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People as Products: Analysis of a Complex Marketing Exchange

Though the notion of marketing as exchange has proved conceptually robust since its introduction more than 10 years ago, few empirical marketing studies have used exchange as a guiding paradigm. The author examines male- and female-placed personal advertisements as examples of complex, heterogeneous marketing exchange. Several hypotheses about the exchange resources possessed and sought by men and women are tested.

MORE than a decade ago, the notion of marketing as an *exchange process* was introduced (Bagozzi 1975). Since that time, the exchange concept has been disseminated widely in the literature (cf. Bagozzi 1978, 1979; Kotler 1972, 1979, 1984) and suggested as an appropriate perspective from which to examine marketing transactions of both a traditional economic (cf. Stern and Reve 1980) and non-economic nature (cf. Fox and Kotler 1981). Even more recently, the exchange concept was incorporated formally in the definition of marketing developed by the American Marketing Association (Brown 1985).

Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives.

Though the exchange notion has served as a constructive organizing principle within the marketing discipline, the marketing literature contains few reports of empirical studies using exchange theory as a deductive paradigm or testing specific resource exchange issues. One possible explanation is that the "marketing-as-exchange" notion was introduced at a relatively high level of abstraction (Bagozzi 1975) be-

cause of its derivation in part from Homans' (1961) theory of social action.

Homans' approach to exchange, as well as related theories of social reciprocity, cooperation, and retaliation (cf. Axelrod 1984; Kelly and Thibaut 1978; Komorita 1974; Komorita and Chertkoff 1973; Thibaut and Kelly 1959) are formulated on the basis of *abstract* or *singular* exchange resources. The focus of these theories generally has been the *outcome of social interaction* that occurs during a series of resource exchanges (e.g., cooperation, retaliation) and/or the *strategies* and *action transformations* used by participants in the exchange to acquire the resource. This approach is useful for marketing contexts in which only one category of resource is being exchanged among parties and the investigation centers primarily on the strategies used and their outcomes (e.g., transactions between nationally based banks and international monetary clearing houses). This exchange approach is relatively less useful for marketing exchange contexts in which *multiple categories* of resources are being exchanged among parties and the research centers on *cross-category* resource exchange patterns.

Most marketing exchanges of both a traditional (e.g., money in exchange for goods and services) and nontraditional nature (e.g., a vote and volunteered time in exchange for a candidate's promise to promote a particular ideology) consist of the latter type of transaction. That is, heterogeneous resources are exchanged and the primary research focus is the pattern of cross-category resource exchange; a collection of diverse resources is being offered, whereas another

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collection of diverse resources is being sought by each party to the exchange.

Even seemingly straightforward economic transactions may include the exchange of heterogeneous resources. For example, a consumer may appear to be acquiring only a good in exchange for an economic resource when he or she purchases an automobile for money. However, possession of a certain automobile may provide social access to such resources as prestige, social acceptance, and even increased personal attractiveness besides the car's intrinsic value as a good. In return, in addition to the cash paid for the automobile, the consumer may reciprocate with a more positive attitude toward the company and may actively promote the company to other consumers, increasing its chances of future exchanges. (Conversely, if dissatisfied with the exchange transaction, the consumer may attempt to "reduce" the company's future resources by engaging in negative word-of-mouth efforts.)

Foa's Theory of Resource Exchange

One of the few social interaction theories to address multiple, heterogeneous resource exchanges is that proposed by Foa (1976; Foa and Foa 1974). Foa describes social interaction in terms largely analogous to marketers' conceptions of exchange. "Social experiences are interpersonal encounters in which resources are given and/or taken away. . . . Whether or not an exchange will take place depends on [two types of] conditions. . . . One pertains to the motivational state of the potential exchangers, their need to receive and capacity to give; the other set refers to the appropriateness of the environment for an exchange of a particular type" (Foa and Foa 1974).

Foa's theory uses six categories of heterogeneous resources: goods, services, love, status, information, and money. They are defined as follows (Donnenworth and Foa 1974, p. 786).

- (a) Love—an expression of affectionate regard, warmth, or comfort;
- (b) status—an evaluative judgment conveying high or low prestige, regard, or esteem;
- (c) information—any advice, opinions or instructions;
- (d) money—any coin or token that has some standard of exchange value;
- (e) goods—any products or objects; and
- (f) services—activities on the body or belonging to the individual.

According to Foa, an individual's *power* to engage in an exchange transaction depends on his/her possession of one or more of these six resources. "More generally, the powerful person is in a position to enter an exchange in which he offers some resource and, in turn, expects to be reciprocated. . . . [However], power cannot be exercised unless there is a corresponding need on the part of the receiver" (Foa and Foa 1974, p. 135-6).

Foa's theory further proposes that *social institu-*

tions, such as retail stores, financial markets, counseling centers, and political elections, help facilitate the exchange of the six types of resources by bringing together "appropriate combinations of 'sellers' and 'buyers' for heterogeneous exchanges." For an exchange to occur,

. . . a person needing a given resource and powerful in another resource should meet an individual who is in a complementary motivational state; i.e., who needs what the other offers and can give what the other needs. It sounds like a complicated task, yet we are constantly involved in resource exchanges. . . . Indeed, society has developed mechanisms for facilitating the meeting of individuals having reciprocal needs and resources. The first function of these . . . social institutions is to provide suitable settings for different exchanges. . . . The second function . . . is to dictate the proper pairs of resources to be exchanged (Foa and Foa 1974, p. 150).

The theory of resource exchange proposed by Foa suggests also that resource categories (e.g., love, money, information) differ in their probabilities of being exchanged for one another, depending on social customs and norms. For example, Foa speculated that it is most socially appropriate to exchange love only for love, though in some specific settings it may be appropriate to exchange love for information or services, for example, in warmly thanking a hostess for a pleasant dinner party.

Foa further hypothesized that the six resource categories are structured in their exchangeability according to their similarity in particularism (personal uniqueness) and concreteness (tangibility). That is, resources having greater proximity on these two dimensions are more likely to be viewed as similar. Turner, Foa, and Foa (1971) tested the proposition that proximal (in particularism and concreteness) resources would be perceived as more similar and found support for the proximity thesis. Research by Brinberg and Castell (1982) essentially supported the same structure.

However, the perceived *similarity/proximity* of resource categories in terms of particularism and concreteness does not necessarily translate into greater *likelihood of exchange* among nearby resources. Instead, as Foa also speculated, there is a complex set of social norms and customs that will encourage exchange across certain resource categories (as being "socially appropriate") and discourage exchange across other resource categories (as being "socially inappropriate"). For example, Beach and Carter (1976) found some social hesitance to accept money in exchange for status and information, suggesting that though Foa's structural proximity schema may be generally valid, *asymmetry* is present in the *pattern* of resource exchanges. Thus, because of social norms, some resources may be more acceptable/unacceptable in exchange for other resources (Brinberg and Wood 1983).

The value to marketing research of the Foa model is its implicit recognition of the existence of materially different resource categories that vary in their structural similarity to one another and whose likelihood of exchange is influenced by social norms and roles. The weaknesses of the Foa theory, as applied to a marketing context, are that it tells us little about the *parties* who possess the various categories of exchange resources and the social *institutions* that organize and facilitate the exchange transactions between parties. These two issues are addressed in a preliminary way in the following sections.

Status Characteristics and Social Interaction

A social exchange perspective developed within sociology, termed "social characteristics theory" (Berger, Cohen, and Zelditch 1966; Berger and Fisek 1974; Humphreys and Berger 1981), can be used to extend Foa's model constructively to the more complex forms of interpersonal exchange that are typical of most marketing transactions. Foa's propositions relate primarily to *pairs* of resources being exchanged in a transaction (e.g., money for goods, love for services). In contrast, social characteristics theory encompasses exchange situations in which actors have "any number of salient characteristics" (Humphreys and Berger 1981, p. 953).

The term "status characteristic" is analogous in many ways to the notion of a resource, as conceived by Foa and as accepted by marketers. As Humphrey and Berger (1981) define it, "A status characteristic is a characteristic of an actor that has two or more states that are differentially evaluated in terms of honor, esteem, or desirability." Status characteristic states, such as physical beauty or high intelligence, that are positively evaluated may be used as resources in exchange for other resources of a similar or dissimilar nature (Berger et al. 1977). For example, physical attractiveness and intelligence may be exchanged for a professional occupation and money (Webster and Driskell 1983).

Research within the status characteristics paradigm provides some clues to one of the marketing exchange issues left unaddressed by the Foa schema—the relative possession and interpersonal exchange pattern for some resources. Among the most important status characteristic resources possessed by men and women are physical attractiveness, intelligence, education, occupational prestige, and income. These features constitute resources in both the Foa sense and the marketing exchange sense, because larger quantities of each are evaluated positively in our culture, they are possessed differentially by potential parties to an exchange, and they are exchanged actively for

one another (Berger et al. 1977; Buss 1985; Webster and Driskell 1983).

Referring to human dating situations, Buss (1985, p. 49) states, "Those who do possess the valued traits [i.e., resources] typically marry others with the same or with equally sought-after characteristics. . . . [For example], if females generally prefer intelligent males because they typically have higher incomes and (occupational) status, and if most males prefer physically attractive females, then over time these two characteristics will tend to covary." Indeed, Elder (1969) has found that physically attractive females do marry males of higher socioeconomic status.

People as Products

Foa's model of resource exchange, extended by the concepts drawn from status characteristics theory, provides an integrated theoretical base from which to examine the social exchange of heterogeneous resource collections. However, as Foa noted and as marketing theorists have long acknowledged, the *social context* of the exchange often influences the *content* of the resources sought and offered (cf. Bagozzi 1975; Kotler 1984). For example, economic exchanges generally are conducted in retail institutions, ideological and political exchanges in elections and other governmental institutions, spiritual exchanges in sacred institutions, and so forth. Of these institutional settings, the economic exchange context has been by far the most heavily investigated (cf. Kotler 1984; Rothschild 1979).

In this research, heterogeneous marketing exchange is examined within an institutional context that only recently has become commercialized—human dating/mating behavior. The pairing of men and women has undergone several institutional shifts as a resource transaction in Western culture. For instance, the spouses of the British aristocracy routinely were selected on the basis of wealth, social status, and political alignments well into the twentieth century (cf. Delderfield 1981). Romantic love and compatible temperament were considered inappropriate variables upon which to evaluate a mate. As an example, Mitchison (1982, p. 174) writes of Lord Argyle's [1645–1729] choice of a second wife, ". . . everyone was taken aback when he chose her for wit and beauty, and not social position."

In modern U.S. society, though romantic love and personal compatibility are widely assumed to be the primary components of dating transactions (cf. Buss 1985; Buss and Barnes 1986) and single men and women generally are left to their own devices in finding one another, several commercial institutional facilitators have sprung up to help enhance the exchange process. Among the most widespread of these com-

mercial facilitating institutions are personal advertisements placed by consumers desiring to meet an appropriate individual for forming a couple (cf. Harrison and Saeed 1977; Lynn and Shurgot 1984).¹

Personal advertisements, for which men and women pay to communicate their availability and marketable assets to others, serve as a unique and constructive context from which to examine complex marketing exchanges. First, they are clearly a form of *marketing* exchange, even in the most traditional economic sense. People must pay to place the advertisements, just as do breakfast cereal companies and automobile manufacturers. Second, like advertisements in a traditional marketing context, personal ads list a set of (presumed) desirable properties² (here viewed as resources) that are put forward to attract potential buyers. Third, a price is also stated in the advertisement, which consists of the set of properties/resources sought in return. Thus, in essence, personal advertisements represent the offering of *people as products*, as a set of marketable resources in search of an appropriate buyer.

The primary research interest was in examining the pattern of heterogeneous resources offered and sought in exchange between men and women using personal advertisements—in other words, in investigating what resources men were willing to *provide* to women and what resources men *sought* from women, as well as the converse, that is, what resources women were willing to provide to men and what resources women sought from men in exchange, within this commercial institutional setting. Personal advertisements appearing in *New York* magazine and *The Washingtonian* magazine were content analyzed according to the resource categories suggested by the Foa exchange model and status characteristics theory.³ These 10 resource categories, whose derivation is documented more fully in the Method section, are:

- Love—an expression of emotional commitment, companionship, warmth, or comfort; emotional/affectionate personality traits.
- Physical status—physical characteristics of an individual that are valued highly in our society.
- Educational status—a formal education at a prestigious university or advanced graduate degrees.

- Intellectual status—above average intelligence or characteristics typically associated with high intelligence.
- Occupational status—an occupation that is held in high regard or esteem in society.
- Entertainment services—nonsexual activities that can be done with another person.
- Money—an expression of wealth, financial well-being, or affluence.
- Demographic information—general descriptive characteristics about a person (e.g., marital status, age, place of residence).
- Ethnic information—statements about race, religion, nationality, or ethnic affiliation.
- Personality trait information—statements about one's personality (does not include traits related to sexual or emotional characteristics).⁴

The Foa model does not provide explicit guidance about which resource categories will be subject to exchange within particular institutional settings. The context of marketing oneself as a product available for a coupling relationship, however, does enable us to derive hypothetical resource exchange patterns between men and women from the human mate selection literature. An implicit assumption in the research is that the pattern of interpersonal resource exchange found in "natural" coupling will be replicated within the setting of personal advertisements.

One of the most intensely investigated of the interpersonal exchange resources is *physical attractiveness/beauty* (Adinolfi 1970; Berscheid and Walster 1974; Buss 1985; Gross and Krafton 1977; Landy and Sigall 1974; Lynn and Shurgot 1984; Miller and Riv-enback 1970; Walster et al. 1966; Webster and Driskell 1983). The research consensus is that both men and women prefer potential social partners who are physically attractive, but men seek physical attractiveness in women more frequently than the converse (Buss 1985; Buss and Barnes 1986). Thus,

H₁: In personal advertisements, *men* will more frequently *seek* physical attractiveness resources than will women.

Further, because this exchange norm is believed to be socially shared and therefore accepted by women,

H₂: In personal advertisements, *women* will more frequently *offer* physical attractiveness resources than will men.

¹Others include computer dating services, singles' weekends at resorts, singles' bars, and professional matchmakers.

²The term "properties" is used deliberately here as opposed to, say, "attributes" or "characteristics." "Property" has two desirable semantic connotations. First, it refers to a specific state of an object and second it refers to entities having value or worth. Resources are states that have value or worth in exchange.

³Goods, a resource category in the Foa model, did not occur in the personal advertisements analyzed for this study.

⁴Sexual personality traits and/or sexual entertainment services were combined within a category titled "sexual resources." As contents of this category constituted less than 1% of all resources coded, it was excluded from analysis.

Research also suggests that women have a tendency to prefer men with above average earning capacity (i.e., money resources) and its associated components (i.e., educational, intellectual, and occupational status), whereas men do not value these three resources as highly in women (Buss 1985; Elder 1969; Vandenberg 1972). Thus,

- H₃: In personal advertisements, *women* will more frequently *seek* money resources than will men.
- H₄: In personal advertisements, *women* will more frequently *seek* educational status resources than will men.
- H₅: In personal advertisements, *women* will more frequently *seek* occupational status resources than will men.
- H₆: In personal advertisements, *women* will more frequently *seek* intellectual status resources than will men.

Because this exchange norm is likely to be socially shared and therefore accepted by men,

- H₇: In personal advertisements, *men* will more frequently *offer* money resources than will women.
- H₈: In personal advertisements, *men* will more frequently *offer* educational status resources than will women.
- H₉: In personal advertisements, *men* will more frequently *offer* occupational status resources than will women.
- H₁₀: In personal advertisements, *men* will more frequently *offer* intellectual status resources than will women.

The 10 hypotheses pertain to five resource categories: physical attractiveness status, money, occupational status, intellectual status, and educational status. The first of these is posited to be more frequently offered by women and sought by men in a commercial setting, whereas the latter four are posited to be more frequently offered by men and sought by women. Though the hypotheses all are drawn from prior research on human coupling preferences, they create a distinct pattern of resource exchange disproportion, with men generally posited to offer more resources to women.

The remaining resource categories are love, services, and information (personality traits, ethnic traits, and demographic traits). Though prior empirical research has not addressed these resource categories directly in a heterogeneous exchange context, both Foa's exchange model and status characteristics theory suggest that when resources are exchanged, even those in heterogeneous collections, there will be *proportionately equal* numbers of resources sought and of-

ferred among participants in the exchange. In examining this general hypothesis, Harrison and Saeed (1977) analyzed personal dating advertisements similar to those in this study and found a high and significant level of congruence between the overall number of resources offered and the number of resources sought.⁵ As Buss and Barnes (1986, p. 559) state, "In a multiattribute market value mating system, men and women with different but similarly valued characteristics become mated."

Therefore, to bring the four-to-one resource transfer equation from men to women into balance, it is posited that women will more frequently offer love, services, and information resources to men in their advertisements.

- H₁₁: In personal advertisements, *women* will more frequently *offer* love resources than will men.
- H₁₂: In personal advertisements, *women* will more frequently *offer* (entertainment) service resources than will men.
- H₁₃: In personal advertisements, *women* will more frequently *offer* information (i.e., on demographic, ethnic, and personality traits) resources than will men.

We also posit that men, in turn, will expect to receive these same three resources from women.

- H₁₄: In personal advertisements, *men* will more frequently *seek* love resources than will women.
- H₁₅: In personal advertisements, *men* will more frequently *seek* (entertainment) service resources than will women.
- H₁₆: In personal advertisements, *men* will more frequently *seek* information resources than will women.

The anticipated pattern of commercial interpersonal resource exchange within our sample is shown in Table 1.

Method

A year's series (May 1983–April 1984) of personal dating advertisements was collected from *New York* magazine and *The Washingtonian* magazine. Both magazines draw subscribers primarily from their respective cities and surrounding suburban areas; both have carried personal dating advertisements for more

⁵In our study an additional implicit assumption underlying the hypotheses is that men and women achieve exchange "balance" by offering countervailing quantities of different resource categories. That is, they each offer the same overall number of resources to each other, but a specific gender will claim to possess more of certain resource category units than the other gender.

TABLE 1
Posited Pattern of Advertised
Resource Exchange

Women	Men
Physical attractiveness	Money
Love	Educational status
Entertainment services	Intellectual status
Information	Occupational status

than five years and are established vehicles in their markets for this type of exchange (Morrisoe 1984). From each series, 100 male-placed and 100 female-placed advertisements were selected randomly; thus the intended sample size was 100 female/100 male *New York* advertisements and 100 female/100 male *Washingtonian* advertisements.⁶

Establishing the Resource Categories

Twenty additional advertisements, not drawn in the original sample, also were selected randomly and their resource contents were used to establish the content categories for the analysis. Correspondences between the resources listed in these 20 advertisements and the categories based on the Foa model and status characteristics theory were apparent and led to an *a priori* set of resource categories: love, physical attractiveness/beauty, money, occupational status, educational status, intellectual status, entertainment services, information-personality, information-ethnic, information-demographic.

Pretesting the Resource Categories

Ten men and 11 women were given the resource categories and their definitions, as developed by the author, and a list of 100 resource items taken from the random sample of 20 advertisements. They were asked to assign the 100 resource items to the category they felt was most appropriate. Their responses were used to provide attribute exemplars for each resource category and to identify any undesirable overlaps across resource categories and/or confusion about their meaning. Responses from the pretest indicated that the categories identified were exhaustive and mutually exclusive with respect to the 100 attributes classified.

Coding the Advertisements

A male and a female coder each were given sets of the 405 advertisements. Working independently of each

⁶In the actual sample, 201 male-placed and 204 female-placed advertisements were analyzed. To obtain the random sample, the advertisements (segregated by city) were first shuffled (to randomize the distribution by date of magazine issue) and then a random number was drawn to select the first ad. A second random number was selected and counted forward from the first ad to select the second ad, and so forth until 100 male-placed and 100 female-placed ads were drawn from each city. A miscount of the quantity of ads drawn caused the actual sample to slightly exceed the target quota.

other and ignorant of the study hypotheses, they coded each of the resources given in the advertisements into the 10 resource categories developed *a priori*. Resources classified into a particular category in the pretest were listed after the definition for that category to provide the coders with resource exemplars as a guide. The coders, both graduate students, were instructed to work slowly and carefully and, in fact, took approximately three weeks to complete the task.

Reliability of Coding

After the set of 405 advertisements had been independently coded, the resource categorization sheets developed by each coder for each advertisement were given to a third research assistant. This person, also ignorant of the study's hypotheses, compared the classifications made by the two coders and identified discrepancies, if any, in the resource categorizations made for each advertisement. Two types of errors were identified, (1) resource *omissions* and (2) *conflicts* in resource classification. Of the total 3782 resource items coded for the analysis, conflicts between the coders were found on 636 items or 16.8%. These conflicts were resolved by the researcher. Additionally, because of the volume of resource items processed, one coder occasionally omitted an item that had been classified by the other coder. There were 480 (12.7%) such omissions. In these instances, the researcher checked to see that the resource item had been classified correctly by the coder, then included it as part of the analysis.

Analysis and Findings

The data were submitted to a 2 × 2 ANOVA procedure in which gender of advertiser (male/female) and city (*New York*/*Washington*) served as factors. Inspection of the main effects and interactions terms revealed that city had no impact on the gender results; hence the tests of hypotheses reported are equally applicable to both locations.

To provide equivalence between the advertisements, which differed in length, the data were transformed to represent the proportionate weight of each resource category (e.g., physical status, money resources, occupational status) within the advertisement. That is, the number of resource items in a given category for a given advertisement was expressed as a proportion of the total number of resource items in the advertisement. For example, if an advertisement listed 12 resources, two of which were offers of money resources, the total for the money category was transformed from two to 2/12 or .166.

The ANOVA means and Z-statistics computed for the hypotheses are reported in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Because of the way in which the advertisements were

TABLE 2
Male and Female Intergender Comparisons
(ANOVA means and Z-statistics)^a

Hypothesis	Male Mean	Female Mean	Z Score	Significance ^b
1	.223	.090	3.69	$p \leq .001$
2	.151	.221	1.81	$p \leq .05$
3	.010	.080	3.39	$p \leq .001$
4	.009	.008	-.11	n.s.
5	.011	.032	1.46	n.s.
6	.059	.050	-.40	n.s.
7	.059	.018	2.15	$p \leq .05$
8	.013	.013	.00	n.s.
9	.086	.067	.72	n.s.
10	.030	.048	-.94	n.s.
11	.060	.063	.00	n.s.
12	.080	.107	.93	n.s.
13	.283	.217	1.51	$p \leq .10$
14	.158	.168	.27	n.s.
15	.103	.071	1.14	n.s.
16	.195	.219	.60	n.s.

^an = 201 male-placed advertisements, 204 female-placed advertisements.

^bn.s. = not significant.

written, there were two ways of examining the hypotheses. Each advertisement described the set of resources the advertiser possessed and also the set of resources he or she desired to receive in return. One way of examining the hypotheses was to compare the advertised resource sets *across genders*—that is, what women offered versus what men sought and what men offered versus what women sought. This set of analyses, in order by hypothesis, is given in Table 2. The other way of examining the same hypotheses was to compare the advertised resource sets *within genders*—that is, what women offered versus what women sought in their advertisements and what men offered versus what men sought in their advertisements. These data are given in Tables 3 and 4. Ideally, the two types of comparisons should lead to similar findings.

The data in Table 2 indicate that hypotheses 1, 2,

3, and 7 can be accepted; hypothesis 13 is significantly reversed in direction and the other hypotheses are rejected ($p > .05$). These findings indicate that men more frequently sought physical attractiveness resources from women ($H_1: p \leq .001$) than vice versa, and that they more frequently offered monetary resources in exchange ($H_7: p \leq .05$). Conversely, women more frequently sought monetary resources from men ($H_3: p \leq .001$) and more frequently offered physical attractiveness resources in exchange ($H_2: p \leq .05$).

No intergender differences are found in the offering or seeking of love, educational status, occupational status, intellectual status, or entertainment services. This finding suggests that, at least in the population from which the sample was drawn, men and women do not disproportionately seek these resources from one another. Rather, though these resources may be sought or offered by either party, they are not female-linked or male-linked.

This finding is of interest, even in its null form, because there is some evidence (cf. Spence and Helmreich 1978) that in the recent past these resources may have been gender-linked. For example, before the advent of women's liberation and the entry of the majority of women into the workplace (Bartos 1981), occupational status resources—and its two primary determinants, educational status and intellectual status—generally were more available to men. Now, however, these three resources may be dispersed more evenly among men and women (at least in these urban samples) and no longer gender-linked. Similarly, in earlier decades the resources of love and entertainment services may have been associated more commonly with women (cf. Spence and Helmreich 1978), but these data indicate this is no longer the case for the sample of consumer advertisers.

There is one weakly significant ($p \leq .10$) reversal from the anticipated outcomes; men offered proportionately more demographic, ethnic, and/or personality information to women than vice versa. It was

TABLE 3
Female Intragender Comparisons (ANOVA means and Z statistics)^a

Resource	Mean Offered	Mean Sought	Z Score	Significance ^b
Money	.018	.080	2.97	$p \leq .01$
Love	.061	.168	3.22	$p \leq .001$
Physical status	.221	.090	3.68	$p \leq .001$
Educational status	.013	.008	.51	n.s.
Occupational status	.067	.032	.98	n.s.
Intellectual status	.048	.050	.09	n.s.
Entertainment services	.107	.071	1.18	n.s.
Ethnic information	.091	.007	3.89	$p \leq .001$
Personality information	.144	.200	1.53	$p \leq .10$
Demographic information	.217	.219	.07	n.s.

^an = 204 female-placed advertisements.

^bn.s. = not significant.

TABLE 4
Male Intragender Comparisons (ANOVA means and Z statistics)^a

Resource	Mean Offered	Mean Sought	Z Score	Significance ^b
Money	.059	.010	2.84	$p \leq .01$
Love	.063	.158	3.04	$p \leq .01$
Physical status	.151	.223	1.82	$p \leq .05$
Educational status	.013	.009	.46	n.s.
Occupational status	.086	.011	3.42	$p \leq .001$
Intellectual status	.030	.059	.81	n.s.
Entertainment services	.080	.103	.94	n.s.
Ethnic information	.090	.053	1.89	$p \leq .05$
Personality information	.131	.150	.71	n.s.
Demographic information	.283	.195	2.65	$p \leq .01$

^an = 201 male-placed advertisements.

^bn.s. = not significant.

posited (H_{13}) that women would offer more such informational resources to men to balance the exchange equation. Interestingly, even though men offered information to women, women did *not* seek this resource from men; thus, the information resource was being offered disproportionately by one party to the exchange (men), but it was not being sought disproportionately by the other party (women). In Foa's view (Foa and Foa 1974), therefore, the information resource does not appear to give men additional leverage in the exchange transaction because it is "unsought" by the other potential party to the exchange—women.

On the basis of the data in Table 2, the cross-gender exchange transaction appears to center mainly on two disproportionately possessed/sought resources—physical attractiveness resources, which women possessed and men sought, and monetary resources, which men possessed and women sought. The data in Tables 3 and 4 support these central conclusions, and also extend and clarify them. The first extension drawn from the intragender comparisons is that women in their own advertisements offered more physical attractiveness resources than they sought ($p \leq .001$) and sought more monetary resources than they offered ($p \leq .01$). Conversely, men in their own advertisements offered more monetary resources than they sought ($p \leq .01$) and sought more physical attractiveness resources than they offered ($p \leq .05$).

However, these findings do not explain fully the exchanges desired by the sample of consumer advertisers. Significantly, both men and women *sought* more love resources than they were offering (F , $p \leq .001$; M , $p \leq .01$). One motivation for men and women to use a personal advertisement may be that they are "looking for love." However, Foa's research (Foa and Foa 1974) and that of others (Brinberg and Wood 1983) has suggested that the only resource generally regarded as acceptable in exchange for love is love. Hence, if one were giving advice to these lovelorn consumers, a suggestion might be that to *get* love one

first must *give* love. Offers of money, beauty, and background information seem unlikely to "buy" the resource that many of these advertisers are seeking—love.⁷

A second extension to the initial conclusions is that both the men and women in the sample offered more *occupational* status resources than they sought; however, for *men* this difference is larger and significant ($p \leq .001$). Thus, occupational status resources do appear to be somewhat gender-linked, though they afford men no transaction *power* (Foa and Foa 1974, p. 135) because women in the sample also perceived themselves as possessing these resources and did not disproportionately seek them.⁸

A final extension to the initial conclusions pertains to information resources. The means in Tables 3 and 4 for the three types of information resources (ethnic, personality, demographic) show that the reversal of H_{13} is due to men's greater offering of demographic ($p \leq .01$) and ethnic ($p \leq .05$) information. Women, in contrast, sought more personality information ($p \leq .10$) from men and also offered more ethnic information ($p \leq .001$) about themselves. These findings suggest that in racially and religiously heterogeneous settings, such as New York City and Washington, DC, the offering of ethnic information may be used by both men and women to find well-matched partners (Buss 1985; Buss and Barnes 1986).

Discussion

Since the introduction of the exchange concept to marketing more than a decade ago, the notion has proven robust as an intellectual principle but has stim-

⁷It should be noted that the socially recognized intent of taking out such an advertisement in the first place is the advertiser's desire to find a companion.

⁸This finding may likely be valid primarily for samples composed of so-called young, urban professionals (i.e., Yuppies) such as those in the present research. Both women and men in this segment have above average occupational status resources.

ulated little explicit empirical investigation. This study is a marketing application of the Foa model of resource exchange, modified and extended by status characteristics theory. It examines a heterogeneous exchange context in which diverse sets of social resources are offered and sought.

The resource sets offered and sought in the commercial exchange setting were men and women who, within the context of an advertisement, presented themselves as products. The findings indicate that within the sample, and consistent with prior social science findings, women tended to offer physical attractiveness resources and to seek monetary resources. Conversely, men tended to offer monetary resources and seek physical attractiveness resources. Somewhat poignantly, the data also reveal that men and women advertisers both sought love resources more frequently than they offered them. This pattern may be a unique one due to the sampling frame or may reflect a more widespread phenomenon in modern society. Perhaps the cultural stress on acquiring valued resources such as occupational, intellectual, and educational status, money, and physical beauty leads to a belated recognition that love resources also are desirable, but an unwillingness (or inability) to offer them.

The notion that some people may view—and advertise—themselves as products is a novel one and may be normatively uncomfortable to persons who would prefer to restrict the scope of marketing investigation to more traditional goods and services. However, the study setting is a marketing exchange context, even in a strict economic sense. Further, in a social science sense, it suggests that marketing inquiry must be prepared also to address nonmonetary social resources, such as educational attainment, occupation, and physical attractiveness, if it is to encompass the entirety of an exchange transaction.

What Exchange Theory Offers Marketing Researchers

Though the study is limited in scope to a relatively simple two-party heterogeneous exchange context, it may serve to stimulate additional empirical investigation of marketing as exchange in a variety of cultural contexts. For more than a decade the exchange notion has been acknowledged in marketing management textbooks and it has even achieved formal definitional status within the AMA lexicon. However, the lack of empirical effort to *activate* this notion suggests that as marketing researchers, we are not yet practicing what we preach.

Two reasons may underlie this investigative hesitancy. First, operationalizing the exchange concept in an empirical setting is difficult. The theories available require the researcher to iterate perilously between intuitively appealing—but extremely abstract—models

like that of Foa and the raw empiricism of social science data on the topic being investigated. In this study, interpretation had to make a connection between the neatly organized categories suggested by Foa and the various correlations of status characteristics found to exist for couples.

What guidance can this effort provide to other researchers desiring to implement the exchange approach using real (as opposed to ideal or abstract) situations? A first step is to delineate the specific setting or context within which the exchange will occur and define the particular parties to the exchange. This step should help the researcher *a priori* to narrow the possible resource categories entering into the exchange equation to a manageable set and also to identify social norms and roles affecting the likelihood and direction of the resource exchange pattern.

The idea of applying the marketing-as-exchange notion to political, charitable, and spiritual exchange contexts often has been suggested, but never empirically attempted (to the author's knowledge). The large social science literature in each of these areas may make possible the operationalization of specific hypotheses about resource transactions. For example, political science theories on coalition formation and cooperation among electorate factions having diverse objectives (cf. Newman 1978; Verba, Nie, and Kim 1978) may enable marketing researchers to examine exchange phenomena meaningfully within this context. Previously only relatively simple exchanges have been conceptualized, such as a vote exchanged for the promise of certain leadership goals. However, a more rigorous attempt to delineate resource categories possessed by political stakeholders, and to understand the desirability of those resources to other stakeholders, could open a new and exciting avenue of investigation.

Limitations of Exchange Theory in Marketing Research

Despite the foregoing arguments advocating the empirical use of exchange as a guiding ideology for marketing research, the notion of exchange has some inherent limitations that must be acknowledged and discussed. Exchange theories can enable us to broaden the scope of marketing research *operationally* (as opposed to just theoretically). However, by *restricting* marketing inquiry to the exchange paradigm we would distort and omit several phenomena of central interest to marketers.

The exclusive use of an exchange ideology would tend to create (or reinforce) a research perspective that all consumer/producer transactions are *instrumental* in form and intent; that they are based only on calculated, analytic motivations; that we see ourselves

and others only as sets of tradable resources (i.e., I give, you take/you give, I take). Some psychologists and game theorists (cf. Kelly and Thibaut 1978) do cast all social intercourse in these terms, but others, particularly those of an anthropological bent, argue that there is more to life—and marketing—than the cynical bargaining of money, talent, status, and love (cf. Belk 1979; Caplow 1984; Sherry 1983). These observers would argue, and the author would agree, that even commercial activities such as Live-Aid, Farm-Aid, charitable donations, Christmas gift-giving, and parents' birthday presents to their children are, at least in part, acts of sincere generosity and altruism, undertaken with no desire or expectation that they will be reciprocated by the receiver.

Further, the restriction of marketing to an exclusively exchange paradigm would tend to exclude from research attention activities such as self production for self consumption or group production for group con-

sumption. In many third world countries, and among some U.S. ethnic subcultures (e.g., the Amish), such insular production/consumption practices are predominant. To be comprehensive, marketing should be able to accommodate the production/consumption cycles of such self-sufficient individuals and groups, as well as those in which resources are exchanged with external parties to create the desired outcome.

Marketing ideology is in flux; the boundaries and scope of our discipline are being altered and expanded by both internal and external forces. The model described and empirically applied here is one possible model (among many) of heterogeneous resource exchange. Though advocating the increased operational use of exchange theories in marketing inquiry, the author also recognizes the perils implicit in the exclusive use of this ideology. Marketing inquiry, as that in most social sciences, will be enhanced by the use of multiple ideological perspectives.

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