

Marketing Developing Society Crafts: A Framework for Analysis and Change

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In a world of growing economic hegemony marked with the emergence of mass cultures, the drive toward cultural homogenization seems relentless. Beyond the functional thrust for standardization dictated by global commerce, the fundamental tenets of consumption and its relationship with culture are being reexamined. Increasingly, global criteria are seen as replacing local perspectives, resurrecting old debates on "who produces and for whom," on individuality versus universality in perception and preference, on appropriation and reappropriation, and eventually, on modernity and tradition. Whether the discourse is located within general theories of culture or political ideology or contextualized for a given people, the issues invariably encompass both material conditions for creation and transaction of goods and their appreciation in host and foreign cultures.

A particularly salient domain—aesthetics—may be viewed as a sensitive crucible that provides a locus for the study of cultural transformation. Clearly, the social history of the arts serves to illuminate the

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dialectics of change that involve individuals and entities driven by respective production and consumption goals. This chapter will examine a specific genre of aesthetic products—traditional crafts from developing nations—from the dual perspectives of creation and consumption of culture. To the extent that developing society crafts are related to the cultural identity of their creators and, as an industry, support economic survival, a marketing analysis is likely to enhance the understanding of the key flows, that is, the transactions that act as the crucial vehicles for change. In the following section, a premise for the study of crafts will be presented on the basis of developmental and culture-related considerations, leading to an enunciation of specific study objectives.

Crafts: Economic and Cultural Considerations

Production and marketing of traditional crafts are viewed in many developing nations as providing dual benefits of generating employment and foreign exchange earnings. Despite their extremely decentralized nature, which evades accurate measurement of output and employment, regional analyses routinely report artisans as constituting the second largest sector of rural employment after agriculture and as often associated with a higher household income (Jain, 1986). Full-time craft employment in Asia alone is estimated to be over 20 million (Pye, 1988) and is believed to be of special relevance to women, who constitute the majority in specific craft categories, for example, batik workers in Java (Joseph, 1988). In recent years, craft exports have grown faster than overall trade earnings for a number of developing countries. India, for example, has increased its international sales by 30%, Thailand by 38%, and Kenya by 25% per year for most of the past decade (Pye, 1988). International trade statistics for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, which dominate world import of crafts, indicate that developing countries account for 37%, or 15 billion dollars annually (Kathuria, 1986).

Besides its substantial economic scope, production of traditional crafts is believed to provide cultural continuity, to revive ethnic identity, and to strengthen local cultural institutions in developing societies (Stephen, 1991). It is argued that under the threat of economic and cultural integration that tends to turn indigenous communities into pale imitations of the masses of larger societies, practical and decorative crafts often provide the community's symbolic external boundaries

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reinforcing shared beliefs, customs, and values. The special economic relationship thus serves as recognition of cultural diversity, ensuring a value beyond its contribution to subsistence (Graburn, 1969).

Despite its attractiveness, craft ventures in most developing countries seem to be confronted with fundamental challenges. As such, locally produced handicrafts are often in competition with imported manufactured products. As rural incomes rise, cheaper, mass-produced goods are often chosen over traditional items,¹ and eventually the process of development itself, which enhances awareness of and access to organized production systems, leads to the disappearance of rural crafts industries (Cable & Weston, 1982). Examples include substitution of handloom and hand-printed textiles by machine-printed fabric, brass and bell-metal utensils by aluminum, and hand-knotted carpets by machine-made floor coverings. Although declining local demand often turns artisans toward other audiences, external or export requirements tend to induce considerable strain on the traditional production system—from determining where artisans should live and work to the symbolism and aesthetics associated with the products themselves. Export-led growth, although credited with survival of several crafts communities in developing countries (particularly in the context of tourism-driven revival of certain disappearing art and craft traditions; Belk, 1992; Belk & Costa, 1992), has nevertheless been critiqued because of a cultural subversion of sorts. Design and technical changes influenced by consuming publics of the external, dominant world have allegedly led to a genre of tourist or airport arts, in which the original symbolic content is reduced to conform to popular notions or stereotypes regarding minority groups—an ethnokitsch that is more a part of the worldview of dominant societies than that of the artisans themselves (Forster, 1964; Greenwood, 1977; Leong, 1989). The acculturation in turn may be responsible for the destruction of the very authenticity that formed the basis for its most genuine appreciation in external cultures.

As noted by several authors (Aziz, 1980; Stephen, 1991), the viability of crafts as an economic venture in the long run and also their cultural survival rest largely on the marketing system responsible for guiding the transaction of traditional goods in an increasingly accessible, secularized, and monetized global marketplace. The global transaction is seen as increasingly substituting the traditional exchange of indigenous crafts as gifts, with corresponding depersonalization in terms of their essential cultural meanings (Gregory, 1982). An entire tradition of research in cultural anthropology and folklore has examined indige-

nous production modes and forms and the dynamic aspects of change (Graburn, 1976). Consequently, a rich store of primary ethnographic and secondary macroeconomic data is available on several societies. International organizations (such as the International Trade Centre, Geneva) and national forums have also researched critical aspects of production and trade. Although market considerations have been salient in most of the above, the absence of a marketing perspective tends to limit analysis to aspects of the phenomenon, for example, the organization of production, export agents, and so forth, without comprehensive assessment of processes, agents, and structures within the major flows of the industry. The latter clearly is crucial in moving from a descriptive approach to a strategic orientation. The objective then is to explore the mutual interrelationships, to ask whether or not cultural identity will remain compatible with the chosen paths of development, and to assess whether or not demands for efficiency succeed in accommodating distinct indigenous expressions. The following sections include a specification of the domain of inquiry, that is, definitions of crafts and description of three constituent sectors—consumers, creators, and intermediaries. Last, a descriptive framework of marketing transactions is presented that allows identification of specific characteristics of the industry, with directions for change.

Crafts: Definitional Issues

Besides the need for conceptual distinction, definitional clarity is critical for facilitating transactions within craft industries. Although most importing nations have preferential trade terms for crafts, there exists a wide variety in definitions, creating complex and confusing certification requirements for exporters in developing countries. The United Nations Council for Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) tariff classification characterizes crafts as those products that embody artistic features typical of the producing region and, further, requires that such be imparted by the manual part of the process, as opposed to machine-created components (Benjamin, 1981; Kathuria, 1986; UNCTAD, 1979). (The cited example in Kathuria, 1986, is hand embroidery in which the production of textile and apparel is achieved through machinery.) Some countries such as Canada and Australia further constrain the use of machine-produced raw materials and powered tools except under very limited conditions (Keesing, 1982). No specific definition, how-

ever, is applied in the European Economic Community (Commission of the European Communities, 1984). Besides the issue of trade regulations, there appears to be substantial variance across developing countries in terms of which products are deemed suitable for inclusion within the domestic crafts sector and hence qualified to receive special assistance (e.g., production and/or marketing subsidies). In Nepal, for example, crafts are undifferentiated from and included within other cottage industries (e.g., distilleries or detergent producers) on the basis of the value of the fixed assets of the enterprise, regardless of the nature of the product (Upadhyay & Sharma, 1988). In the Philippines, different agencies use different definitions: The Chamber of Handicrafts Industries prefers manual dexterity and indigenous materials as the twin criteria, excluding rattan products, whereas the Central Bank includes the latter in its classification (Pye, 1988). Broadly surveyed, most legal definitions seem to encompass varying subsets of three aspects: aesthetic representation symbolic of the producing culture, predominance of manual value addition in processing (with *handmade* signifying potentially more primitive and, hence, authentic creative forms), and small group or community-based organization for production.

By contrast, in academic literatures, the definition of crafts is often sought in relation to that for the arts. Becker (1978), for example, differentiated the two in terms of work organization, work ideology, and varying emphasis on standards of utility, virtuoso skill, and beauty. Crafts are viewed as products created to serve utilitarian needs of a customer, with emphasis on acquisition of specialized skill (such as that of a potter) and without serious consideration for beauty ("he contents himself that the pipe he installs carries water, the bookcase he builds is sturdy and fits in the space he measured for it," Becker, 1978, p. 866). Distinctions, however, are drawn with an "artist-craftsman-with more ambitious goals and ideologies" (p. 866), that is, one who is free from the employer-employee relationship and more closely resembles an artist. Hirschman (1983) has followed the above categorization in defining art as more abstract, subjectively experienced, nonutilitarian, unique, and holistic when compared to products generally (see also Hirschman & Wallendorf, 1982; Semenik, 1987). Viewed in conjunction with the above distinction, crafts may then be considered to embody either the obverse or lower proportions of these properties.

Although the range of crafts variously labeled as "folk," "primitive," "tribal," or "Third World" clearly include both craftlike as well as art-like qualities as described previously, the problem of categorization is compounded by the notion that aesthetic products may be "art by

destination," that is, intended by their producers to be art per se, or "art by metamorphosis," the case when products serving various goals in one society are transferred to another and labeled as art (Maquet, 1971; cited in Graburn, 1976, p. 3). The latter may exemplify certain craft exports from developing nations, such as hand-knotted carpets—an alien utilitarian product that is vested with complex meanings in the Western world—or Mayan pottery that has no utilitarian appeal to urban-industrial consumers and is useless except as decorative objects. This transformation is also evident in the decontextualization that typically accompanies the display of ritual objects in ethnographic as well as art museums in the West (Ames, 1992). The utility-based distinction and resulting definitions of arts and crafts, however, have been critiqued as elitist, emerging in the high civilization of the postindustrial age without parallels in ancient societies (Graburn, 1976). Varadarajan (1991), for instance, claimed that scriptures such as the *Aitareya Brahmana* (900 to 700 B.C.) do not differentiate between art and craft, stating that aesthetic products (*silpa*) must reflect skill and be endowed with *chhanda*, that is, rhythm, balance, proportion, and harmony.

What characterizes crafts from developing societies, then, appears to be their aesthetic manifestation of regional culture with varying degrees of utility association in production and/or ultimate usage. This is common to the first of the three criteria invoked in the many policy-related characterizations described earlier and may constitute a parsimonious definition. Inherent is the recognition of diversity, in terms of both consumer perception (i.e., segments) and motivations of artisans. The simultaneous consideration of creators and consumers also allows focus on both production and consumption cultures with opportunities for contextual analysis of issues such as transformation, revival, or appropriation. If cultural preservation is the goal, analysis of authentic cultural representation could serve as the cornerstone to policy. To the extent that preservation of certain production organizations is the objective (as with several developing societies striving to support income-generating activities of indigenous communities), a varied scheme for trade or domestic policy may be needed. It may be advantageous, then, to move toward multiple categories of crafts themselves, each embodying varying combinations of human-machine involvement in processing (e.g., handmade batik, compared with machine-printed cloth using batik motifs) and small group-factory organizations of production. The "cultural representation" aspect would provide overall discrimination with respect to other products, that is, act as the outer boundary.² Definitional issues such as these illuminate the complexity of consumption, production, and transaction modalities that

characterize crafts industries and are reviewed in the following sections.

Consumers and the Craft Product

Crafts and their consumers have been discussed under various organizational schemes, reflecting several disciplinary goals. In addition to chronological treatments by art historians, classifications have been based on the content of craft products, such as their degree of use of traditional or modern aspects of style, materials, and processes. (Graburn, 1976, for example, has proposed seven categories reflecting degrees of acculturation in craft products.) Classifications have also been based on consumers (domestic or export consumption; Subramanian & Cavusgil, 1991). Both approaches draw implicitly on analysis of the consumer-craft relationship in describing the existence of different markets for crafts.

In the absence of a direct appraisal of consumers' desires with respect to acquisition of craft objects and respective craft product implications, however, the assessment of variety in crafts appears to be somewhat sporadic. Tracing such desires to the nature of craft products may provide a simultaneous classification that bridges the perspectives of both creators and consumers and facilitates an inner dialogue in the industry. Also, it is important to ensure that such schemata not be ahistoric because the consumer-craft relationship has demonstrated both evolutionary and revivalist trends. I suggest five conceptually distinct categories of consumer desires—craft as trophy, knowledge, self-identity, status, and memory, each associated with a subset of nine craft product aspects: traditional portrayal, exoticism, compatibility with external usage contexts, relative age, material value, simplicity, singularity, portability, and affordability—that may influence the nature as well as transaction modalities of specific craft products. These reflect intuitive categories on the basis of a variety of ethnographic, historical, and economic analysis of transactions and suggest dominant consumption patterns without necessary mutual exclusion.

CRAFT AS TROPHY

Early examples of crafts outside their regional domains of creation and usage may be traced to imperial collections (Bascom, 1973). Although trade on items of perceived value such as gold, ivory, spices,

silk, and so forth was predominant, crafts were not systematically collected. Colonial officers, after they had overcome their revulsion toward conquered societies, sometimes returned with souvenirs that found their way into private homes of European nobility (Claerhout, 1965). The Austrian imperial collection, for example, began with the voyages of Captain Cook, the dukes of Burgundy were known for their African collection in the early 1600s, and the London and Cambridge museums had Polynesian and Melanesian specimens (Gerbrands, 1957). Indeed, as described by Thomas (1991), the artifacts of non-Western people were known over a long period as "curiosities," and the creators of such—the indigenous peoples—were in fact "absent from the transactions which ostensibly constituted their engagement with the civilized world" (p. 183). Either obtained as gifts or plundered from shrines, these crafts probably reflected unacculturated traditional forms, symbols, or utilities. With the exception of precious gems or metals, there were hardly any bases for preference, and their ownership excluded appreciation of cultural or aesthetic meaning.

Although the desire for crafts exclusively as trophies, or symbolic of conquest, is uncharacteristic of present-day consumption, aspects of such are manifest from time to time in relation to pilfering of idols, ritual accessories, and so forth, in relatively inaccessible terrains (e.g., sub-Himalayan nations) or where internal strife has led to laxity in preservation (such as in Myanmar or Cambodia). Admittedly, this is largely abetted by the need for antiquity, although their function as trophies (objects of material value) to the adventurous traveler remains plausible and has been documented on occasion (Maurer & Zeigler, 1988). The latter raises a parallel with modern-day tourism and the needs of certain segments of tourists to enshrine personal triumphs and voyages through acquisition of crafts (Gordon, 1986). This, though, is often related to the building of tangible memory traces and will be discussed in the section on "Craft as Memory."

CRAFT AS KNOWLEDGE

By the end of the 16th century, the importance of crafts emerged in European states possessing colonies as a means of understanding the subject peoples and creating an awareness and interest in them at home to foster trade. This coincided with the founding of ethnographic museums and the systematic study of other cultures. The focus on knowledge as a tool for exercise of power over conquered societies led to methodical study of the means and relationships of production and

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to the task of determining what Tylor (1871) described as the relation of the mental condition of savages to that of civilized man. Crafts, along with other aspects of material culture, provided "scientific" evidence of skill development among exotic peoples. In the absence of aesthetic appreciation, ethnological sections were usually separated from other collections in European museums and focused on harpoons, axes, oars, arrows, and the like (Goldwater, 1967). As Defert (1982) described, however, the "discovered people" (p. 13) were not submitted to an analysis of their internal coherence but studied within the methodologies of chronology and inventory that had meaning only for diplomatic, commercial, and religious strategies of domination.

In postcolonial Western societies, acquisition and display of developing society artifacts are subjected to cultural reconstructions that often exhibit "the dominance of a set of historically determined Euro-centered ways of seeing and imagining" (Lavine, 1991, p. 83). As claimed by Vogel (1991), representations of traditional artifacts are not politically neutral, and "the meanings we give to the objects visiting in our homes and museums are not those that inspired their creators" (p. 192). Thus, the craft object undergoes cultural dislocation, is recontextualized and reinterpreted, is emphasized selectively (Leong, 1989), and in the end serves to act as a document in confirmation of largely Western cultural and political theories. The Western desire for cultural documentation of the colonies also probably heralded the duplication of ritual and functional crafts for purposes of export and, in terms of craft product implications, an interest in realism or faithful naturalistic representations. The latter may also have followed from an attempt to depict the native as distinctly as possible from Western traits and value systems. Thus, portraits of village life and everyday utility items were favored over objects vested with nonmaterial meanings (Boyer, 1976). Although craft for knowledge, as a basis for cultural demarcation and interpretation of other societies, continues to permeate museum displays (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1991), the need for global awareness in certain lifestyle segments in modern societies seems to contribute toward a desire for traditional items of everyday use from developing societies and justifies their continued presence in craft markets (Bouchard, 1981).

CRAFT AS SELF-IDENTITY

The role of crafts in providing a sense of identity and cultural discrimination has been historically pervasive. In addition to control of the

colonized world, anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, historical, and artifactual studies strengthened what Edward Said (1979) has termed "the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans" (p. 7). Crafts, as well as other aspects of material culture, helped define the "reason," "clarity," "directness," and "nobility" of the Occident as opposed to the "imprecision," "gullibility," "infantilism," and "emotion-proneness" of the Orient among other subject races (Cromer, 1913/1969; cited in Said, 1979, pp. 38, 40). Exemplifications in crafts focused on the most hideous specimens to testify to the strangeness and inhumanity of their customs (usually cult objects; von Siebold, 1843). These attempts at cultural demarcation also led to the examination of crafts from both aesthetic and symbolic perspectives. Relying on Darwinian theories, forms of art were seen as reflective of natural evolution—of intelligence (Haddon, 1895). "Primitive" art was viewed as conventionalized and simplified representations of natural objects, that is, the lowest form. Yet the very "savage-child" boundary in defining aesthetic identity in colonial societies formed the basis for some of the most influential cultural movements in Europe, particularly romanticism (in the late 18th and early 19th centuries), which sought an identity different from the artificial and complicated and embraced the simplicity and naturalness of subject peoples and their aesthetic modes of expression (Gauguin, 1931; Lovejoy, 1923). The influence of primitive or aboriginal crafts on several schools of art (postimpressionism, German expressionism, and fauvism) and artists has been well documented (Goldwater, 1967). These artists may be credited with ushering in a more complex relationship involving crafts from developing societies and their Western consumers—a relationship on the basis of vesting these objects with personal, symbolic meanings.

After World War II, the market for developing society crafts witnessed an unprecedented surge, and American and European buyers were sent into Asia, Africa, Oceania, and Latin America with large orders. This was also the beginning of a larger market for crafts beyond museums and private collections of the elite. The use of products generally as crucibles of symbolic meaning and vehicles for expressing identity has been prevalent in past eras. (See Belk, 1988a, for a review of the notion of self in relation to possessions.) Nevertheless, post-industrial societies appear to have elevated the role of material possessions in the determination of self-image (Belk, 1985). Furthermore, in the case of aesthetic objects, facets of consumption and symbolism relating to multisensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects (i.e., hedonistic)

seem to dominate over those that are utility related (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Undoubtedly idiosyncratic, such symbolic extensions in the case of craft products, however, may be construed in terms of certain key trends.

A major trend, ontologically similar to the early romantic perspective, is the revival of traditionality (in consumption mores) as an antithesis to the complex relationships of modern civilizations. Alienation between meaning and conditions of life or livelihood appears to give rise to "Modern Man losing his attachments to the workbench, the neighborhood, the town, the family, which he once called 'his own' but, at the same time, developing an interest in the 'real life' of others" (MacCannell, 1976, p. 91). Crafts and artisans appear to be outside of industrial time, "working like spiders, weaving to perfection" (p. 69). The consumption of traditional craft objects that provide a simple identification with chastity, purity, even poverty, allows the consumer to symbolically transgress the existing borders of his or her society. Often, functional objects from developing societies are desired for what they are, without adaptations for style or usage context, such as the *mola* dress of the Cuna Indians (Salvador, 1976). On occasion, the need for traditional and naturalistic depiction acts as a market signal leading to new genres—the application of indigenous styles and skills for creation of nonindigenous products, such as the *amate* bark-paper paintings of Xalitla, Mexico, which depict village nativity or historical scenes.

A second trend, commonly summarized as exoticism, draws from the continued interest in seeking differences in intellectual and artistic traditions as a way of establishing both personal and social identity (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Bourdieu (1984) claimed that such a manifestation of novelty (i.e., through aesthetic objects) serves to establish social distance. Although natural depictions from foreign cultures, as previously mentioned, may adequately serve such a purpose even without the antecedent motive of traditionalism, a common manifestation may be found in the search for exotic objects. Such objects, in the context of crafts, are often construed in terms of grotesqueness and gigantism. As described by Stewart (1984), "the spectacle of the grotesque involves a distancing of the object and a corresponding 'aesthetization' of it" (p. 107); the object is viewed as a "freak of nature," an aberration that "normalizes" the viewer. It appears to invoke wonder while avoiding contaminations—"Stand back, ladies and gentlemen, what you are about to see will shock and amaze you" (p. 108). Desire for exaggeration, distortion, or "something larger than life" tends to reinforce the excitement for the unknown and the

untamed, the awe or terror, and creates the distinction from routine environments. Although certain crafts from developing countries (such as the Naga statuettes from India and Myanmar or those from the Melanesian islands) seem to satisfy such canons of taste for exotic novelties in their original form, others have undergone mutations as a function of such a requirement. Probably the most notable of these are the *shetani*, or spirit forms developed by the Makonde people of Mozambique and Tanzania in the last 20 years, a departure from the *bindamu* carvings of purely African naturalistic forms (Körn, 1974).

It is important to recognize that the search for distinction via exotica is not limited to decorative objects but manifests in common usage items as well. Besides the adoption of traditional utility items in modern life (such as wicker baskets, straw bags, terra cotta planters, etc.), designers have sought distinction through "ethnic implants" in styles, motifs, colors, and materials. Thus, crafts without moorings in cultures of their origin have come to coexist with other displaced things and people. A particularly noteworthy example cited by Gupte (1988) involves the use of brocaded *saris*, a traditional attire for women in India, as shower curtains. Such divergence between the symbolism associated with creators and consumers has opened the door for a broader range of experimentation involving crafts from developing countries and the desire for compatibility with external usage contexts. Nevertheless, it has also raised complex definitional issues with respect to their status as cultural objects (Appadurai, 1990).

CRAFT AS STATUS

Although symbolic display is close to the notion of self-identity, and status may constitute a dimension of the latter, a separate discussion here may be useful in understanding how requirements of social power and authority might manifest in the desire for specific craft aspects. As Veblen (1899) pointed out, besides contributing to a complex set of meanings and gratification of beauty, aesthetic objects may be "coveted as valuable possessions, and their exclusive enjoyment gratifies the possessor's sense of pecuniary superiority" (p. 96).³ Crafts, then, may be seen as providing the "evidence of wealth, it becomes honorific, and failure to consume becomes a mark of inferiority and demerit" (p. 64). In fact, Veblen went further in claiming that handcrafted items allow better opportunities for status discrimination because they are largely nonutilitarian and more expensive than comparable machine-made

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products. According to Brooks (1981), this "veneration of the archaic" (p. 22) is believed to foster "competitive display" (p. 19) and emulation in craft markets hierarchically structured with a small elite of dealers, investors, and connoisseurs who act as opinion leaders and manage the shifting secrets of quality.

The need for achieving status through possession of crafts probably underlies the demand for authenticity as a key determinant of quality. Spooner (1986) defined authenticity as "a conceptualization of elusive, inadequately defined, other cultural, socially ordered genuineness" (p. 225). Inherent are the twin issues of objective attributes and the social mechanisms for the negotiation of authenticity. Probably the key material determinants are assessment of antiquity, perceived conformity with traditional designs, handcrafting (as opposed to machine-produced clone commodities with easy replaceability), material value, and the degree of singularity—that is, specification of origin, for example—to a tribe and, in the extreme case, to a specific creator.

Although relative age remains the dominant criterion for rare craft objects and constitutes a basis for auction house and gallery-based dealerships, at the level of creation it has led to the fairly widespread phenomenon of "staged authenticity" (MacCannell, 1976, p. 91), or faking.⁴ Several crafts have seen the emergence of dating techniques such as dipping ceramic pottery in mineral mixers, wooden carvings into termite molds (Carpenter, 1971; Crowley, 1970), and special treatment of paper for traditional paintings (Maduro, 1976). In terms of design, there has been a revival of traditional patterns and even adoption of such from other producing cultures. An example is the use of traditional Persian designs in contemporary carpet production in India and Pakistan (Cable & Weston, 1982). Emphasis on valuable raw materials has in some cases led to the substitution of traditional ingredients such as common wood with ebony and mahogany in certain genres of African carvings and to the use of ivory or bone implants (Segy, 1989). Last, the attribution of authenticity to specific creators and regions has led to the emergence of "branding," the practice of adding signatures to craft products. Thus, from "nameweavers" to labeled carvings, traditionally anonymous crafts are resingularized, taking on much of the characteristics of contemporary art (Price, 1989, p. 56).

As described by Spooner (1986), in addition to material evidence, the perception of authenticity is also largely determined through the reconstruction of the context of origin of the craft product. Here, the lore associated with the object is viewed as equally important. The historical information regarding producers, merchants, and processes of trans-

action constitutes a rich framework within which the craft object is valued. Thus, Bukhara carpets are appreciated for the lore encompassing the ancient central Asian city as a trading post, with myriad period-related associations. Clearly, the role of craft dealers and information is critical in the maintenance of authenticity and the structuring of price-based differentiation within a number of craft categories.

CRAFT AS MEMORY

Since World War II, growth in international tourism has led to an unprecedented rise in the consumption of crafts as souvenirs or memory markers. Indeed, the interdependence is manifest in much of contemporary destination marketing (Aznam, 1992). Although it may be inappropriate to characterize all craft acquisitions made by tourists as guided by the need to perpetuate memory of travel, the latter may co-exist with other motives across various segments. An example may be purchase of crafts as evidence of "having been," to establish social identity or to demonstrate status-congruent discretionary leisure activities in addition to building self-relevant tangible memory traces (Kelly, 1992). The sense of past is integral to identity, and as Belk (1988a) explained, "Possessions are a convenient means of storing the memories and feelings that attach our sense of past. A souvenir may make tangible some otherwise intangible travel experience" (p. 148).

Furthermore, specific types of possessions related to places, such as handicrafts, may be more attractive because they may be perceived as vested with protracted human and cultural involvement (Wallendorf & Belk, 1987). As Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) described, aesthetic objects such as crafts are capable of generating internal, multisensory images of two types. First, these might trigger "historic imagery"—those images associated with actual events—and allow enjoyment through evocation. Second, "fantasy imagery" may result through constructions and enhance appreciation of the past (p. 92). Crafts, then, may act as personal trophies, as discussed previously, and be valued for their ability to serve as evocative cues.

Ben-Amos (1973) has described such memory cues as "a minimal system which must make meanings as accessible as possible across visual boundary lines" (cited in Graburn, 1976, p. 17). Although more complex cues (i.e., crafts with substantial symbolism) might well serve the need for memory, these may be more related to self-definitional motives of knowledge for distant cultures or of achieving distinction in

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social life. At its primary level, memory-supporting crafts, then, act as visual cross-cultural codes or signs and embody the requirement of simplicity or ease of understanding. The nexus between travel and acquisition also leads to functional requirements within certain tourist segments, such as portability and affordability. The emphasis on crafts as an everyday reminder imparts utilitarian requirements, whether or not such was intended in a given craft product in its producing culture. A large number of tourists with the above requirements imposes a macrolevel challenge on crafts: the ability to create high volumes.

Desire for simple understanding may have led to a conformity in developing society crafts to popular notions or stereotypes associated with indigenous cultures (Graburn, 1976). To the extent that members of dominant cultures recognize ethnicity as a set of overt features (such as skin color, traditional occupations, natural habitat, etc.), such are reflected in souvenir choices. Examples include statuettes demonstrating hunting prowess, dolls in native costumes, or in the extreme, dyeing light-colored wooden souvenirs to match the skin colors of their producers (Seiler-Baldinger, 1985). There is a trend toward traditional naturalism here as well because portraiture serves the goal of simplistic identification.

Miniaturization for many varieties of crafts may follow from the requirement of portability. In addition, reduction in size and decorative complexity also affords the creators the opportunity to reduce cost as well as increase the volume of production. The perceived scope of large markets may in addition lead to a revival of traditional craft themes (Belk, 1992) and, in specific contexts, to the substitution of traditional materials where these require substantial processing time (e.g., use of chemical dyes in place of vegetable extracts for Yagua and Ticuna hammocks of Colombia and Peru; Seiler-Baldinger, 1985). Skill-demanding crafts may even be abandoned for those that are easily made and require less time and resources. The utility-related aspect of consumption also leads to designed adaptations described earlier, that is, transformation of purpose and meaning between producing and consuming societies.

The aforementioned classification, relying on five sets of consumer desires vis-à-vis crafts, each associated with a subset of nine craft product aspects, is not premised on exclusive membership, similar to most social categorization schemes (Lingle, Altom, & Medin, 1984): (a) Consumers may well display multiple desires and craft aspects associated with each of these; (b) a specific craft may appeal to different desires, necessitating variety in form and transaction; (c) a particular craft aspect (e.g., traditional portrayals) may satisfy diverse desires; and (d)

desires historically dominant in given periods may recur and assume similar connotations at a given time (e.g., reemergence of craft as personal trophy aided by modern-day tourism). Useful from the point of view of creators of a given craft is to identify the range of relevant desires and their respective implications (in terms of craft product aspects) to determine appropriate conditions for creation and delivery. The latter undoubtedly would necessitate focus on communications and transaction mechanisms in addition to the design, process, and organization of craft production.

The Organization of Craft Production

Production systems for crafts have received attention in relation to macroeconomic indices such as national employment and income; division of labor; and production inputs such as raw materials, skills, credit, design, technology, and delivery aspects. Although material conditions for craft creation appear undoubtedly to facilitate or inhibit capabilities to serve a variety of consumption desires and related craft product aspects, these have not received systematic analysis. Neither has there been an analysis of traditional forms of creation compared to more innovative cultural patterns. In the following sections, four different entrepreneurship forms—household, cooperative, subcontracting, and factory—are described with a view toward tracing the relationships between consumption and production sectors.

HOUSEHOLDS:

THE SPECIALIST/MASTER ARTISAN

Historically, the craft production system consisted of rural households in which the creators were required to meet a traditional and known demand. The ritual or utility aspects were manifest in designs associated with specific craft families or master artisans and transmitted in tribal or genealogical terms. Craft workers were generally born into craft families and learned their skills through observation and the socialization process. Raw materials were largely collected from the natural environment or bartered through rural exchange modalities. In the absence of institutional facilities, family savings or loans from local intermediaries provided the necessary credit. Value addition through

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manual processes constituted the majority of craft products and coexisted with certain innovative indigenous technologies (such as locally developed looms for weaving; Spooner, 1986).

Although the evolution of craft markets (especially for exports) has led to a shift from household organization forms, such forms still constitute a majority in most developing countries (Kathuria, Miralao, & Joseph, 1988). The key advantages of this mode are the ability to create craft objects that embody traditional designs, exotic innovations, and the relatively high degree of singularity of these creations. The social location of artisan households makes them best suited to reflect relatively less acculturated forms in their crafts because many continue to serve both local and external audiences. Even when the external orientation is economically dominant, artisan households are likely to be resistant to changes in the essential symbolism characterizing a craft product because of a perceived relationship between the quality of their work and their community status as experts (Hughes, 1981). Despite their loyalty to tradition, these master artisans are often also the best innovators, capable of infusing personal imagery and symbolism into traditional forms through their superior skills (Silver, 1981). It is probably best to view such artisans as "artist-craftsmen" (Becker, 1978, p. 866; see previous discussion in section titled "Crafts: Definitional Issues") who lead the dynamic tradition of indigenous crafts. As Price (1989) has described, there is "a delicate interaction between individual creativity and the dictates of tradition" (p. 58), and a traditional artisan may act as both the curator and the agent of change. To the extent that exoticism is associated with departure from realism and infusion of imagination, "the primitive artist moves from naturalism to abstraction without embarrassment" (Newton, 1981, p. 53). The individualism associated with certain artisans or craft families also renders their work singular—identifiable to external audiences.

The innovations described, however, are usually distinct from the reductionism inherent in the need for simplicity. Although certain traditional items may indeed provide a simple identification of culture, a deliberate simplification is often equated with trivialization. Also, the typical lack of access to distribution does not predispose artisan households toward producing large numbers of small (portable) and inexpensive items, even though their traditional repertoire often includes such examples. Lack of interaction with external consumers also reduces the opportunity to adapt local crafts to suit external usage contexts. In the past, artisans working in households had access to valuable raw materials such as rare wood, ivory, and precious metals because

these were viewed essential in the creation of certain ritual objects and were often made available by the community. Current restrictions on trade (such as on import of silk in the Philippines and logging permits in regions of Africa), however, along with the impoverished status of most rural artisans, preclude the use of valuable materials.

The household mode of organization, then, has the potential for serving knowledge and self-identity desires through creation of both traditional and uniquely exotic crafts. Lack of exposure to consumers in external cultures, however, renders adaptation of crafts for alien contexts (a potential aspect of self-identity) problematic. Individualism may, in addition, serve status requirements. The latter may be enhanced if valuable raw materials are made available and if specialized intermediaries ensure antiquity through long-term buying strategies. Although these organizations are also capable of producing simple, portable, and inexpensive crafts (such as those serving a desire for memory), lack of organized distribution usually places them in a competitively weaker position compared with urban-based organized production systems.

COOPERATIVES

Although informal cooperation among rural artisans and development of collective genres of crafts have many historic examples (Brody, 1976) with parallels to the guild system, production cooperatives reflect a more recent development often supported by domestic craft policy (Kathuria et al., 1988). Although retaining many of the features of household production, the cooperatives are seen essentially as providing greater control to artisans with respect to the creation process (e.g., access to institutional credit, bulk buying of raw materials, use of technology, and a larger pool of trainers and trainees), enhanced leverage in negotiating with intermediaries (e.g., through determination of a standard price and capability toward carrying inventory), and market exposure through collectively owned retail outlets and shared costs of transportation.

Clearly, a variety of cooperative forms has been implemented on the basis of modalities for division of labor, resource sharing, and management responsibilities. Two broad categories—organization by product and by process—are characteristic of the above and pertain to the discussion of serving segments of consumption desires and their related craft aspects. The first of these is similar to individual household-based

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creation and allows for distinctive expressions. This arrangement may also allow similar service capabilities with respect to consumption desires, with the additional advantage of ensuring larger volumes. Potentially threatening is the rivalry among artisan families to establish quality standards in the context of a region (Taimni, 1981). The organization by process, which typically involves community workshops, shared equipment, and division of a product by components (Hakemulder & Last, 1980), seems to have been less successful because of both a reluctance among participants to share skills and a lack of local management expertise (Gormsen, 1985).⁵ In principle, such cooperatives seem to possess advantage in creating large volumes of crafts, especially those that are relatively small (portable) and shorn of individual innovation and complexity. Efficient management of resources could also allow for low-cost production and render these products fairly affordable. The congregation of artisans has the added opportunity for maximizing contact with external consumer experts, such as designers, and for adapting local crafts (through changes in specific stages of creation) to match consumption contexts.

Cooperatives, in general, afford the creation of larger volumes of craft production than do household organizations. Although cooperative organization by products has essentially similar service capabilities as individual artisan families, cooperative organization by process offers the opportunity for adaptations, that is, serving the desire for self-identity through grafting of "ethnic" craft features to a variety of consumption items in external cultures. In addition, these cooperatives can target the memory segment with affordable crafts that are both simple and portable.

SUBCONTRACTING

In many developing society cultures, subcontracting or the "putting out" form of organization acts as a specialized cooperative system with either horizontal (between products) or vertical (between processes) division of labor among rural households. The entrepreneur maintains the flow of raw materials and finance—supplying inputs (such as a craft product at a certain stage of creation) to the outworkers, collecting the finished goods, and settling payments. In many regions in which subcontracting (especially by process) is well entrenched, artisans rarely deal with each other financially or even physically. Thus, silk weaving in Thailand, which involves eight different steps, is performed

in eight different households (Mead, 1981) in a way that Mies (1980) described as akin to "an invisible assembly line where each is assigned only to make a component part of the whole which she never saw let alone would ever use herself" (cited in Cable & Weston, 1982, p. 18).

Advantages of the subcontracting system are its flexibility in serving both large volumes and diverse varieties of crafts. Although for the entrepreneur the ability to draw from a large pool of skilled artisans without incurring fixed overhead is attractive, the autonomy of the artisan is also somewhat assured. Nevertheless, the complex task of coordination among units, often geographically dispersed, and of maintenance of quality introduces a degree of standardization in the craft products, with consequent emphasis on process-based rather than product-based organization. Thus, relatively simple representations and easily transportable items are preferred over those that require complex manifestations of individual creation. Because many of the entrepreneurs in developing countries also act as exporters, these standardized forms are often influenced by designers external to the rural producing communities. As Teske (1986) described, such contacts often "impose outside aesthetic criteria upon traditional artists, to introduce standards of quality control designed to produce commercial sameness, and to undermine the confidence of folk artists and craftsmen in their ability to judge what is good and beautiful" (p. 80). Memory-serving crafts, those that are simple, portable, and affordable by virtue of volume production, are hence facilitated by this system. Also, the prevalence of creation-to-design enhances the scope of adaptation to external usage contexts, that is, those that seek embellishment of a wide range of products (utilitarian, fashion, etc.) with "ethnic" themes. The shift in focus from the individual artisan or craft family, however, potentially excludes the subcontracting organization from creating idiosyncratic items of tradition or products marked with innovation.

THE CRAFTS FACTORY

Increasing demand for large volumes of craft objects serving specific consumption motives described earlier has led to the transformation of craft workers in several developing countries from community-based artisans integrated with agricultural life to urban-based wage laborers (Jain, 1986). The change is increasingly evident for crafts that have received sustained appreciation in the West, such as carpets from India and Pakistan, batik textiles from Java, and rattan furniture from the

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Philippines. In the latter, large corporations employ hundreds of workers with significant foreign participation in marketing, product design, and capital investment (Upadhyoy, 1973). Such factory organizations also tend to rely on training of workers outside hereditary skill acquisition in rural craft families and to use technology to enhance speed and to ensure standardized specifications of their products. Raw material supplies are usually negotiated with large contractors, often aided by government subsidies (Aguilar & Miralao, 1984) and at times ensured through backward integration (examples include ownership of rattan-producing farms by furniture manufacturing companies in the Philippines).

Although separation of craft workers from the entire creative process endows factory-produced crafts with much of the same characteristics as the process-based subcontracting arrangement, the superior resources of factory organizations (in terms of market information and quality delivery capability) allow a broader range of crafts than subcontractors. Thus, in addition to serving large orders for relatively simple and inexpensive items, they have made inroads into crafts as self-identity and status, supporting higher value product markets as well, particularly in fashion, furniture, and home accessories. Adaptation to usage contexts also allow these craft products, within a range of traditional styles, to provide high material value (e.g., use of expensive materials such as silk, special quality wood, rare gems for jewelry, and certain varieties of stone) and to target more affluent segments in Western markets. Attempts to singularize such high value-added crafts occur through branding, and designer labels are becoming more common. The identification, though, is more complex than that involving a rural artisan and includes aesthetic inputs (i.e., from designers) that draw inspiration from external cultures as well. To quote one such designer with her own namebranded line, "Just a touch of color, a delicately drawn, clean outline, gemstones perfectly interspersed—these things can transform ancient artisanship into high-fashion jewelry for the American woman, or into furnishings for her home" (Gupte, 1988, p. 30). Clearly, although suited for crafts that serve the desire for memory, status, and aspects of self-identity, the factory organization shares the disadvantage associated with process-based subcontracting and cooperative arrangements that exclude idiosyncratic traditional expressions and innovative creations of master artisans functioning within autonomous rural households.

Although each of the four organizational forms is more or less prevalent in most craft industries in developing countries, often competing

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with each other for end-use consumers or intermediaries, the national focus on foreign exchange earnings through exports is exerting an influence toward greater organization on the traditionally unorganized production system (Jain, 1986). The transition is claimed to receive momentum from national governments in developing nations that favor large factories over rural households through provision of scarce raw materials, subsidies in training, investment credits, and marketing support (Jain, Krishnamurthy, & Tripathi, 1985). Critics, on the other hand, have pointed out that reliance on limited production organizations would reduce a developing society's capacity for serving diverse consumption desires vis-à-vis crafts and potentially jeopardize an attractive dimension of the industry—the provision of rural employment. Besides creators and consumers, the transition is also likely to affect the vast network of intermediaries and redefine their roles in the craft industry.

Intermediaries in Craft Industries

The network of entrepreneurs and institutions that interfaces between creators and consumers is diverse and is viewed as indispensable in terms of economic sustenance of the industry. Indeed, there are examples of craft households selling directly to consumers (i.e., tourists) and cooperatives operating retail outlets; however, their contribution is relatively minor compared with the major flows in craft products (Harrison, 1979). Even in the case of cooperatives, such as those for batik in Java, inability to establish linkage with go-betweens often precludes market access (Joseph, 1988). Traditionally, intermediaries have provided coordination and created enabling conditions for the creation of crafts and, similar to the organizations of production, have witnessed transition in form and relationships. In many developing countries, new patterns of intermediaries have emerged with innovations in terms of both organizational form and functional activities. The following sections describe five generic categories, identifying specific characteristics and their relationships with particular production organizations and consumer segments.

BUYING AGENTS

The dispersed location of craft families and rural cooperatives has traditionally led to itinerant agents providing the necessary functions

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of coordination, market access, credit, and at times, supply of raw materials, coexisting with local artisan-patron relationships. Typically, the buying agent is specialized, in terms of either crafts from a region or a specific craft category (such as agents in the Teotihuacán Valley dealing in a variety of ceramics; Charlton, 1976). The restricted range of crafts limits their outward interactions to larger merchant exporters who are urban based and possess export know-how. Buying agents are increasingly attracted to importers who seek to bypass larger intermediaries for cost savings, but their limited inventory precludes them from competing with the more powerful merchants.

By virtue of their intimate contact with craft families and regions, the agents are well placed to locate traditional forms, especially innovative artisans, and antique works. They are also often responsible for discovering novel genres that subsequently receive attention from commercial and government initiatives. Low volumes, limited variety, and inability to provide design inputs, however, have largely excluded them from playing an independent role in the larger markets serving consumers' desire for crafts as memory and in segments that desire specially adapted craft products.

MERCHANT EXPORTERS

The complex requirements of exporting, such as dealing with foreign importers and retailers, transportation and packaging, design inputs, and knowledge of regulations, have led to the emergence of merchant traders in many developing countries. The resources of merchant exporters, who are usually based in urban centers, allow them to carry substantial inventory, to meet delivery schedules, and to evince power in negotiating with importers and retailers. Although buying agents contribute to their varied stock, merchant exporters tend to rely heavily on subcontracting arrangements—usually commissioning products to meet designed specifications—and provide quality checks. Depending on the volume of stock they need, at times they buy directly from factories, using their excess capacities.

As a group, the merchant exporters serve the entire range of craft desires, although complex exporting arrangements usually predispose them toward dealing in large orders of relatively simple, low-breakage, portable crafts that are adapted to the usage contexts of Western consumers. Specialization within this group also allows for high value-added crafts directed toward boutiques or fashion outlets. As pointed out by Hughes (1981), museum quality or rare craft objects are seldom

carried, although some merchant exporters have undertaken the duplication of traditional objects through cooperatives and by subcontracting and, in addition, may act as key information sources leading to their acquisition.

MANUFACTURER EXPORTERS

As described earlier, the sustained appreciation of certain craft varieties in the West and the growth in tourism and memory-serving crafts have led to substantial volume requirements. The latter has provided the impetus for greater control over the chain of creation to ensure both quality and delivery. The manufacturer exporters tend to inspire confidence among importers and retailers and display substantial power in negotiations. Although they are committed to their factories, they are also led by large orders to engage in subcontracting arrangements. These arrangements form the basis for horizontal channel conflict (Stern & Gorman, 1969) with merchant exporters who typically have a stronger association with the subcontracting outworkers (Kathuria et al., 1988). In dealing with both import wholesalers and retailers with known demand for large volumes, they also contribute to vertical rivalry between the two and are able to extract higher margins than what would be warranted through exclusive arrangements.

In creating-to-design, the manufacturers have the greatest advantage in serving segments that seek specially adapted products. In transforming the production organization from rural to urban and from specialist artisan to wage laborer, however, the capacity to serve traditional craft requirements is considerably reduced. The inflexibility in terms of variety also leads toward specialization within particular categories and reduces access to knowledge and certain identity-based segments. Such specialization may occur at either the low or high end of the value-added continuum. Certain manufacturers may focus on low cost, simple (memory-serving) crafts, whereas others with considerable overhead are predisposed toward more expensive goods, often involving materials of high value (usually designer fashion, furniture, and home furnishing products), and serve the status-seeking markets.

IMPORTERS

Paralleling merchant exporters in developing countries, the wholesale importing organizations usually carry a wide range of craft products and inventory to supply diverse retailers, from boutiques and

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specialty stores to department chains. With direct access to market information, they often provide extensive design support to merchants and manufacturers in developing countries and assume the risk of new craft ventures. Usually their margins are higher at early stages of the cycle and tend to decline with acceptance of the craft and subsequent competition from retailers who attempt to buy directly from local intermediaries. Among external commercial organizations, they are the most knowledgeable and devote substantial attention to both purchasing and marketing. In terms of serving consumer segments, they usually carry a broad portfolio, although the emphasis on designed adaptation and on the standardized crafts necessary to serve large volumes limits their access to traditional specialties.

RETAILERS

Drawing largely from import wholesalers, some retailers, especially those who require large volumes of standard lines, sometimes buy directly from local merchants and manufacturers to reduce intermediary margins. Because fashion and gift sections tend to rely on novelties, however, direct buying is relatively uncommon. Their relative lack of knowledge also leads them to greater reliance on importers, through whom design requirements are usually communicated.

Highly adapted fashion and home-use products continue to form the basis for most purchases, although specialty craft shops and boutiques aim at serving the knowledge, identity, and status segments through specialized importers, local merchants, and even knowledgeable buying agents. Marketing cooperatives (such as nongovernmental organizations) with cultural interests in the developing world often bypass large intermediaries and support craft-producing cooperatives or undertake purchasing visits to developing countries.

Although the preceding discussion reflects the generic categories of intermediaries, these may be construed more broadly in many nations. For example, intermediaries may include taxi and trishaw drivers and tour guides who act as intermediaries by bringing tourists to artisan households, cooperatives, or local retailers (generally for a commission).

Contrary to attempts to singularize the crafts industry and impose a definition-bound reductionism for policy purposes, this discussion of consumers, creators, and intermediaries shows a range of diversity, recognition of which underlies the success of rendering it effective and satisfying to its constituent sectors. The continuing interaction between consuming and producing societies provides for its evolutionary

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nature, and marketing innovations are likely to direct its future course. Although there appear to be both complementary and contradictory forces at play, understanding the key flows is critical in identifying strategic opportunities and longer-term potential.

A Marketing Framework

Marketing crafts and aesthetic products in general has been a subject of critical inquiry, viewed especially from the perspective of adapting the creative process to serve customer preferences. Walle (1986), for example, claimed:

The main danger of modern marketing is that the marketing concept consciously directs attention towards the customer. Since the "folk" are seemingly "production people," it is easy—too easy—to forget their needs and wants and, instead, to focus attention toward clients (those who will buy the goods if the proper "marketing mix" is adopted). (p. 100)

Presumably, the needs of the producers (i.e., traditional artisans) refer to their own cultural and symbolic aspirations, which are rendered incidental as traditional artisans are reduced to the role of technicians creating to satisfy an externally designed craft requirement (Teske, 1986). Similarly, Hirschman (1983) has proposed that the marketing concept is inapplicable for aesthetic products because the creative process reflects personal values and social norms rather than considerations of consumer preference (see also Searles, 1980; Woods, 1987). The order of primacy between *artistic needs* and *consumer needs* is believed to contribute to either a product or a market orientation. Holbrook and Zirlin (1985) have proposed to accommodate both by suggesting that nonprofit organizations (e.g., museums) are better served by an artist-oriented product ideology, whereas those committed to profits could successfully ascribe to consumer-driven operations. This perspective, however, raises questions with respect to the relative scale of the two modes. Because museum acquisitions are meager compared with retailing and purchase of crafts, museum buying alone would allow survival of only a small number of highly specialized and acclaimed artist-craftspersons, leaving the vast majority of creators and intermediaries to serve the consumer-profit sector.

Viewed historically, aesthetic creations seem to have been related to patrons or clients (such as the monarchy, clergy, landlords, etc.; Hauser, 1951), and marketing the craft product was integral to the arti-

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san's rationale for survival (Joyce, 1986). As pointed out by Johnson (1986), "in the day-to-day scheme of events, selling is the craftperson's most important form of recognition" (p. 87). Indeed, the economic opportunity afforded by a craft industry creates conditions for continued pursuit in most developing countries. The challenge, then, is to foster multiple marketing flows that allow coexistence of a variety of consumption desires and production organizations (with their respective motivations). Rather than choosing between consumer-driven adapted craft production and self-driven traditional expressions, the marketing task is to help match particular crafts with market segments most likely to appreciate them (Holbrook, 1980). The debate between market and product orientations is not particularly moot if the industry as a whole adopts the marketing concept of seeking and strengthening complementarities, as long as the constituent sectors are free to create or consume items of their choice. A master artisan, hence, could very well pursue his or her imagination or symbolic standards of a community without adapting, and such could contribute to his or her economic well-being if marketing systems were in place to make available these creations to knowledge- or identity-motivated craft consumers. Intermediaries who are generally more integrated into the transaction system than rural artisans may be better positioned to adopt the marketing concept and support both the indigenous (artist-driven) and relatively acculturated (consumer-driven) forms of crafts within the profit-generating sector itself. As pointed out by Pye (1988), the variety of craft desires has led to expanded potentials for different forms with substantial returns associated with both simple and complex craft objects. Three major flows of crafts, on the basis of particular configurations of consumption desires/craft aspect requirements, intermediaries, and production organizations, are shown in Figure 10.1. The following sections identifying the nature of transactions of these three flows, with suggestions for enhancing marketing effectiveness for each.

THE FLOW OF INDIGENOUS CRAFTS

A significant flow within the craft industry involves the satisfaction of craft as knowledge and self-identity desires through objects that embody traditional themes, as well as exotic innovations by master artisans. As described earlier, craft families and rural cooperatives organized on the product basis are best suited to create such objects. Local buying agents usually provide the necessary credit and raw materials. Importers and retailers who focus on specialty products acquire these



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objects from the agents and make them available to consumers in external cultures. As a group, these crafts probably reflect the most unacculturated forms and seem to contain all three definitional elements—cultural symbolism, manual value addition, and production in small groups.

Evidently, museums as well as individual consumers with the aforementioned craft desires are likely to constitute the target segment. As Belk (1988a) described, collecting has become a significant activity and often acts as a vehicle for creating one's extended self, in addition to filling gaps in one's sense of thoroughness regarding unfamiliar cultures. The requisite marketing mix would involve positioning these crafts in terms of the desired benefits and rooting these in specific cultural contexts. Providing an assortment either within a particular region/specific category or across genres is likely to serve the desire for in-depth understanding or variety. Presumably, price-quality differentials would characterize submarkets within the overall segment, with perceived value determined on the basis of factors such as the relative inaccessibility of a region and its craft products, adherence to known traits of tradition, and the aesthetic assessment of innovations. The credibility of promotional messages, as well as that of the retail outlets, is likely to determine how traditional or artistic these crafts are perceived to be. Craft shows, demonstrations by artisans, and reviews in the media are likely to be viewed as effective promotional vehicles; specialty stores, such as museum shops and boutiques, would also allow the consistent portrayal of these items as aesthetic and traditional expressions of cultural value. Thus, besides judicious procurement, substantial efforts are necessary in terms of positioning these crafts to the consumers (museum curators and individual consumers defined along appropriate segmentation variables) by rendering accessible their cultural meanings and conditions of origin.

THE FLOW OF PRECIOUS CRAFTS

Precious crafts represent the economic high end of the craft market, serving desires for status and trophy through their associated aspects. Although intermediaries and production organizations similar to those for indigenous crafts provide the necessary supply functions, the nature of transactions are somewhat different, given the high material value of the items. A key distinction is the role played by merchant exporters, who, either independently or through their network of buying agents, provide the expensive raw materials to households and

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Figure 10.1. A Marketing Framework

cooperatives, reintroduce original designs when artisans possess skills but have lost touch with traditional forms through acculturation, and assume ownership of the completed products, thereby freeing the artisans and agents from the responsibility of carrying expensive inventory. These merchants provide specialty importers and retailers with region or genre identification through historic lores of creation, ownership, and trade. Precious crafts also seem to satisfy the most rigorous definition of crafts, although the transposition of producing regions and historical genres sometimes leads to rivalry among developing nations seeking tariff concessions (such as those for Persian carpets produced in the Indian subcontinent).

Antiquity and material value are critical both in the positioning of crafts within this flow and in each of the mix decision elements. Auction house sales, catalogs, galleries, and special shows (often by appointment only with a dealer) provide the venue for purchase and serve as market signals heralding the availability and desirability of these craft items. Promotion is also heavily dependent on re-creation of the sociocultural context of creation and the interpretation of genuineness (such as published commentaries on antique carpets by experts in trade journals). Often, the pedigree of an object is determined by its history of ownership, the prices paid at each transfer, and the exhibits and publications in which it has appeared (Price, 1989). Clearly, determination of price depends on comparative assessment of these within specific genres and is influenced by experts or connoisseurs in the field. Duplications, of course, allow for a wider range of prices, provided these can be endowed with region- or culture-specific identities.

THE FLOW OF ADAPTED CRAFTS

Adapted crafts arguably represent the most dominant flow within the industry, a flow based on response to requirements of large volume. The emergence of craft factories and widespread subcontracting and the pivotal role of manufacturer/merchant exporters, wholesalers, and volume retailers in importing societies are attributed to the necessity for bulk. As a group, these crafts embody varying levels of aesthetic and symbolic aspects of the producing region. There is greater reliance on large-scale production and use of technologies, however, as opposed to manual value addition. As a consequence, they pose certain complications in terms of their classification as cultural goods and may indeed warrant a separate treatment for purposes of trade or domestic policy.

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Two distinct markets coexist within adapted crafts distinguished by the served needs, inputs into the creation process, and the choice of marketing mix. The first involves serving the desire for memory through simple, portable, and affordable objects. Although largely associated with tourism, these products are also sold directly in importing societies and may be related to self-expressive needs as well—as day-to-day objects and as distinctive gift items. The marketing process, initiated by wholesalers and retailers, usually follows the standard paradigm: selection of crafts most likely to appeal to consumer segments, their adaptation for maximum compatibility, test marketing followed by refinements, suitable packaging, and a combination of “push” and “pull” strategies for promotion and distribution. The chosen marketing mix also reflects mass-merchandising features, with emphasis on distinctiveness and utility; intensive distribution through department stores or home-furnishing outlets; and awareness campaigns often tied to seasonality, tourism, or country themes (such as joint promotion of Southeast Asian crafts and tourism by Western department store chains, travel agents, airlines, and respective tourism departments before the winter holiday season). The price range is usually restricted, given the notion that neither tourists nor consumers of gifts or of minor daily objects are likely to view these in complex symbolic terms or as status objects.

A second stream of adaptation pertains to high-value items of fashion or home furniture, where compatibility of usage coexists with the requirement of distinctive self-expression. Designer items with “ethnic” embellishments, although demanding of volume (and hence, having similar supply inputs and conditions as the first market for adapted crafts), share features of the indigenous craft flow, especially in the creation of distinctive culture-based images (e.g., designer fashions with an “African theme” in motifs or fabric). Their promotion and distribution tend to be more exclusive than the mass-marketed variety and reflect price premiums associated with specifically branded identity.

At the level of the consumer, coexistence of these multiple flows affords the manifestation of diverse craft desires, as well as the option of “graduating” from one flow to another as a function of learning and increased exposure. As described by Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, Holbrook, and Roberts (1988), collections often are initiated by gifts or other unintended acquisitions, although it is important to note that not all consumers may be collectors. Over time, self-identity or knowledge motives may come to encompass an individual’s world of crafts, leading to a shift from adapted crafts to indigenous crafts or even to precious crafts. At the level of the industry, multiple flows ensure cultural

preservation as well as economic survival for communities in developing societies. Although the dominance of one, say adapted crafts, to the exclusion of others could eventually lead to unlearning traditional skills and failure to create unique products to compete in international markets, spurning volume requirements could also lead to economic deprivation of factory and subcontracting workers and reduce the attractiveness of the industry to domestic policymakers. The necessary balance undoubtedly calls for sensitive facilitation, recognizing the unique character of each of the marketing flows and their constituents.

Facilitating Change in Craft Industries

For the most part, governments in developing countries are in favor of supporting domestic craft ventures through a range of policies. Local and international nongovernmental organizations have also participated quite actively in this sector, in which facilitations are conceived in terms of infrastructure building, production inputs, and marketing support. Unfortunately, in the absence of systematic analysis of requirements to facilitate specific craft flows, most policy initiatives tend to view such requirements as similar across different types of crafts. Deficiencies in critical inputs and redundancies consequently characterize many craft assistance programs. Furthermore, craft policies tend to be conceived at the central levels without reference to cultural preservation policies (if any) and without assessment of local vagaries (Taimni, 1981) and invariably run into implementation problems. Short-term demands for export earnings, in addition, tend to emphasize support for particular flows (usually urban-based factories) with neglect of the remaining crafts. It seems necessary, then, to move from a general, centrally administered, short-term orientation to one that is based on specific requirements and is managed locally within a long-term plan encompassing the entire domestic industry of a developing country. Table 10.1 relates the long-term needs of the three marketing flows to specific aspects of change programs on the basis of characteristics of creators, intermediaries, and consumers discussed earlier.

DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Organized production systems such as cooperatives are viewed in many developing societies as potentially increasing the volume of creation in a region, as well as enhancing the bargaining power of artisans

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TABLE 10.1 Program for Change in Craft Industries

Key Marketing Flows	Suggested Requirements		
	Infrastructure	Production Inputs	Market Support
Indigenous Craft Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative organization • Land and equipment acquisition • Management training • Transportation to buying centers • Information dissemination system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design advice from experts • Raw materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized exposure to buying agents and merchant exporters • Packaging expertise • Promotion of overall craft profile
Precious Craft Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative organization • Land and equipment acquisition • Management training • Transportation to buying centers • Information dissemination system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design advice from experts • Rare and expensive raw materials • Regional awards • Preservation and cultural documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market encounter between merchant exporters and specialty importers/retailers • Encouraging auction house submissions • Catalogs and information service
Adapted Craft Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation and container arrangements • Warehousing facilities • Telecommunications • Simplification of export requirements • Joint ventures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill training • Indigenous technologies • Quality inspection • Market information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade fairs, exhibitions, on-site demonstrations • Promotion of overall craft profile • Marketing management training • Export handling assistance

with respect to buying agents. Consequently, assistance in the form of land and equipment acquisition and transportation arrangements is usually emphasized. Rural outworkers and volunteers are also engaged in organizing the craft families and setting up acceptable modalities for cooperation. Unfortunately, the failure of many such cooperative ventures has been traced to the lack of experience and expertise in general administration (such as proper accounting procedures, determination of a profit sharing formula, and leadership) and demand assessment that would allow for maintenance of adequate inventory (Gormsen, 1985). In addition, poor communication between administrative centers and rural artisans and cooperatives often leads to missed opportu-

nities⁶ (procurement camps, delivery schedules for raw materials, etc.). For indigenous and precious craft flows, building effective communications and training a pool of local management talent would enhance production and marketing efficiencies.

By contrast, the adapted crafts flow, characterized by the movement of large volumes, requires different forms of infrastructural support. In this case, efficient transportation from rural to urban centers; adequate warehousing, shipping, and container arrangements; simplification of legal and administrative requirements; and enhanced access to modern telecommunications would facilitate export operations. Creation of an institutional base with responsibility for the above could serve both planning and coordination functions between governmental and non-governmental programs. For many developing countries, however, the organization itself of such institutions with defined agendas appears to be a greater challenge (Aziz, 1980). Recognition of mutual strengths in public and private organization could lead to effective joint venture arrangements. Change agents could facilitate these by identifying partners with relative strengths in given areas and by participating in negotiations.

PRODUCTION INPUTS

Given the success requirement of traditional themes in indigenous crafts, design assistance appears to be a critical input. This is probably most relevant in areas in which artisans have lost touch with original ritualistic and utilitarian forms through acculturation, although retaining the skills for creation of the same. Folklorists, cultural anthropologists, and museum curators could play a vital role in the process of revival and rejuvenation. Several developing countries have undertaken to establish research centers that draw artisans and culturalists to facilitate the process of revival and relearning. Documentation, recreation of traditional tools, and discussion on historical, religious, and mythological themes are believed to help further a reappropriation that goes beyond the mere reproduction of older craft pieces (Varadarajan, 1991). With respect to other production inputs, although the transaction of raw materials is not inherently problematic, providing cheaper access to these may help artisans in overcoming historic indebtedness to intermediaries and may allow a greater latitude for experimentation (Harrison, 1979).

For precious crafts, however, raw material supplies may be more critical because of their high costs and/or their unavailability in local

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contexts and may require preferential buying schemes for artisans and cooperatives. Revival of traditionality through design support continues to be important, as does encouragement for innovations. Conducting regional competitions could provide incentive for the latter, and as Stromberg (1976) has described, tying awards to preferential purchase has the potential for sustaining individual creativity. Because precious crafts are also negotiated on the basis of cultural and trade lores, documentation and dissemination of the same to market intermediaries would constitute an important facet of change activities. Preservation for future sale, inculcated in policy terms, would serve the need for antiquity and keep alive the supply of antique objects, deflecting the urge toward pilfering them from their natural habitats.

Although formal skill training is largely unnecessary for households and rural cooperatives serving the indigenous and precious flows in craft objects, it constitutes a critical element for craft factories that serve the needs for adapted crafts. Craft factories in most developing countries draw human resources from the pool of urban poor and migrant farm workers who are unversed in traditional skills. In addition, available technological resources need to be adapted to serve the requirements of mass production with assurance of quality standards. To the extent the latter are specified by designers (both local and foreign), the monitoring of market information and its input into the production process remain critical from a systemic perspective as well as in actual processing terms.

MARKET SUPPORT

Facilitating market encounters is critical, although their nature varies depending on the specific craft flow. For indigenous crafts, organized exposure of artisans and cooperatives to buying agents and merchant exporters would enhance the awareness of the range of available products and increase the potential for introduction of new genres. A critical but often overlooked aspect is the development of packaging that ensures transportation free of physical damage and that enhances appropriate demonstration and use. Both creators and intermediaries stand to benefit from packaging innovation, the lack of which at times is blamed for recalcitrance among quality-conscious importers.

To the extent that the overall craft profile of a developing country invokes awareness and interest among consumers, promotion serves as the key element of "pull," or creating receptivity in external consumer segments. A range of partnership arrangements may be used to

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promote the craft profile, including national campaigns, cosponsorship with wholesalers, and provision of promotional materials (e.g., brochures) to specialized retail establishments.

Although similar market encounters appear to be necessary for precious crafts, facilitating access to auction houses and their catalogs could locate these crafts among the international repertoire of valuable artifacts. Large merchant exporters could be encouraged to participate in art shows and be provided with necessary financial resources and documentation attesting to authenticity of their submissions.

Market support for adapted crafts usually involves organization of trade fairs, on-site demonstrations by artisans, and promotion of a country's overall craft profile through various partnership arrangements. The provision of marketing skills, especially in exporting, is the key in identifying segmental preferences, selection of distribution partners, and formulation of mix ingredients.

Conclusion and Future Directions

The value of a descriptive framework lies in its ability to locate specific events within the complexity of the overall phenomenon and in suggesting a set of contingencies most relevant to their manifestation. In addition, a framework judiciously applied may indicate directions for change and suggest areas that warrant detailed investigation. The need for an organizing principle is most evident in the crafts industries of developing countries, especially in terms of the marketing flows toward external audiences. The diversity in creation, intermediary roles, and consumption desires often leads to piecemeal analysis or undue reductionism to suit short-term policy requirements. The framework suggested in this chapter may provide a starting point in relating constituents, transactions, and strategies and may serve as an inductive basis for richer theory building and empirical research.

As shown in this chapter's discussions, marketing research is crucial both in delineating specific relationships (e.g., between a consumption desire and aspects of a craft product) and in determining the impact of specific marketing programs (e.g., the creation of craft awareness in foreign markets through trade fairs and increasing the effectiveness of market encounters in extending the line of crafts carried by importers). Description of the transactions in the specified flows also highlights the effectiveness of different research methodologies. Although naturalistic inquiry may be well suited to determine expectations and requirements of rural artisans, more structured tools could complement these

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It is critical to recognize that the analysis of marketing processes for crafts is inseparably linked to the issue of cultural identity of the indigenous peoples in the developing world. As Hinsley (1991) described, the danger lies in the glorification of the exchange values of these artifacts as exotic commodities, deprived of their contextual associations as an integral part of a culture. Success, therefore, from a conventional marketing point of view, may serve short-run economic ends while disrupting an ongoing heritage unless sensitive practices are in place that reinforce both cultural and economic bases for perpetuation of these traditions.

Notes

1. Although on occasions such a substitution is guided by functionally superior modern goods, at times even inferior products may be chosen for their apparent perception of modernity (Belk, 1988b).
2. The demarcation may serve to exclude other small-scale and manually produced products (such as Western-style work boots and light industrial components) from the category of crafts, that is, those that do not serve cultural preservation goals.
3. For a contemporary account on the trade of luxury goods, see "The Luxury-Goods Trade" (1992-1993).
4. The notion of "staged authenticity" was originally applied (MacCannell, 1976, p. 91) in the context of performing arts.
5. Although it is difficult to generalize across large numbers of craft cooperatives throughout many developing countries, the literature appears to document more negative experiences than those that are viewed as successful.
6. A survey of rural Malaysian artisans (Pye, 1988), for example, showed that about 75% of them were unaware of a special subsidy program for raw materials instituted by the government during the previous few years.

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