The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth* [21]." *LS* rebukes climate change deniers and calls into question all those who ignore environmental issues, sacrifice ecological harm for economic gain, or assume that improved technology will effectively address environmental ills (Rocca 2015). Such themes have been previously elaborated in CST, as noted above, and reflect several key principles including stewardship, common good, and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.

LS might be characterized as carefully developing one overarching motif (i.e., environmental stewardship), but it repeatedly elaborates two other very important sub-themes. The *central* message, which channels scientific studies about global warming and environmental damage (Naik 2015), calls for an "integral ecology [10-11]" and improved "ecological education [202-14]" that will protest the status quo and restore planet earth. The *two sub-themes* that consistently resound in *LS* are that (a) environmental exploitation most disadvantages the poorest of earth's residents [145-9] and, (b) the globalized capitalistic system of "unfettered markets," driven by its

"pursuit of economic growth" (ever-increasing revenues and GDP), are responsible for a great deal of environmental spoil [106-10]. It should not be surprising that *Laudato si* is both celebrated and controversial, often depending upon the political beliefs of the reader (e.g., Eisner 2015; Eacho 2015). These three themes are made more apparent in the discussion below.

Integral Ecology

Given the *LS* sub-title, "On care for our common home," and the public anticipation of religion-based commentary about the physical environment, the document's central focus on issues relating to the ecology of planet earth is not surprising. The main doctrinal matters of religious significance in *Laudato si* are taken up most expansively at paragraphs 66-68 and 116-119. Here the "inadequate presentation of Christian anthropology" [116] is addressed, with *LS* noting that the oft-quoted Biblical passage from Genesis (1:28), giving mankind "dominion" of the world, requires reinterpretation. Human dominion "should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship [116]" because everything should be seen as connected. At [68], *LS* notes, "Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures." Further added at [68], "Clearly the Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism for other creatures." Perhaps the most succinct statement of *Laudato si's* global message comes at [95]: "The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone."

The policy implications regarding environmental responsibility sprinkled throughout *LS* are to be seen within the context of an "integral ecology", where everything is closely interrelated [137]. *LS* counsels, "When we speak of the 'environment,' what we really mean is the relationship that exists between nature and the society, which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live [139]." This said, it should also be noted that *LS* explicitly rejects the radical ecology that humankind has no special standing in the world different from any other species. Instead, "Christian thought sees human beings as possessing a particular dignity above other creatures; it thus inculcates esteem for each person and respect for others [119]."

Global Inequality

Consistent with a major principle of Catholic Social Thought advocating a "preferential option for the poor," an explicit sub-theme found throughout *LS* is the connection between environmental exploitation and its disproportionate impact upon the poor. This *LS* theme echoes a decades-old argument that global trade can contribute to inequality both between and within nations (Stolper and Samuelson 1941), a position confirmed in recent economic studies that also call for policy adjustments at national and international levels (Dhingra 2018). At [48], *LS* observes: "In fact, the deterioration of the environment and that social impact affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: 'Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest (Bolivian Bishops Conference 2012).'" Noted here are detrimental outcomes such as the loss of fisheries, desertification, water pollution, and rising sea levels that affect impoverished coastal populations, particularly in poor countries [48]. Other environmental justice concerns encountered within *Laudato si* that impact the poorest nations include privatization of resources [93], over-consumption by rich economies [95], the job loss to automation [128], displacement of indigenous communities [146], shortage of decent, affordable housing in mega-cities [148], health effects from pollution [175], and a lack of political leverage by the poor [189]. *LS* warns of empty "green rhetoric" and counsels that "…a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach: it must integrate questions of justice in debates about the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor [49]."

Flawed Technocratic Paradigms

A discernible, yet less evident sub-theme of *LS* (since the critique it is not concentrated in any particular section) is an unease with the economic and technological system that exploits the environment and contributes to its degradation. While sympathy to global environmental issues and the plight of the poor are predictable, a critical appraisal of the current economic system — and the prevailing political/business ethos — alleged to contribute to these problems, may be much less welcome in the marketing community. Proposed causes of the current environmental dysfunction, to be enumerated presently, are embedded throughout the *Laudato si'* narrative; they constitute a major indictment of the existing market system and beg for corrective attention.

Marketing Pathology

Six critical perspectives of the current capitalistic system explicit in LS now follow.

Short Term Perspectives

"The earth's resources are being plundered because of short-sighted approaches to the economy, commerce, and production [32];" and "A politics concerned with immediate results, supported by consumer sectors of the population, is driven to produce short-term growth. In response to electoral interests, governments are reluctant to upset the public with measures that could affect the level of consumption or create risks for foreign investment [178]." In addition, "short-termism" in business conduct, including the tyranny of quarterly financial reporting in public corporations, is encouraged.

Over-Consumption

"…human beings frequently seem to see no other meaning in their natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption [5];" and "…the accumulation of constant novelties exalts a superficiality which pulls us [people] in one ['escapist'] direction [113]." These comments advocate for a simpler, yet functional consumer culture.

The Deified Unfettered Market

"Many people will deny doing anything wrong because distractions constantly dull our consciousness of just how limited and finite our world really is. As a result, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenseless before the interests of a deified market which becomes the only rule [56];" and "It is also the mindset of those who say: 'Let us allow the invisible forces of the market to regulate the economy and consider their impact on the society as collateral damage [123].'" This criticism of unregulated markets is echoed recently in Laderia et al. (2018). Along with the political expediency noted previously, such critiques of the current market system recognize the limits of current corporate and national economic governance structures and thus, imply the need to incorporate principles of solidarity and common good into economic politics [194-197]. For example, such concern provides the platform for "alternative [economic] models" as proposed by Cremers (2017) and Schellnhuber (2018), e.g., cooperatives or 'benefit' corporations.

A Growth Imperative

A one-dimensional paradigm "…has made it easy to accept the idea of infinite or unlimited growth, which proves so attractive to economists, financiers, and experts in technology. It is based on the lie that there is an infinite supply of earth's goods…[106]." (Although one reviewer argued that nature is resilient - likely much more so than humanity – the "limits to growth" rhetoric remains compelling (Meadows, Randers, and Meadows 2004).)

Technological Mania

"The technological paradigm has become so dominant that it would be difficult to do without its resources and even more to utilize them without being dominated by their internal logic. It has become counter-cultural to

choose a lifestyle whose goals are even partly independent of technology…[108];" and "The technocratic paradigm also tends to dominate economic and political life. The economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings [109]."

Profit Maximization

"Is it realistic to hope that those who are obsessed with maximizing profit will stop to reflect on the environmental damage which they will leave behind for future generations? Where profits alone count, there can be no thinking about the rhythms of nature, its phases of decay and regeneration, or the complexity of ecosystems which may be gravely upset by human intervention [190];" and "The principle of the maximization of profits, frequently, isolated from other considerations, reflects a misunderstanding of the very concept of the economy [195]."

These six major criticisms, proposed as sources of ecological dysfunction, constitute a shocking and distressing critique of many of the world's political, technological, and economic systems, including that of the United States. Considered altogether, they raise the obvious question: *Can the existing market-focused system, so central to so many Western democracies, be better modified or constrained to create a more sustainable, more environmentally friendly, and more socially conscious form of market capitalism?* Parsing the answer to this meta-question involves examining what the proper relationship ought to be among *marketing* (the driver of provision and consumption), *markets* (allocating these decisions), and *society*. Especially important here is the concept of 'the common good' — i.e., the idea that all institutions in the marketing system, buyers/sellers and the markets in which exchange occurs are social arrangements that should benefit all members of the community. The "common good" perspective harmonizes the *LS* vision of seeking the positive characteristics of market-based economies but, if necessary, exploring alternative market adjustments - arguably a critical objective of the macromarketing project.

Criticism and Commentary on LS

It is proper to note that the analysis and proposed correctives in *LS* have prompted critical reviews when viewed through the lenses of economics and politics, as well as theology. For example, Gregg (2015) argues that the encyclical misunderstands the economic causes of pollution and the flow of natural resources from poor to rich countries. Rocca (2015) echoes Gregg and concludes his detailed review of the encyclical by noting that the elimination of fossil fuels is "unrealistic," while the cleaner use of those fuels is more practical than the pollution they cause. On the other hand, Reese (2015) agrees with *LS*' political diagnosis but offers a more tempered reading of the evils of technology. Reno (2015) notes that, unfortunately, the encyclical stops short of proposing any specific radical re-engineering of the politico-economic system. On the other hand, the *United Nations Global Compact* (Kell, Kingo, and Reynolds 2015) responded quite positively to the encyclical, recognizing that the private sector should and must "do more to protect the environment and address climate change," and that *Laudato si'* should be an inspiration to that effect (p. 1). Focusing on the environmental challenges facing business enterprise, the December 2016 *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* (Williams et al. 2016) is devoted to engaging *Laudato si'* as a framework for considering the role of the United Nations Global Compact as an international and institutional mechanism for advancing sustainable development. Anticipating Singer (2019), referenced earlier, Rousseau (2017) takes that objective further, integrating CST principles into a theory of the firm.

Between these contrasting perspectives (i.e., "*LS* is an insightful document" versus "*LS* is flawed in its logic") are a range of contributions that expand on or amend *Laudato si.* For example, Green (2015) points out the importance of *LS* to those interested in assessing (global) catastrophic and existential risks. Spina (2015) applies Pope Francis' thinking to the topic of risk regulation. Austriaco (2015) considers the encyclical's understanding of bioethics as a clear reflection of moral law. Deane-Drummond (2015) endorses the claim that *LS* registers nature

as a "gift of god to humanity," to be treated accordingly (p. 49). In addressing the *Centesimus Annus* Foundation in 2017, Francis explicitly positioned the message of *Laudato si'* on poverty as *more than* an environmental issue (Pope Francis 2017). Extending that theme, Bacik (2018) incorporates *LS* into a more general overview of an abiding concern for the poor (p. 3).

In response to these various perspectives, reflecting diverse values and instrumental preferences about ecological challenges, we propose there is a "common body of knowledge" dedicated to studying interactions among marketing, markets, and society (i.e., macromarketing) that examines the questions raised in Laudato Si'. Put differently, *LS* seems to suggest that if the physical environment is to evolve sustainably, then the impacts of market machinations on society must be more deeply analyzed and understood with constructive modifications explored (Lanzona 2015). The discipline arguably best able to pursue this line of inquiry is macromarketing. In the sections below, we will illustrate how for decades, macromarketing has examined market system issues that bear on environmental sustainability, protection of vulnerable consumers, and the common good.

Macromarketing Thought – Responding to Dominant Managerialism

While early marketing scholarship was primarily devoted to the description and quantification of marketplace activities and institutions (Bartels 1976; Jones and Witkowski 2018), the 1960s witnessed the ascendance of a micro-orientation in business schools, reflecting a managerialist perspective (Enteman 2015), focused on buyer behavior and how to influence it (McCarthy 1960). The related attention to exchange transactions with consumers largely ignored the institutional networks of which they were a part, their social contexts, and the impact of buyer and seller behaviors on society. This neglect prompted renewed academic attention to these concerns and the development of a "macromarketing movement" (Hunt 2012).

The domain of this re-emerging field of study was explained in the first issue of the *Journal of Macromarketing* by Hunt (1981): "Macro-marketing (hyphenation was common before the mid-'80 s) refers to the study of (1) marketing systems, (2) the impact and consequence of marketing systems on society, and (3) the impact and consequence of society on marketing systems (p. 8)." This definition was later modified as the journal's subtitle, "Examining the interactions among markets, marketing, and society." In this vein, the discussion below is a selective review of macromarketing scholarship (e.g., Shapiro 2006, 2012) that bears on the questions raised in *Laudato* si'. A more complete review of the corpus of macromarketing literature can be found in other articles published in this volume.

Market system - relationships and dynamics

One sub-theme of *Laudato Si* is that the failure to protect the earth's physical environment flows from the materialistic and arguably amoral character of the extant economic system. The overarching framework for macromarketing research calls for systems-level examination of markets. That is, the study of markets and marketing requires examination of (1) networks and relationships that indicate and facilitate interdependencies among participants, (2) the social context in which those participants act, and (3) the changes that take place in these forces over time. Fisk (1974) advanced this perspective in a prescient textbook many years ago. White (1981) presented it as defining the macro domain in the original issue of the *Journal of Macromarketing.* Arndt (1981) subsequently anchored it to "political economy." Dixon (1984) went further, defining marketing systems as essentially social in character such that public policy, technology, demographics, and culture all come into play. More recently, within the macromarketing canon, these marketing-society systems have been explored in depth by Wilkie and Moore (2013), Layton (2015), and Wooliscroft and Wooliscroft (2018).

There seems little doubt that systemic macromarketing investigation speaks to the key question raised in *Laudato Si'.* That is, how can market systems be adjusted and improved to provide greater fairness and ecological sustainability? This systems approach is clearly in tune with thinking, reflected in *LS,* that some market

structures and conduct threaten environmental degradation and poverty, while significant opportunity exists for corrective actions. Stated alternatively, *systems thinking about markets* will be necessary to enhance and refine the environmental sustainability called for in *LS*.

Externalities and the environment

LS makes clear that many typical market arrangements permit or even encourage negative environmental effects, albeit "unintended" and/or ignored. In macromarketing thought, systems thinking is exemplified by studying exchange transactions and their third-party effects, termed *externalities* (Mundt 1993; Mundt and Houston 1996). This concept includes by-products from sourcing, production, distribution, and consumption that impact the environment (Nason 1986). Thus, these market forces have ecological dimensions (Viswanathan et al. 2014; Duffy, Layton, and Dwyer 2017). These may positively affect the environment (e.g., Cadeaux 2002), but, echoing the long standing work of economists Pigou (1932) and Kapp (1950), they often generate hidden or unintended social costs from, e.g. the exhaustion of scarce resources and pollution as described in Klein (1977) or Laczniak (2017).

Given the focus of *Laudato si'* on preserving the environment, the extent of concern with this subject in macromarketing research is notable (e.g., Crane 2000). Interest in the relationship between environmental concerns and marketing dates to the emergence of this sub-discipline (Fisk 1974), became a major theme of macromarketing scholarship in the late 1990s (Kilbourne, MacDonough, and Prothero 1997), and continues to attract macromarketing scholarship, notably Benton (2015), who calls for an environmental ethos that transcends the usual deontological or utilitarian justifications for natural preservation. Thus, a primary macromarketing research interest involves exposing and measuring the potentially catastrophic externalities discussed in *Laudato Si'* as well as seeking and evaluating approaches to achieving their reversal.

Distributive justice – the poor and vulnerable

As previously noted, distributive justice and the "preferential option for the poor" are prominent criteria in CST. *Laudato si'* explicitly notes the significance of unfair outcomes [48], and laments how environmental degradation impacts the poor. A review of the macromarketing literature indicates that justice and fairness have been frequently examined, at least since the mid-1990s (Morgan et al. 1994) in terms of various social outcomes. Reflecting theories advanced by moral philosopher John Rawls (1971), *distributive justice* as related to marketing practice (i.e., the fairness of market outcomes) has been extensively examined. In 2008, a special issue of the *Journal of Macromarketing* was devoted to this topic (e.g., Crul and Zinkhan 2008; Ferrell and Ferrell 2008; Klein 2008; Laczniak and Murphy 2008). More recently, Facca-Miess and Santos (2016) formulated a multi-dimensional model for evaluating marketing conduct and performance. Concern for the poor and vulnerable (*Laudato si*' at [48]) has been long standing in macromarketing scholarship (Andreasen 1997; Hill 2002; Kotler, Roberto, and Leisner 2006; Laczniak and Santos 2011; Agnihotra 2012; Gau et al. 2014; Kolk 2014; Aiyar and Venugopal 2020). Particular attention has been given to vulnerable consumers, often victims of predatory practices or redlining (e.g., Baker, Gentry, and Rittenburg 2005; Baker et al. 2015; Beninger and Shapiro 2019; Commuri and Ekici 2008; Pavia and Mason 2014; Rowthorn 2019; Ringgold 2005).

Quality of Life (QoL)

Macro outcomes are a major point of concern in *Laudato si'.* The macromarketing perspective also engages a wider set of criteria for evaluating performance of socio-economic systems than relying solely on economic measures (e.g., gross domestic product, income, and employment). In sociology, research extending beyond economic measures and accounting for other societal outcomes is referred to as "quality-of-life" or "social indicators" research. Such scholarship (Noll 2018) might consider social welfare measures such as education levels, housing, disease and crime rates, infant mortality, and life expectancy as well as more traditional economic variables (e.g., employment rates and income distribution). This broadened understanding of market

performance, which also exposes conflicts between societal and purely economic outcomes, has long been a principal theme of macromarketing scholarship (Malhotra 2006). Sirgy and others (2006, 2008) made important contributions to this understanding. A prominent example of superseding the narrow economic perspective is work by Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero (1997), recognizing the environmental implications of business and consumer actions that pollute or exhaust scarce natural resources, precisely the perspective advocated in *LS*. In addition, Hill, Felice, and Ainscough (2007) considered the ethical dimension of human rights as an element of QoL. This human-centered perspective is also reflected in work by Peterson (2006) and by others evaluating the QoL of developing nations (e.g., Mullen et al. 2009), including "work life," another CST criterion, (e.g., Nguyen and Nguyen 2011; Sison, Ferrero, and Guitian 2016). These examples of macromarketing scholarship involving QoL issues can be seen as both reflective and informative regarding relationships among economic and social development and environmental preservation, topics central to *Laudato si'*.

Consumer culture

Consumer values and over-consumption (i.e., "consumerism [34]"), are identified in *Laudato si'* as threats to environmental stewardship (Pope Francis 2015). It should be noted that earlier definitions of "consumerism" focused more on consumer protection issues (Pappalardo 2012). An early macromarketing commentary on this issue was from Rassuli and Hollander (1986) who recognized consumer desires as apparently limitless (How many pairs and colors of shoes do we need?). Pollay (1986, 1987) and Holbrook (1987) discussed the effect of advertising on this issue. Later, Dröge et al. (1993) recognized both materialism and the individualistic, often selfish orientation of consumers as socially dysfunctional. Turning to the particular concern with less developed nations, Belk (1988) noted decades ago – and questioned – the role of consumer demand in less developed economies, expressing concerns echoed later by Eckhardt and Mahi (2012). In line with the overarching ecological orientation and sustainability focus of *LS*, the environmental implications of consumption have been a subject of exploration in macromarketing for many years (e.g., Dolan 2002; Scott et al. 2014).

Ethics and corporate social responsibility

A major theme of Laudato si' is the moral status of the natural environment impacted by questionable business conduct. As the macromarketing movement completes the micro-managerial orientation with a systems perspective, it follows that its scholarship has a significant ethical content that considers the social implications of marketplace conduct. To the extent that ethical principles are rooted in religious teachings, the subject of this inquiry regarding *LS,* religion-based ethics deserves separate attention (see below). However, there is a substantial volume of macromarketing scholarship about ethics in which an explicit religious dimension is absent.

Including the articles on distributive justice (cited earlier), marketing ethics is frequently prominent (even warranting its own Associate Editor) in the *Journal of Macromarketing* (e.g., Bone and Corey 1998; Ekici and Ekici 2016; Gundlach and Murphy 1993; Hunt and Vitell 1986, 2006; Laczniak, Lusch, and Strang 1981; Laczniak and Murphy 2006; Laczniak and Santos 2011; Nill 2003; Nill and Schribowsky 2007; Priddle 1994). The "stakeholder vs. stockholder" debate reflected in *LS* (Pope Francis 2015 [190]), customarily attributed to the strategic management literature (e.g., Freeman 1984, Smith 2003), has also been explored in the macromarketing literature (Laczniak and Murphy 2012). Related to this, general understandings of social responsibility in market contexts have also been studied (Beschorner, Haiduk, and Schank 2015; Drumwright and Murphy 2001; Gonzales-Patron and Nason 2009; Laczniak and Murphy 2015). Finally, another pillar of CST and a foundational concept in *LS* (Pope Francis 2015 [18, 23, 156] is the notion of *common good* (e.g., Pittz, Steiner, and Pennington 2020), also the theme of a macromarketing focused University of Notre Dame scholarly symposium (e.g. Furuhashi and McCarthy 1971/2014, Gaski and Etzel 2014; Murphy 2014). These examples demonstrate a literature-grounded and secular perspective for anchoring ethical responses to the moral challenges raised in *LS*.

Religious values in marketing and markets

As this paper explores the alignment between issues of interest in macromarketing and in *LS*, it seems necessary and useful to point out how the relationship between marketing and religion has been examined over the years, both in the macromarketing discipline and by a broader school of marketing scholars. First, the marketing-religion relationship has been increasingly studied in general terms (e.g., Kale 2004; Mittelstaedt 2002; Dann and Dann 2016; Drenten and McManus 2016; Van Buren, Syed, and Mir 2019). In the context of the social sciences, religion is usually viewed as a socio-cultural phenomenon (e.g., Putnam and Campbell 2010). In the context of marketing practice, religion is seen to influence both consumption (LaBarbara 1987; Mathras et al. 2016; Yurdakul and Atik 2016; Chowdhury 2018a, 2018b; Khan 2018; Razzaq et al. 2018) and business practices (Cai, Li, and Tang 2020; Cai and Shi 2019; Chan and Ananthram 2019; Friedman 2001; Hu, Lian, and Zhou 2019; Klein, Laczniak, and Santos 2017; White and Samuel 2016) -- or not (Aydin and Alquayid 2017). The more normative perspective—i.e., how religion based values can shape ethical marketing decisions—has been underscored previously (e.g., Klein 1987; Dixon 2001, Klein and Laczniak 2009), including research specifically focused on environmental concerns (Leary, Minton, and Mittelstaedt 2016; Landrum, Tomaka, and McCarthy 2016; El Jurdi, Batat, and Jafari 2017). Of special emerging interest might be the study of economic globalization vs. the influence of religion in developing markets (e.g., Sandikci et al. 2016). These examples are significant indicators of the macromarketing's hospitality to diverse inquiry about how religious values impact marketing, including insights about many of the issues that resonate throughout *Laudato si'*.

The "Authentic Anthropology" of *LS* and Macromarketing

The fundamental debate about environmental ethics posed in *Laudato si'* is cultural rather than theological in nature. In that framework, the economic critique of profit-seeking, never-ending growth, uncritical faith in technological progress, and limitless consumption in *LS* is subsidiary to a larger understanding of the human/environmental relationship; whether humankind seeks "dominion" or responsible stewardship (Pope Francis 2015 [117]). While open to criticism as too anthropocentric, the 'Franciscan vision' informing *LS* takes exception to the 'dominion ideology' that assumes economic endeavors and the technological advances are independent of their ecological impact and the social principles called for in most religious traditions; that is, human dignity, the common good, preferential treatment for vulnerable populations, and mostly importantly, environmental stewardship.

Conversely, in the search for a more integral ecology, the vision laid out in *LS* fosters "authentic social progress [4]," authentic human ecology [5]," and "authentic human development [5]," i.e., an overarching *culture* that sees the human-nature relationship as integrated, thus, "authentic" as defined by Handler (2015) and applied in discussing cultural identity and aspiration. In this vision of ecological ethics, "care for planet" and "care for each other" are mutually reinforcing and incorporate economic objectives in a supporting, not superior role. More generally, Puen (2019) and Retolaza, Aguado, and Alcaniz (2019) offer a vision of economic anthropology, derived from Catholic social thought, that challenges the classical, liberal model of self-interest, prominently represented by *shareholder* primacy and indulgent consumerism. At a minimum, macromarketing perspectives echo the Franciscan vision of taking "care of our common home" and, most significant, that macromarketing thought reflects an understanding of both a deep concern for others (e.g., Kadirov, Varey, and Wooliscroft 2014) and attention to the common good (Kadirov 2018). In summary, a sympathetic reading of *Laudato si'* yields valid and compelling guidance in macromarketing for uncovering clues and frameworks about how the ecological challenges raised in *LS* might be overcome.

Final Comment

Implicit in this paper is the prospect that *Laudato si'*, presumed to reflect a moral anthropology of environmental stewardship that fortifies the macromarketing school of thought, which was a response to an overtly managerial (firm-focused) orientation. This fortification is mutual as macromarketing scholarship, particularly its environmental manifestation, provides (1) a blueprint for initiatives called for in *Laudato si'* and (2) moral parameters – i.e., ethical objectives and limits – for marketing systems that support environmental care for planet earth. Thus, *LS* can be seen as calling macromarketing scholars to seek ways to make markets work better in support of environmental stewardship and to chart a map for ecological approaches that enhance human well-being and fairness across the globe. This challenge now awaits us.

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