

## The Evolution of Demarketing Literature

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### ■ ABSTRACT

The term *demarketing* refers to a strategy aimed at regulating the level and shape of actual and future demand by organizations (profit and non-profit as well as governments). Put differently, demarketing is the strategic answer or road mapping, designed by organizations, to manage excessive demand of goods, services, experiences, and other products, by its actual or future markets. This paper researches the evolution of the literature on demarketing between 1971 and 2014, its theoretical and conceptual development, and the practical contexts in which it has been applied to regulate demand. Its objective is to raise questions or comments on the focus sustained by those who have studied and applied demarketing as a way of managing demand.

**Keywords:** demarketing, scarcity, excessive demand, recessions

**JEL Classification:** M-30

## La evolución de la literatura de demercadear

### ■ RESUMEN

El término demercadear se refiere a una estrategia destinada a regular el nivel y la forma de la demanda actual y futura de las organizaciones (con y sin fines de lucro así como de gobierno). Dicho de otra manera, el demercadear es la respuesta estratégica u hoja de ruta diseñada por las organizaciones, para gestionar la demanda excesiva de bienes, servicios, experiencias y otros productos, por sus mercados actuales o futuros. Este trabajo investiga la evolución de la literatura sobre el demercadear entre 1971 y 2014, su desarrollo teórico y conceptual, y los contextos prácticos en los que se ha aplicado para regular la demanda. Su objetivo es plantear preguntas y comentarios sobre el enfoque sostenido por quienes han estudiado y aplicado el demercadear como una forma de gestionar la demanda.

**Palabras claves:** demercadear, escasez, demanda excesiva, recesiones.

**Clasificación JEL:** M-30

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The term *demarketing* was coined by Kotler and Levy (1971) in an article published by *Harvard Business Review*, titled “Demarketing, yes, demarketing.” Since then, scholars have focused on demarketing as a marketing strategy whose objective is to manage excessive demand (Harvey & Kerin, 1977).

For the period covered in this review (1971-2014), 81 articles, and a book titled *Demarketing*, edited by Bradley and Blythe (2014), have been published. Fifty-four or 67% of the articles were made available between 1993 and 2014, meaning that the scholarly interest on demarketing grew quite recently.

Articles on demarketing have been published in top journals, including the *Journal of Marketing*, the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, the *Journal of Health Care Marketing*, *Health Care Marketing Quarterly*, the *Journal of Business Ethics*, and the *Journal of Park and Recreation Management*, among others. These publications mostly centered on the application of demarketing (demand reduction) to environmental issues, public health, tourism, and other widely demanded goods and services; they also focused on tactical aspects (the application of the marketing mix or four P’s), such as pricing, distribution, promotion, and product issues for reducing demand.

Reingruber (2010) termed these last tactical applications of the four P’s as, “an ad-hoc emergency solution” (p. 34) to situations requiring demand reduction. For Reingruber, these types of short-term solutions show lack of strategic planning.

Unfortunately, as Bradley and Blythe (2014) had stated, since demarketing has been virtually ignored during the past half century, only a few scholars have aimed to develop a conceptual framework for its study and application. Bradley and Blythe (2014) explain why demarketing have been rarely studied:

We all understand the basic principles underpinning marketing activity: to identify unfulfilled needs and desires and boost demand for the solutions a product is offering. The mantra is always “sell more.” Demarketing tries for the opposite. Why would a company actively try to decrease demand? There are many good reasons to do so: a firm cannot supply

large enough quantities, or wants to limit supply to a region of narrow profit margin. Or, crucially, to discourage undesirable customers: those that could be bad for the brand reputation or, in the case of the finance sector, high risk. Demarketing can yield effective solutions to these issues, effectively curtailing demand yet (crucially) not destroying it. Nevertheless, the fundamental negativity of demarketing strategies often causes organizations to hide them from view, and, as a result, they are rarely studied. (p. i)

Demarketing has a role to play in the development of road maps for organizations, whether private or public, for profit or not for profit, since it is most pertinent in designing the appropriate segmentation strategy. As Bradley and Blythe implied in the words above, or as Kotler and Levy (1971) clearly established: “Marketers have dealt with the problem of increasing demand for so long that they have overlooked a host of situations where the problem is to reduce demand or cope with inability to meet it” (p. 79); thus, demarketing effort is the answer when marketers want:

- To reduce demand, without alienating loyal customers
- To reduce demand by discouraging consumption from market segments that are either unprofitable or that could injure loyal buyers (p. 79).

This article did not intend to provide conceptual frameworks or develop theoretical paradigms on demarketing.<sup>1</sup> Its interest was to review the evolution of the literature on demarketing, mostly based on academic journals and practitioner magazines, published between 1971 and 2014, and to comment or make observations on the focus sustained by those who contributed to its evolution. The authors were also interested in confirming what Bradley and Blythe wrote on demarketing: “only a few scholars have aimed to develop a conceptual framework for its study and application” (2014, p. 212).

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 14 of Bradley & Blythe (2014), for a discussion on the subject.

The following section describes the methodology followed for the literature review. Section 3 content analyzed this literature. Section 4 provides conclusions to the review.

### **Methodology**

In line with Kitchenham's (2004) approach for systematic literature reviews, the methodology for this article comprised: (1) a planning stage, (2) conducting the review, and, (3) the content analysis of articles found. Following Herrera Maldueño, Larrán Jorge, Lechuga Sancho, and Martínez-Martínez (2015), and as part of the planning stage, the authors examined other systematic reviews, including Fisk, Brown, and Bitner (1993); Cooper (1998); Eisend (2006); Gremler, (2004); and Ruiz-Torres, Ayala-Cruz, and Acero-Chávez (2015), for guidance to develop a roadmap for this article.

The review started with the planning or searching of articles focused on demarketing as available in electronic databases, such as EBSCOhost/Business Source Premier, ProQuest/Inform Global, and ScienceDirect. Other articles were found by revising the bibliographies and references available in the publications. The authors found that between 1971 and 2014, 98% of the 81 articles discussing demarketing were written in English. One of the articles was written in German and one in French.

To select articles for inclusion in the review of the evolution of the literature on demarketing, the authors analyzed the content of academic journal and practitioners' magazines found in the databases. According to Gremler (2004), as suggested by Chell and Pittaway (1998), data from content analysis may be employed for both quantitative and qualitative purposes; for example, researchers may examine the number of articles published within the field of interest during a study period. By contrast, researchers may examine the narrative in the document, and code and categorize its content according to the principles of grounded theory (Chell & Pittaway, 1998).

As a first step in the analysis of content, the authors looked for the words demarketing, de-marketing, and phrases such as exces-

sive demand and managing recessions, in titles and abstracts of the publications found. Should an article have not clearly included these words and phrases as part of its title or abstract, but discussed a related subject (such as overflow demand), two authors inspected its content and decided on its inclusion.

As suggested by Chell and Pittaway (1998), authors and the journal titles, were included as part of the analysis. Then, the authors went on to classified articles content as either discussing conceptual frameworks or practical applications. Conceptual issues were those related to the development of theoretical constructs as well as taxonomies or classifications of demarketing; whereas practical applications relied on discussions focused on demand reduction both at the macro (the economy and its social needs) and micro levels (the application of demarketing by organizations), as well as government and organizations' tactical solutions.

The *First Decade* of the review is the period spanning from 1971 (the year when the word demarketing was coined) to 1981. Seventeen articles were published during the *First Decade*. The *Second Decade* spans from 1982 to 1992. Nine articles were published during the *Second Decade*. The *Third Decade* covered between 1993 and 2003. Fifteen articles were published during the *Third Decade*. The *Fourth Decade* took from 2004 to 2014. Forty articles were published during the *Fourth Decade*.

## Content Analysis

### Initial Interest in Demarketing

Even though the title of the pioneer article on the subject written by Kotler & Levy (1971) was *Demarketing, yes, demarketing*, ideas related to demand reduction were discussed by other authors, but the word demarketing was no mentioned.<sup>2</sup> During the first petroleum crisis on August, 1973, a chain reaction resulted from the crisis (Akins, 1973; Harvey & Kerin, 1977), causing limited availability of grains, wood, fertilizers, cotton, and wool, and generating an

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<sup>2</sup> See Holden and Holden (2001).

unbalanced demand-and-supply state; consequently, other scholars, besides Kotler and Levy, became interested in subjects such as demand reduction (Cravens, 1974; McGuire, 1974).

Kotler and Levy defined demarketing as a marketing strategy aimed at discouraging consumption in general, or from a certain class of customers on a temporary or permanent basis. According to the authors, an organization sometimes faces the need to reduce either total or certain classes of demand to the level of supply without damaging long-run customer relations.

In their article, Kotler and Levy described three different types of demarketing:

- General demarketing, which occurs when marketers shrink total demand; for instance, when water suppliers fine customers for using the liquid to wash their cars during severe droughts;
- Selective demarketing, which is aimed at discouraging demand from customer's groups. Service providers that cater to high-income individuals, discourage purchases from low-income persons by avoiding low-image retailers;
- Ostensible demarketing, as when marketers limit product distribution to increase its exclusivity and desirability. (1971, p. 75)

The authors suggested the classic marketing mix or 4 P's (Product, Promotion, Price, and Place) to reduce demand:

- Curtails in advertising expenditures and modification of message content;
- Reduction in sales promotion expenditures: investing less in trade exhibits, point-of-purchase displays, catalog space, and so forth;
- Cuts back in salespeople's selling time and their entertainment budgets, requiring that they focus on other products, spend more time in service intelligence work, and learn to say "no" in a way that does not put off customers;

- Increasing the price and other sale conditions to the marketing company's advantage;
- adding procurement time and expense, also referred to as "efforts and psychological costs," to discourage demand;
- Reduction in product quality or content, either to discourage consumption or make the product more available and, thus, demarket at a slower rate;
- Curtailing the number of distribution outlets, using product shortage as an opportunity to eliminate undesirable dealers and/or customers. (p. 76)

Kotler and Levy concluded their article by commenting that "whether the task at hand is to reduce total demand without alienating loyal customers, discourage demand coming from certain market segments that are either unprofitable or could injure loyal buyers, or to appear to want less demand for the sake of increasing it, the need is for creative demarketing" (p. 79). The following sections content analyze the reviewed literature by decade of publication, author, and subjects covered.

### **First Decade (1971-1981)**

During the First Decade, a total of 17 demarketing articles were published in scholarly journals.<sup>3</sup> A limited number of scholars who wrote on demarketing during the First Decade did consider theoretical and conceptual issues in their articles. Most did focus on practical applications of demarketing, such as discussing tactical maneuverings for demand reduction.

Theoretical and conceptual issues were mostly the concern of Kotler and Levy (1971) and Kotler (1973). In 1973, Kotler studied the demand states for products and the marketer appropriate

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<sup>3</sup> The authors acknowledge that three articles on demarketing were published by the American Marketing Association in *Marketing News* during the First Decade (two in 1974 and one in 1975) and that two were published during the Second Decade (1983 and 1986) of their research; but the content of these four articles was not analyzed for this article as they were short-length remarks, rather than an extended discussion on demarketing.

response of each state. According to Kotler, marketing managers are professionals “whose basic interest and skill lies in regulating the level, timing, and character of demand for a product, service, place, or idea” (p. 48). Kotler referred to demarketing as management strategy when product demand substantially outpaces supply, a period he referred to as “overfull demand” (p. 47). Kotler also mentioned that demarketing is appropriate in certain situations and ethically dubious in others. Both the seminal article and that of demand states showed Kotler’s theoretical digressions on demarketing.

Among those who discussed applications of demarketing was Cullwick (1975). He argued on the use of the marketing mix to reduce demand by calling for the discontinuation of products, for price increases, credit tightening, distribution targeting, and conservation themes as part of promotion efforts. In the same vein, Hanna, Kizilbash, and Smart (1975) identified key environmental changes, such as buying behavior, competition, political stability, and psychological climate, within which firms operate, that marketers should be aware of and that requires the use of marketing tactics to control excessive demand.

Based on the marketing mix, Kotler (1974) suggested demarketing to keep companies prosperous, both in the short- and long-run, during periods of shortages. Shedding some light on this suggestion, Demirdjian (1975) stated that demarketing should be used regarding products composed of materials that the economy expects to be in shortage, and that it should primarily focus on limiting promotion of those products.

Cravens (1974) added a discussion on four broad marketing strategies that could be employed during shortages of basic resources such as oil and petroleum products: growth strategy, market retention, market building, and balancing and realignment. Cravens also identified the appropriate strategy as per demand type.

During this decade, a group of authors discussed the implementation of programs to reduce consumption at the macro level of the economy, which Bates and Dillard (1976) referred to as *social demarketing*; for example, Saddik (1977) discussed specific strategic

demarketing issues for the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, while Hugill (1977) considered the negative impact that demarketing could have on society (such as when advertising is regulated by government agencies, limiting its educational role in society). Post and Baer (1979) discussed the importance of demarketing certain products that are averse to human health.

Once demarketing gained traction, scholars started focusing on strategic issues such as segmentation research within specific contexts. One such scholar was Frisbie (1980), who studied electric energy clients' psychographic profiles, allowing for the formulation of a segmentation strategy during the energy crisis to respond to limited fuel supply. In particular, Harvey and Keri (1977) discussed Shell and Exxon's demarketing within the gas sector as a case study.

During the First Decade, Kotler and Levy (1971) brought to the attention of marketers three pertinent segmentation objectives when dealing with demarketing:

- To reduce demand, without alienating loyal customers;
- To reduce demand by discouraging consumption from market segments that are either unprofitable or that could injure loyal buyers;
- To appear to want less demand for the sake of increasing it.

From a marketing perspective, these concerns demonstrated that Kotler and Levy recognized that marketing and demarketing could or should be considered equally acceptable scenarios for the marketing effort. That each scenario needed cautious examination on how one can impact the other; hence, each needs the development of its respective, but linked, road maps. It might even be examined as two faces of the same coin, one face trying to retain customers and the other either reducing or eliminating demands from unwanted markets; so, if a manager needed or wanted to implement a marketing effort where desired customers are retained and unwanted customers are rejected, each effort could be simultaneously implemented; but, must always monitor the other, so objectives are achieved.

Besides, it was also Kotler and Levy (1971) and Kotler (1973) who initiated the theoretical discussion of demarketing by providing appropriate justifications for this effort. Kotler and Levy (1971) were even the firsts to suggest a typology to describe the demarketing effort and circumstances for its implementation. Other scholars concentrated on practical issues of demand reduction and its application within specific contexts.

It is most appropriate to mention that articles published during the decade appeared on top journals, a fact that typically encourages other scholars to pay attention to a topic, and that the scholars attracted to the subject were of the highest level at the time; thus, one would suppose that the next decade would have been as fruitful as the first.

### **Second Decade (1982-1992)**

Only 9 articles were published during the Second Decade, a 47% reduction in the number of articles, vis-à-vis the First Decade. These articles were published in academic journals, such as the *Journal of Marketing*, the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing*, *MIS Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Macromarketing*, among others.

The Second Decade encompasses the incorporation of new disciplines as explanations associated to demarketing, including law, technology, and macroeconomics. As in the First Decade, scholars mostly focused on practical issues such as the implementation of marketing tactics (the marketing mix) to control excess demand.

McLeod and Fuerst (1982), for example, discussed internal demarketing issues and a proposal for a marketing orientation within organizations. Deutsch and Liebermann (1985) were concerned with advertising's effectiveness on the reduction of electric energy in Israel.

Lepisto (1983), on the other hand, went back to the subject on typologies by introducing a new demarketing taxonomy, which categorized the strategy as either (1) passive, (2) active, or (3) complete. For Lepisto,

- Passive demarketing is implemented on products with strong demand, but considered adverse to human health

and social well-being, such as cigarettes. These products are not removed from the market, but potential customers are strongly encouraged to consider substitutes.

- Active demarketing employs the marketing mix to reduce the entire market's demand for certain products.
- Complete demarketing refers to products withdrawn from the market. Complete demarketing may be voluntary or imposed. Where voluntary, marketers do whatever is necessary to halt product sales; and, where imposed, governments order the removal of products from the market on public health grounds.

Lepisto exemplified imposed demarketing via Firestone 500 tires case study, discussing how the Federal Trade Commission ordered the removal of these tires from the market due to defects.

Papadopoulos (1983) proposed that, before implementing a demarketing program at the firm level, managers should determine if their country's economy (the macro level) is undergoing a recessionary cycle. The author suggests that managers evaluate falling economic activity in terms of its causes (resource scarcity or limited production capacity), duration (short- or long-term), intensity, and the firms' actual situation facing its competitors (better than, worse than, or equal to competitors). Once management identifies shortage, it should proceed with its demarketing program.

Adding to the discussion, Hollander (1984) stated that marketing scholars have generally ignored legal and other external constraints (Lepisto & Hannaford, 1980), like government mandates (Krapfel, 1982) on consumer behavior. Studying the impact of sumptuary laws<sup>4</sup> for marketing, the author stated that these laws are designed to discourage consumption by the market or some segment thereof, and are construed as a benchmark for other de-

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<sup>4</sup> A sumptuary law is any law designed to restrict excessive personal expenditures in the interest of preventing extravagance and luxury. Such laws have proved difficult or impossible to enforce over the long term (Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, 2009).

marketing measures. Hollander linked sumptuary laws with instruments for the implementation of macroeconomic national policies, such as protectionism from importing goods from other nations, which, in some instances, constraints market options.

Meanwhile Rößl (1991) discussed demarketing within the service industries as a measure to avoid simultaneous presence of incompatible segments in the servicescape. According to Rößl, should the value of services be primarily based on customers' special characteristics and behavior, then demarketing is crucial. For this scholar, marketing must ensure that segments considered undesirable in terms of their impact on target segments perceptions are excluded from the service setting. Rößl is one of the first scholars who applies demarketing to services.

Focusing on shortages, Dadzie (1989) addressed the relationship between the incidence of economic shortages and demarketing activity performance in six African countries: Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, and Zambia. Dadzie concluded that demarketing activity among African firms was an exercise of government control over marketing decisions.

During the Second Decade, scholars added a new demarketing typology (Lepisto, 1983); suggested the integration of new disciplines, such as the law, for studying decisions on demand reduction (Hollander, 1984), particularly at the macro or society level; even recommended a methodology before implementing a demarketing effort (Papadopoulos, 1983); and studied the value of demarketing as a segmentation scheme for services (Rößl, 1991). Fundamentally, all authors kept their attention on the (practical) implementation of demarketing efforts. Unfortunately, this interest did not mean that demarketing was a subject growing in the number of articles written on its behalf; nonetheless, the interest was there, the authors of the articles kept being known scholars, and the prestige of the publications where articles were included, was also of the highest level. On a curious note, two authors—Dadzie (1989) and Papadopoulos (1983)—published their articles on the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*.

### **Third Decade (1993-2003)**

A total of 16 articles were published during the Third Decade, 6 more than during the previous decade; this represented a 67% increase in articles published.

Academic publications such as *Advances in Consumer Research*, the *Journal of Health Care Marketing*, and the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* were among the periodicals where these 16 articles were published. The attention of the articles focused on the implementation of demarketing efforts to social environment and the public sector. Two reasons were behind authors for their concern on these two contexts: (1) excessive demand for some public services and (2) socially unacceptable consumption.

For instance, Kindra and Taylor (1995) suggested user-fees or co-payments by patients of the Canadian healthcare system to restrict excessive demand. MacStravic (1995), Mark and Brennan (1995), and Mark and Elliott (1997), however, questioned this propositions on ethical grounds, as price increases limit the populace's access to crucial services. Borkowski (1994, 1995) argued for coordinated medical systems developed in the United States and Canada, such as Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO's), the reduction of the excessive use of health services via preventive medicine, cost-sharing by the medical professional connected to the health care system, and adequate management controls.

Offering a strategic perspective of demarketing, Gerstner, Hess, and Chu (1993) focused on differentiation-based demarketing. The authors stated that low price firms may purposely introduce a nuisance attribute to a product, to drive customers to purchase a higher-price substitute offered by another firm. The underlying rationale is that without differentiation demarketing, two firms could offer identical products, engendering a price war that would eventually drive prices to costs. By contrast, differentiation via introduction of the nuisance attribute, allows the higher price firm to raise its prices by capturing consumers who dislike the demarketed product. This situation also helps the lower-price firm to raise its prices as well. The authors concluded entrant firms may be interested in differentiating demarketing when product improvements are cost-

ineffective. In such situations, entrant firms offer a lower price and introduce a nuisance attribute to differentiate itself from a higher quality offered by another established firm, thereby avoiding price competition. Demarketing consumers with low demarketing tolerance purchase the high-priced products, whereas those with high tolerance purchase from other demarketer, to save money.

In 1971, Kotler and Levy cautioned of chronic over popularity, referring to instances where a product's success threatens its long-run quality, because management spends less in managerial controls and is less interested in investing in the product (it becomes *cash cow* for the business); for example, Sem and Vogt (1997) suggested price increases and to use advertising messages that encourage visiting alternative sites to those (i.e., parks) affected by over-popularity; whereas Groff (1998) recommended researching visitors' perceptual images to develop strategic demarketing plans. McLean, Havitz, and Adkins (2002) studied managerial behavior in situations of excessive demand of municipal golf courses, finding that price increases were the most employed demarketing strategy.

Relatedly, Beeton, and Benfield (2002) argued that demarketing is unconsciously employed in tourism, but has not been acknowledged or actively pursued as a marketing or management tool. They promoted the conscious incorporation of demarketing into the tourism marketing strategy, particularly that concerning mass or environmental tourism. Quan (2000) criticized travel agencies that market parks as tourist destinations and Wilkinson (2003) inquired whether government agencies should preserve the integrity of national parks via demarketing.

Foxall (1995) introduced what he called Behavioral Perspective Model of Purchase and Consumption, based on the principles of behavior analysis as applied to social demarketing interventions that are aimed at environmental preservation. Foxall indicated that the model helps categorize demarketing strategies in terms of antecedent and consequential stimuli to modify behavior.

Focusing on ethics and demarketing, Cui and Choudhury (2003) qualified campaigns aimed at no consumption of alcohol as

ethically appropriate. On the other hand, Gallagher (2001) highlighted business-to-business demarketing for the first time in the literature, issuing recommendations to manage encounters among providers' representatives and segments within the services sector.

As stated, there was an increase in the number of articles written on demarketing during the Third Decade. New specific areas of application of demarketing were introduced by authors worried with excessive demand for some public services and socially unacceptable consumption; hence, health care, tourism, and alcohol consumption, enjoying what Kotler (1973) called overfull demand or a state in which demand exceeds the level at which the marketer feels able or motivated to supply it, got the attention of scholars. It also got the attention of scholars the application of demarketing to the B2B relations within the service sector. As it was discussed during the Second Decade, the service sector was also the subject of inquiry by Rößl (1991) within the context of incompatible segments in the servicescape. This time the subject was service encounters among providers and customers. What is pertinent is the fact that the scope of demarketing was expanding.

The study of demarketing was also getting more attention from strategists. The article by Gerstner, Hess, and Chu (1993) discussed a basic strategic interest of both of scholars and practitioners: that of differentiation. Related to strategy design within the context of demarketing is the study of customer behavior by Foxall (1995).

As Gerstner, Hess, and Chu recognized “little effort has been devoted to the formal study of demarketing by marketers” (1993, p. 50). “This is not surprising,” commented these scholars—as so did Kotler and Levy (1971) and Bradley and Blythe (2014)—“as marketers are trained to build demand rather than destroy it;” but, “there has been growing scholarly interest in issues that can be construed as demarketing, although demarketing terminology is not used” (p. 1). No question that since the First Decade demarketing was establishing its place in the scholarly literature. Besides, this decade saw new journals publishing articles on demarketing. The Fourth Decade will tell us if it was a sustained perspective.

### **Fourth Decade (2004-2014)**

Thirty-nine articles were published during the Fourth Decade, 21 more than during the Third Decade; this represented a 160% increase in articles published. The following are some of the academic publications where these 39 articles were included: the *Journal of International Marketing*, the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *The Sage Handbook of Social Marketing*, and the *Journal of Academy of Business and Economics*.

Lefebvre and Kotler (2011) advise marketers on appropriate contexts to apply demarketing:

- Water and energy shortages: during water shortages water should be rationed, whereas frequent energy blackouts require campaigns to discourage unnecessary or wasteful energy consumption.
- Preventing shortages: overfishing must be discouraged to preserve fish supply.
- Fostering public health: cigarette smoking as well as misusing prescription medication must be discouraged.
- Environmental conservation: discouraging too many people from visiting ecological reserves, national parks and other over-attended natural resources.

When carrying on demarketing efforts, Lefebvre and Kotler suggested to:

- Develop segmentation strategies and research to understand how to demotivate current practices.
- Reduce the number of features or attributes of services or tangibles.
- Realign incentives and costs of the current (discouraged) products, services, or behaviors to make them financially, psychologically and socially costlier, thereby increasing opportunity costs for engaging in these behaviors or consuming these products or services.

- Change the environment and reduce opportunities so that current products and services are more difficult to access.
- Eliminate or restrict promotional activities that encourage the use of products and services or support current practices and behaviors.
- Design and position products, services, and messages that align demarketing objectives with personally relevant and valued self-identities or social roles among priority.

The above topics links demarketing with social marketing issues, or the marketing of an idea, cause, or behavior that improves societal well-being. According to Lefebvre and Kotler (2011), social marketing (includes campaigns such as “stop smoking,” “say no to drugs,” and “exercise more”) has been centered on demarketing throughout its 40 years of existence.

Kotler and Lefebvre stressed that firms must not only focus on demand reduction, but also seek sustainability,<sup>5</sup> operating in ways that allow society to leave the same or larger basket of resources to future generations. The authors enumerated future research areas, such as factors that incentivizes consumer behavior which results in sustainability, sustainability-based competition, and the emergence of *green* companies, among others.

In this decade, authors again placed interest in practical applications of demarketing. Varadarajan (2014), for example, looked to demarketing within environmental protection,<sup>6</sup> highlighting that inadequate or ineffective investments in infrastructure lead to poor quantity and low quality public goods (e.g., water, electricity, sanitation, public transportation), often requiring consumer behavior adverse to sustainability. The author suggests conducting case studies to identify consumer needs at the base of the market pyramid and ways in which to close public goods quality and quantity gaps.

Also, discussing demarketing and environmental protection, McKercher, Weber, and du Cros (2008) studied perceptions and

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<sup>5</sup> See also Sodhi (2011).

<sup>6</sup> See also Milliot (2011).

behaviors of visitors to the Uluru Mountain (Ayers Rock by its name in English), and developed programs aimed at reducing visits. Similarly, Armstrong and Kern (2011) examined management's attitude toward demarketing for the Blue Mountain National Park, finding that demarketing was already in place and suggesting that client data be regularly collected to design future efforts.

While pursuing sustainable tourism, Moeller, Dolnicar, and Leisch (2011) explored the perceived trade-off between minimizing environmental damage and maximizing revenue, finding market segments that are environmentally friendly and have high expenditures; therefore, this market segmentation, when coupled with marketing and demarketing policies, may be employed as a complementary strategy to the development of destination-based initiatives to foster sustainability.

Gnepa (2007) considered demarketing in the context of water conservation in United States, suggesting advertising campaigns to educate the citizenry about moderate water consumption. From a sociological perspective, Grinstein and Nisan (2009) studied water consumption of Israel's various ethnic groups, revealing a link between water consumption and cultural identity. In light of this link, the researchers suggested that public policies be targeted at each of these groups.

During the Fourth Decade, public health took priority as a context wherein to apply demarketing; for example, some scholars focused on promoting health for Muslim communities (Haq, Medhekar, & Ferdous, 2011), and others on the effectiveness of different demarketing tactics implemented by both governments and non-profit organizations, to help people stop using tobacco or smoking (Bourdeau, Brady, & Cronin, 2006; Hassan, Shiu, Walsh, & Hastings, 2009; Inness, Barling, Rogers, & Turner, 2008; Lee, Cutler, & Burns, 2004; Moore, 2005; Salem, 2010; Wall, 2005). Delving deeper into this latter issue, Yang, Schaninger, and Laroche (2013) discussed demarketing teen tobacco and alcohol use and how parents could help reduce this consumption. Wansink and Huckabee (2005) criticized United States' public policies to reduce obesity, while Kavas and Kavas (2011) juxtaposed smoking and overeating,

considering how demarketing tools used in reducing tobacco consumption could be employed to combat obesity.

Concerning products adverse to public health, Gbadeyan (2011) studied demarketing in Nigeria, recommending that the government enact laws imposing penalties on producers and distributors of such products. In the same vein, Panwar (2008) studied India's consumption (by demographical group) of gutkha, an addictive concoction that leads to mouth cancer, to discern how to best demarket its consumption.

Others focused on reducing farmed salmon consumption; for instance, Vivian Krause (2011) proposed passively demarketing farmed salmon through advertising campaigns, less funding for organizations, and granting more control to retailers over the supply to incentivize wild salmon consumption. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation (2015) have funded and granted large sums of money to denounce the harvesting, selling, and consumption of farmed salmon, which was referred as dangerous. In the same vein, Jaffa and McDowell (2014) wrote that “the main reason for the demarketing of farmed salmon is the protection of the US wild salmon fishery” (p. 22). The authors mentioned that “many wild-caught salmon from Alaska started life being farmed in a hatchery” (p. 22).

The tourist sector and demarketing were also the concern of some authors. Medway and Warnaby (2008) created a typology for demarketing within the context of the tourist sector:

- Selective passive place demarketing. It suggests segmentation and positioning strategies to attract certain markets and avoid others.
- General passive place demarketing. This is indicated for moderate control of demand since what is sought is resource sustainability when demand is excessive.
- Places in crisis demarketing. This is basically a government resource when places are in risk of permanent damage and need to close provisionally.
- Informative demarketing. This is employed when people are advised of risks of visiting a destination.

In 2011, Medway, Warnaby, and Dharni examined the rational and strategies for demarketing places. They identified the following strategies:

- No marketing or avoiding implementing marketing activities at certain times of the year.
- Redirection to alternative places to mitigate the impact of high visitation on certain sites.
- Informational place demarketing or the use of the media to communicate accurate information about a place, such as lack of parking space availability and hotels or motels to stay overnight.
- Restricting access through control measures.
- Pricing mechanisms such as price increases or no specials offered.

The authors agree that “these strategies are not mutually exclusive, and a specific location may operationalize more than one of these strategies simultaneously, or alternatively may change strategies over time depending on context” (p. 138).

Peeters, Gössling, and Lane (2009) discussed the importance of developing tourism products capable of reducing dangers to the environment caused by toxic gases from planes, buses, and cars. The authors suggested that instead of prohibitions, people should be explained the dangers to the environment caused by gas emissions from vehicles used to transport visitors.

Other publications on demarketing during this decade dealt with its role in improving quality image of products (Miklós-Thal & Zhang, 2013), in improving profitability when differentiation through product improvements is not cost effective (Munish, Payal, & Priya, 2014), and on the exploration of the relation between involvement, trust, loyalty, social marketing, and demarketing (Chin-Feng, 2012; Suh, Ahn, & Rho, 2009; Suh, Rho, & Greene, 2012). Yim, Sauer, Williams, and Lee (2014) suggested that consumer’s attitudes toward and willingness to purchase luxury brands depends on the synchronization of appeals in ads and cultural orientation;

thus, if the orientation of consumers is toward power, status, authority, obedience, and conformity, ads must appeal to this type of orientation; otherwise, it would demarket willingness to purchase luxury brands.

Coyne and Traflet (2008) suggested limiting the massive sales (demarketing) of securities as these products are potentially risky for individuals and groups while Gorden (2006) considered discouraging the consumption of products by segments showing poor profitability. The topic of discouraging poor profitable segments from doing business with a provider was studied by Munshik, Jinwoo, and Taeseok (2009) within the service sector. The authors used the concept *relationship demarketing*, defined by Gorden (2006), to describe the possible intention of customers to retain or improve relations with a service provider that opted for demarketing as strategic route.

In an unusual twist, Ferreira Vasconcelos (2011) discusses demarketing within organizations regarding it “as a sort of corporate illness that is (1) closely associated with high and middle managers’ actions, decisions, and behaviors, that (2) are capable of triggering negative perceptions at work settings, that (3) can potentially lead to the decrease of productivity and/or poor organizational performance” (p. 35). Specifically, the author defines internal demarketing as “the set of managerial actions, decisions, and behaviors—either consciously or unconsciously implemented—that are capable of triggering perceptions of frustration, disappointment, and dissatisfaction at work settings and that can potentially lead to the decrease of employee productivity and organizational performance” (p. 37).

The literature published during the Fourth Decade showed a significant increase. Although as Reingruber (2010) commented “it is obvious that demarketing is only a reaction to unfavorable external factors, such as shortages in natural resources or production capabilities” (p. 34), the fact is that more scholars were researching on demarketing through market segmentation, positioning, and differentiation solutions; and by so doing they were helping to strengthen the theoretical and conceptual scope of the subject;

nevertheless, the fact is that demarketing has been studied as a responsive mechanism to confront excessive demand. Most probably, the book by Bradley and Blythe (2014) will help in partially demarketing that responsive mechanism and encouraging stronger theoretical perspective in the future.

### Conclusion

As mentioned, the literature on demarketing seems to embrace one single perspective: demand reduction, in other words, the matching of supply and demand. Its main concerns are: (1) those products with limited availability (because of all sorts of scarcities); (2) those products in need to elicit negative demand (products which poses health risks for humans, such as tobacco); and (3) the service sector, which finds itself unable to supply demand because of capacity limitations. The first two types of products are either man-made or extracted from natural sources, whose depletion represents a risk to humanity. The third type represent the first contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) globally; it provides 63% of GDP production, versus 31% for manufacturing, and 6% for agriculture (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2016).

Because of its limited scope, demarketing seems to be an *ad-hoc* emergency solution when micro and macro environmental circumstances worsen (Reingruber, 2010). Unfortunately, for example, sustainability does not seem to be a reason for the demarketing effort in the situations above.

It could be inferred from Kotler and Levy (1971) contribution, that marketing and demarketing are equally acceptable scenarios for the marketing effort. Of course, each scenario needs cautious examination on how one can impact the other when simultaneously implemented; hence, each scenario needs the development of its respective, but linked, road maps. It might even be examined as two faces of the same coin, one face trying to retain customers and the other either reducing or eliminating demands from unwanted markets. A manager in need to implement both efforts, one where desired customers are retained and unwanted customers are

rejected, must keep monitoring the other, so objectives as those expressed by Kotler and Levy are achieved.

The authors further conclude that demarketing seems to be a *second role actor* with still limited theoretical background to support its status as a first role actor. The study of the evolution of the literature on demarketing hence confirms, except for the theoretical and conceptual contributions mostly by Kotler, what Bradley and Blythe (2014) had stated: “only a few scholars have aimed to develop a conceptual framework for its study and application” (p. 212). Forty years have not been enough for improving its pertinence; but, as Fisk, Brown, and Bitner (1993) commented “Academia by its nature is conservative and hidebound. New ideas and concepts gain acceptance slowly” (p. 62).

### **Limitations**

First, this review is not necessarily a representative sample of the literature on demarketing. The authors, though, did go through a search process that probably included a vast quantity of the research published on the subject; but, does not claim to have incorporated every publication that might be available. Second, although the authors tried to include literature published in languages other than English, unfortunately, few publications in other languages (one in German and one in French) were accessed through electronic bases, bibliographies, or references.

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