

Asking More COMMENTARY

Perspectives from Mendoza College of Business

COMMENTARY POST - [OLIVER F. WILLIAMS, CSC](#)

Mendoza Marketing Dept.'s new book redefines role of marketer

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Tag: [Social Responsibility](#)

As the global economy expands into the far corners of the developing world, unfortunately the term “business ethics” is often thought to be oxymoronic.

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I am happy to report, however, that in recent years, the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame has become known throughout the world for its leadership in business ethics and this is due, in no small part, to the work of

scholars in the Marketing Department. I am honored to celebrate the work of these scholars in the 2014 volume *Marketing and the Common Good*, edited by Pat Murphy, former chair of the Department, and John Sherry, current chair.

To give you an idea of how well this work has been received, let me quote from two of the dozens of favorable advance reviews:

Marketing is widely demonized as being synonymous with egocentric materialism, a shallow consumer culture, broken promises, intrusiveness and other ills. The collection of essays now published by two of the most eminent marketing scholars and business ethics researchers, John F. Sherry, Jr. and Patrick E. Murphy, provides a welcome antidote to these prejudices. The contributions demonstrate that the field of marketing has substantially more intellectual gravitas than is commonly assumed. Illustrating the interconnectedness of marketing to ethics, moral economy and public policy, this book is a must read for anyone who is interested in societal aspects of marketing and in the

*fundamental question of how we all want to live together. **Bodo Schlegelmilch**, Professor of International Marketing and Management, and Dean, Executive Academy, Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria.*

*The Fighting Irish beat their scholarly swords into societal ploughshares with a collection that is catholic in scope and Catholic in spirit. Ecumenical and enlightening, Marketing and the Common Good is a Notre Dame antidote to the B-school diseases of devil-take-the-hindmost and sin-to-win. This book is better than brilliant, it's uncommonly good! **Stephen Brown**, Professor of Marketing Research, University of Ulster, UK.*

Why I believe this volume makes an outstanding contribution to the field is that under the leadership of Pat Murphy and ethics professors, Marketing is asking *normative* questions not simply *descriptive* questions. What are markets for? What is the common good?

For example, the question moves beyond, "Do Americans believe that all who so desire should be able to carry fire arms?" the descriptive question, to the normative question: "Should anyone who so desires be able to carry fire arms?" And, if not, why not? Rather than simply providing a descriptive characterization of people's beliefs, this volume lays the groundwork for developing reasonable normative claims. Other issues such as kidney transplants, child obesity, and sustainability are considered as well.

The book is asking for a marketing reformation, working with other societal institutions, to realize the common good with reference to some key principles such as human dignity, the preferential option for the poor, solidarity and stewardship. In this vision, the marketer is not merely a provisioner of society but a social architect and a behavioral engineer. Indeed this is a challenge but it is the sort of challenge that has been the hallmark of the University of Notre Dame and it is embodied well in the work of Pat Murphy and John Sherry.

From remarks delivered during a Nanovic Institute Forum on recent books by Nanovic Institute Faculty Fellows.