

# **Sustainability Marketing: Blurring Social Marketing's Boundaries**

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Cardiff Business School and  
Sustainable Places Research Institute**



Sustainable Places  
Research Institute





There were different types of marketers  
– and each one knew their place in the  
world:

# Pearce's Three Systems of the Economy

**First  
System:  
Private  
Profit  
Oriented**

**Firms  
from  
SMEs to  
MNCs**

**Government  
from  
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Councils to  
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**Second  
System:  
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**Charities,  
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Orgs,  
Self-Help,  
Unions**



# Marketing on the Move

Marketing in all sectors has continually evolved;

# Marketing's Evolution



European  
Social Marketing  
Conference



**Environmental  
Marketing**

**MARKETING**



**Relationship  
Marketing**



**Ethical Marketing**



## Marketing on the Move

Marketing in all sectors has continually evolved;

That evolution has increasingly blurred the traditional sectoral roles and boundaries;

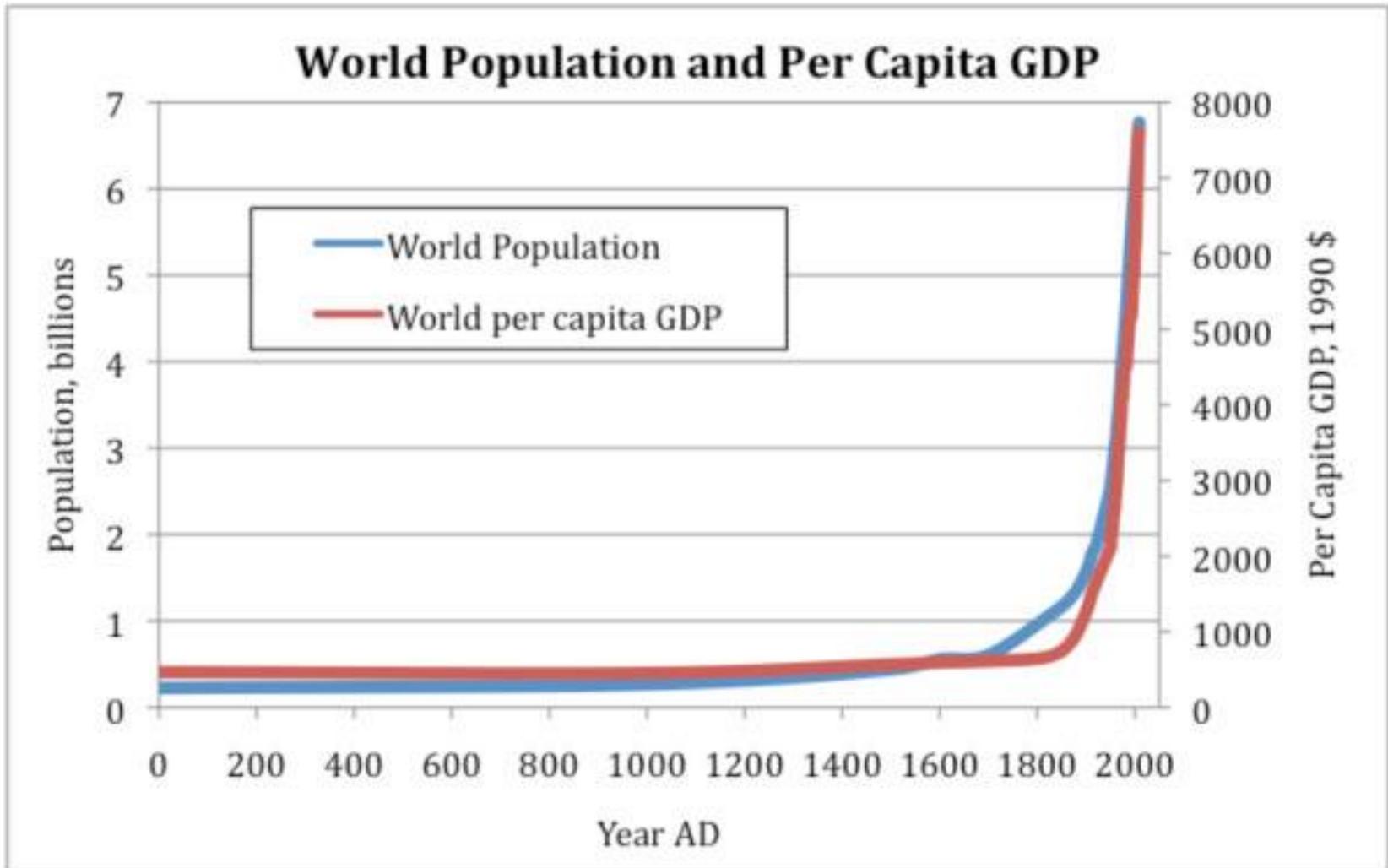
## Marketing on the Move

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One of the most interesting elements for social marketers happening in the commercial sector is *“Sustainability Marketing”*.

# Why Do We Need Sustainability Marketing?



Maddison (2008)

# What Does the Evidence Tell Us?



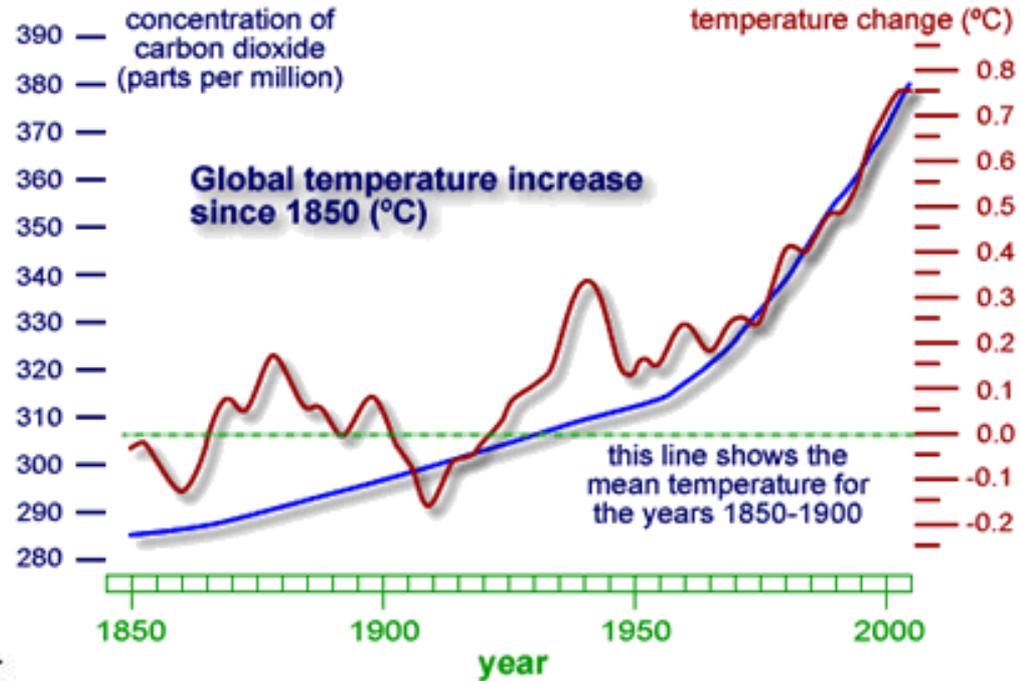
## ECOSYSTEMS AND HUMAN WELL-BEING

Synthesis

MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT



©BFF 2005



**That the current socio-economic situation and system is unsustainable**

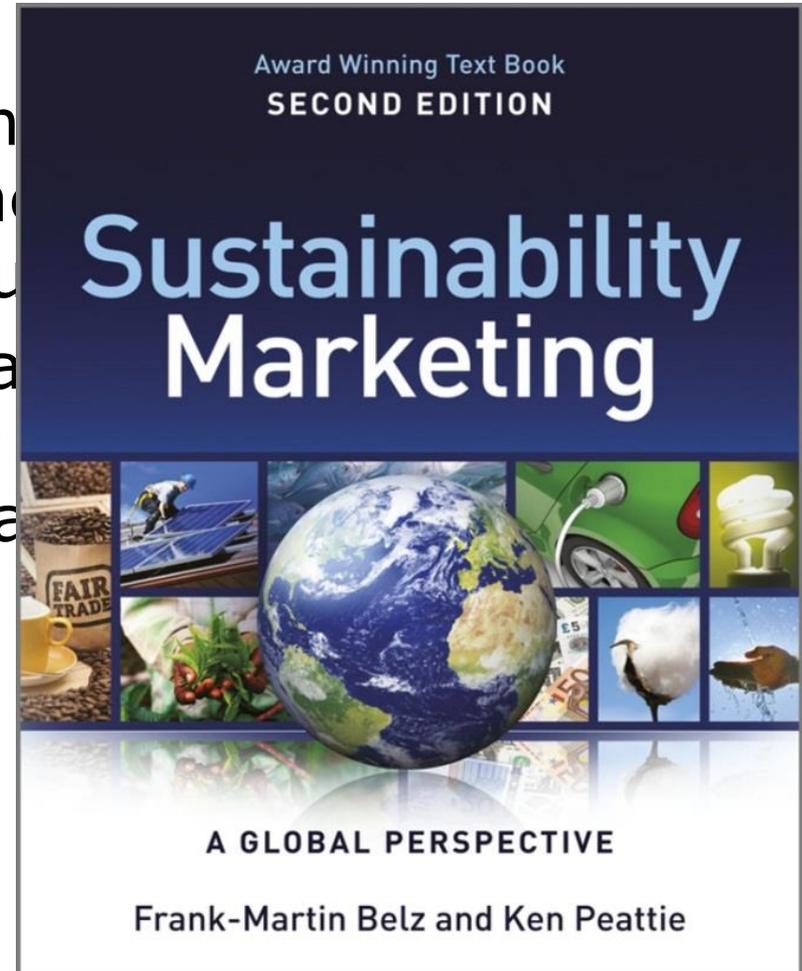
# What Next?

Increasingly accepted need to gear our production and consumption systems and policy making around the pursuit of....

**SUSTAINABILITY**

# What Is “Sustainability Marketing?”

- It is about building and maintaining relationships with customers, the environment and the natural world
- It seeks to integrate social and environmental issues with consumer behaviour and marketing strategy



# The Consumer's Role in Sustainability

Key mechanisms to achieve more sustainable production & consumption systems include (Lebel & Lorek, 2008) :

- responsible purchasing,
- certification and labelling,
- resource efficient strategies based on product-service substitutions,
- co-design strategies and frugal resource usage.

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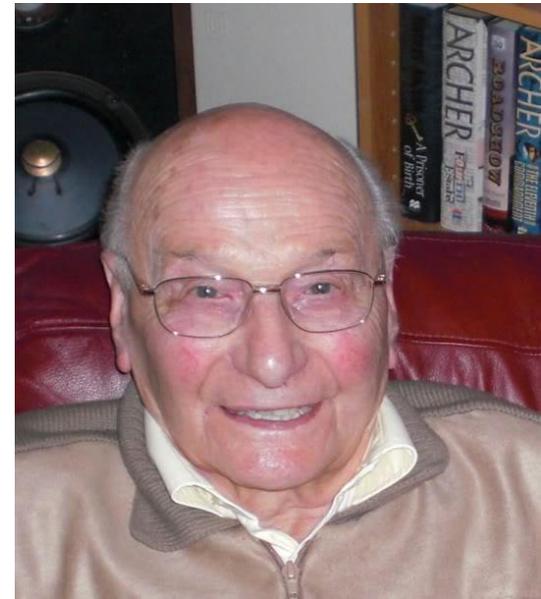
All require consumer 'buy-in' and create behaviourally-orientated challenges and a need to successfully engage people in pro-sustainability behaviours (PSBs);

# Why Might Commercial Marketers Struggle?



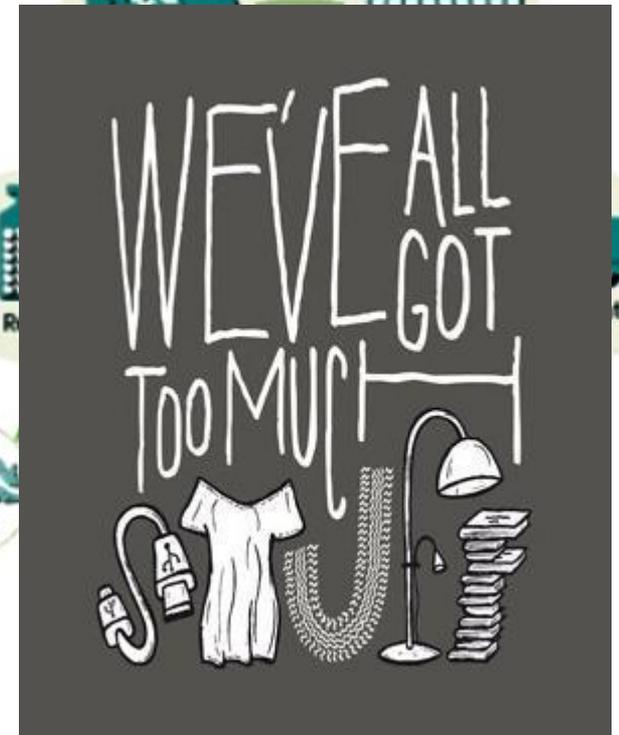
“I’m really concerned about the environment and climate change and try to do my bit. I recycle, I buy Fairtrade coffee, I drive a Prius, I invest ethically, last holiday was an ecotourism trip to Costa Rica”

“I don’t care about the environment, not my problem, the government should sort it out. Climate change is a myth. I can’t afford a car. I don’t like abroad – I’d rather spend time on my allotment”



# Sustainability: A Major Challenge for Marketers

- It is about lifestyles and households, not about purchases & individual consumers;
- It is determined by the 'cradle-to-grave' view of products, their use and disposal;
- It is about consuming less as well as consuming differently.



# Fairtrade: A Social/Commercial Marketing Continuum

**SOCIAL  
ATTRIBUTES**

**COMMERCIAL  
ATTRIBUTES**



**Aspire**

**Traidcraft**

**BodyShop**

**Starbucks**

**Cafedirect**

**Cadburys**

**Nestle**

**(Golding & Peattie, 2006)**

## Why Might FT Marketers Learn from SM?

- ✓ A “Social Proposition” as a focus;
- ✓ Emphasis on behaviour change to enhance the well-being of others;
- ✓ Primary beneficiary not the sponsoring organisation;
- ✓ Emphasis on the barriers to behaviour change;
- ✓ Emphasis on non-price competition;
- ✓ Experience of David v. Goliath scenarios.

# From Cause Related, To Cause Inspired, Marketing

ONE Water:

A profit orientated social enterprise.



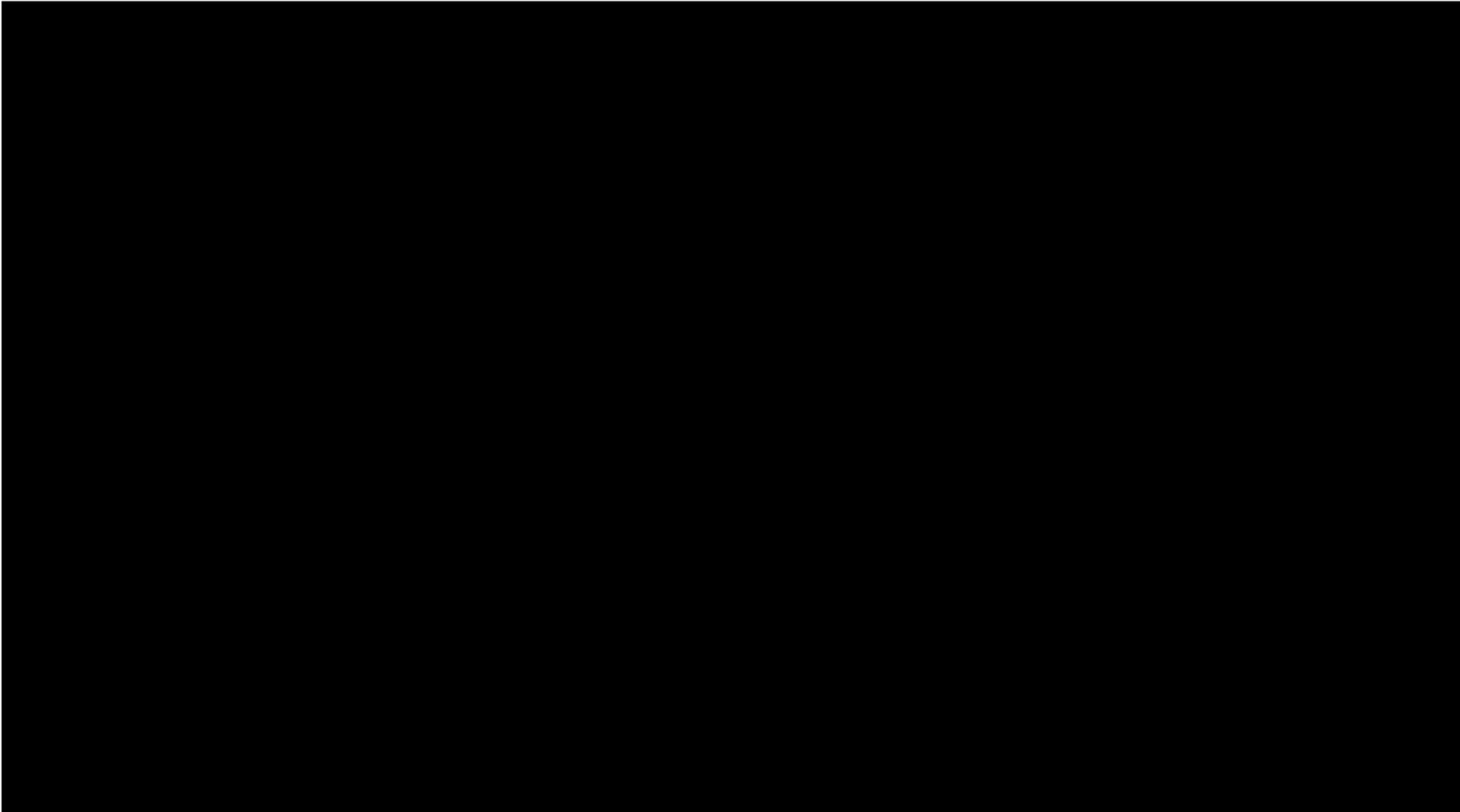


# INSPIRING SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Expert insights into consumer behaviour &  
Unilever's Five Levers for Change

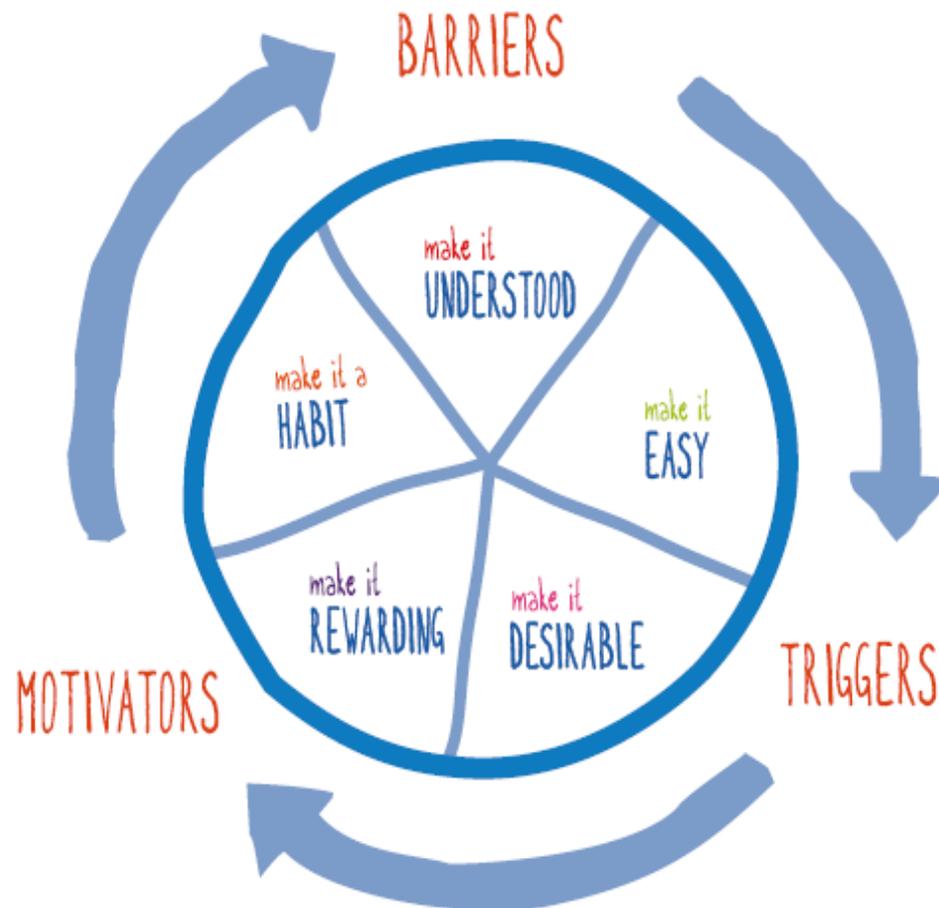


**Unilever –  
From “Green  
Marketing” to  
Sustainable  
Living**



# Look Familiar?

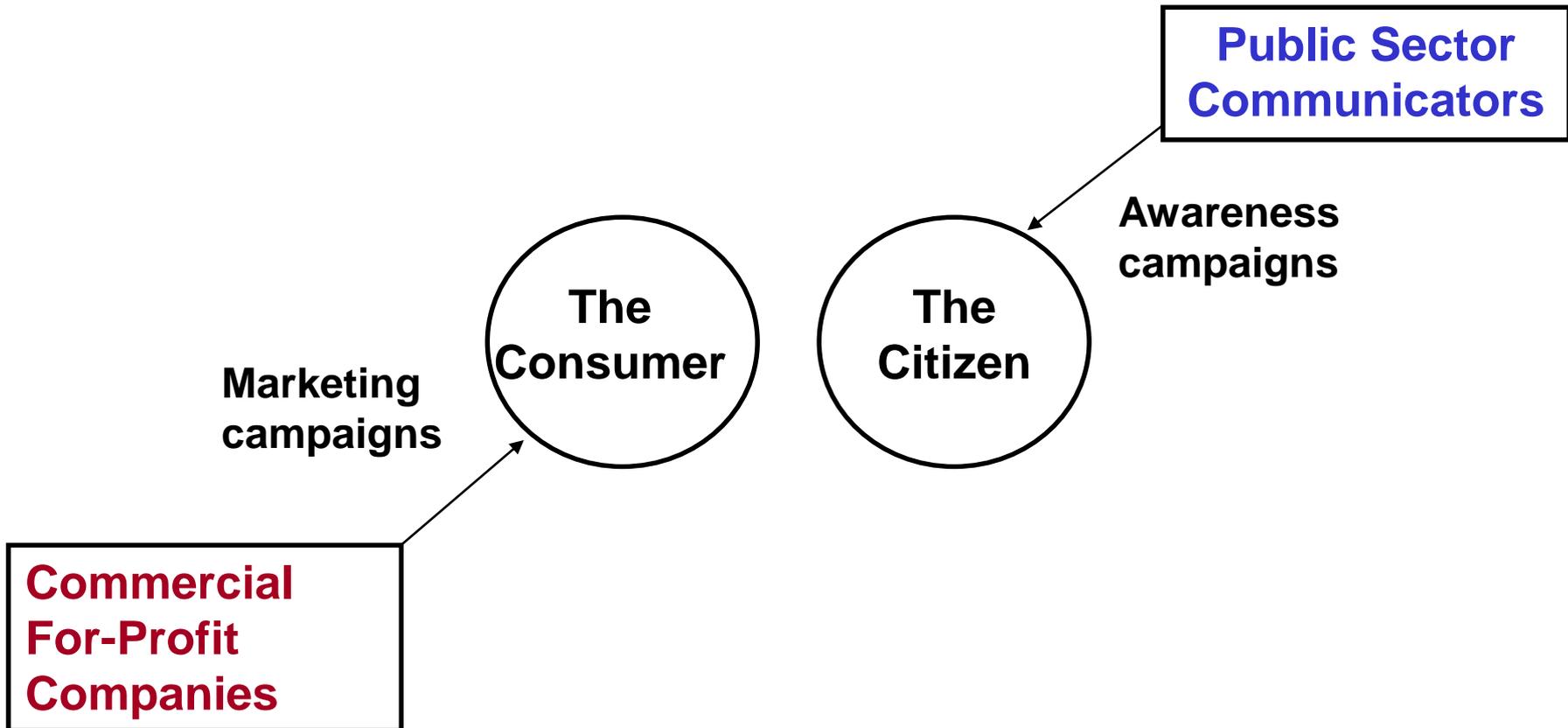
## UNILEVER'S FIVE LEVERS FOR CHANGE



## Blurring the Boundaries

- CSR and Sustainability strategies taking firms 'beyond business';
- Tactical CRM strategies becoming long-term strategic partnerships between firms and social causes;
- Increasing use of partnership-based and 'upstream' social marketing;
- The rise of the 'consumer citizen';
- New types of hybrid organisation;
- Companies moving into behaviour change for sustainability;

# When Worlds Collide



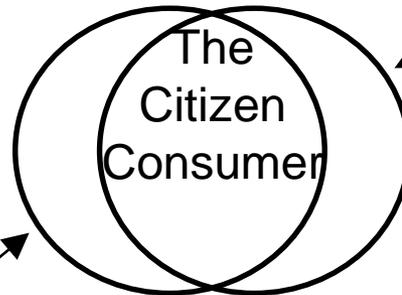
# When Worlds Collide

Marketing Expertise  
via Social  
Marketing &  
Partnerships for  
Joint Campaigns &  
CSR Opportunities

**Public Sector  
Marketers**

Social  
Marketing  
campaigns

Marketing  
campaigns

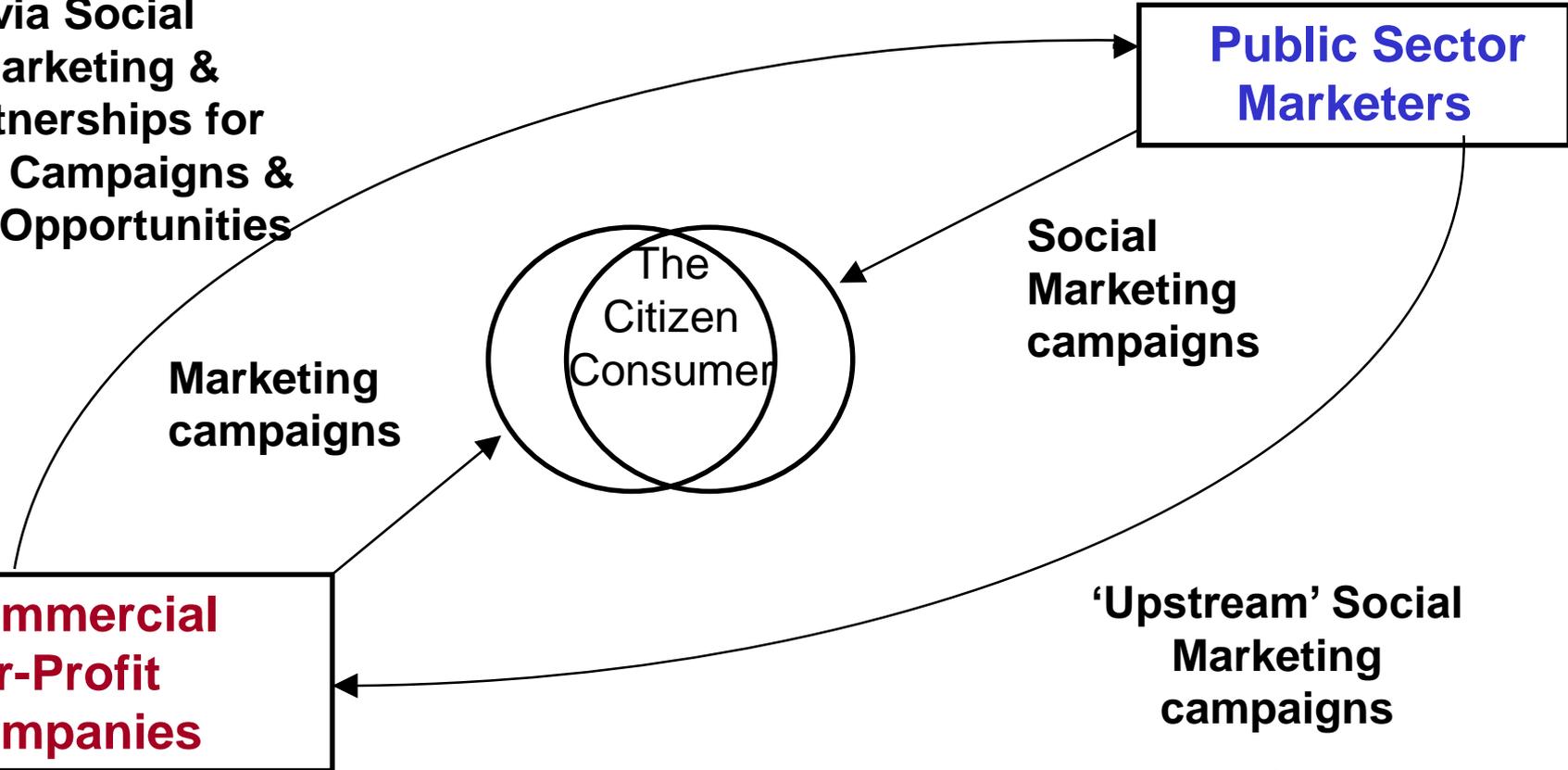


**Commercial  
For-Profit  
Companies**

'Upstream' Social  
Marketing  
campaigns

&

Joint Campaigns



## Ultimately

- Sustainable lifestyles will benefit of consumers, citizens, firms & governments;
- But consuming both differently and less is a difficult “sell”;
- Without social marketing to engage people with sustainability as a social goal, and sustainable lifestyles as a means – future quality of life will be impaired;
- Partnerships and learning across the marketing sectors will be crucial;

# Cross-Sectoral Marketing Learning

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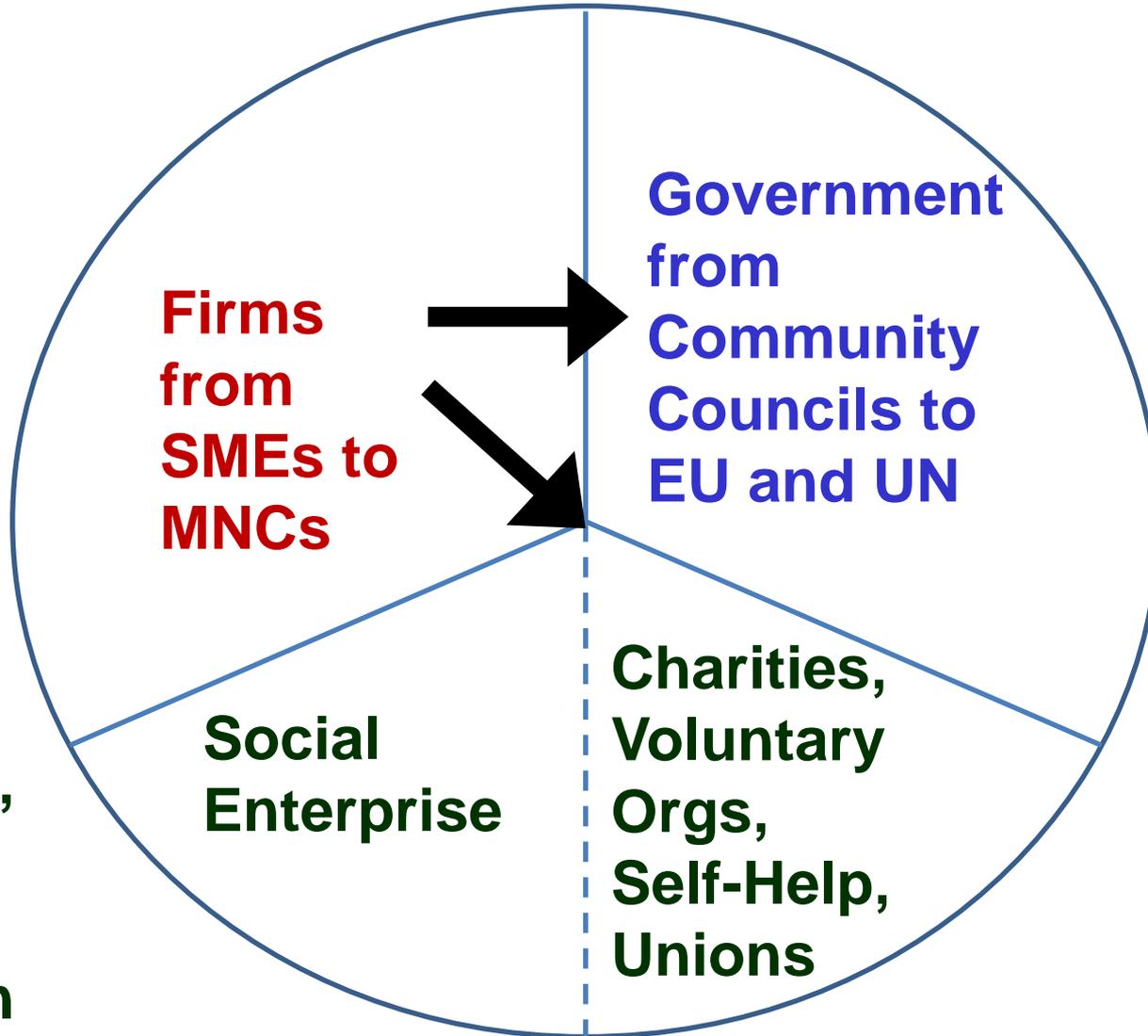
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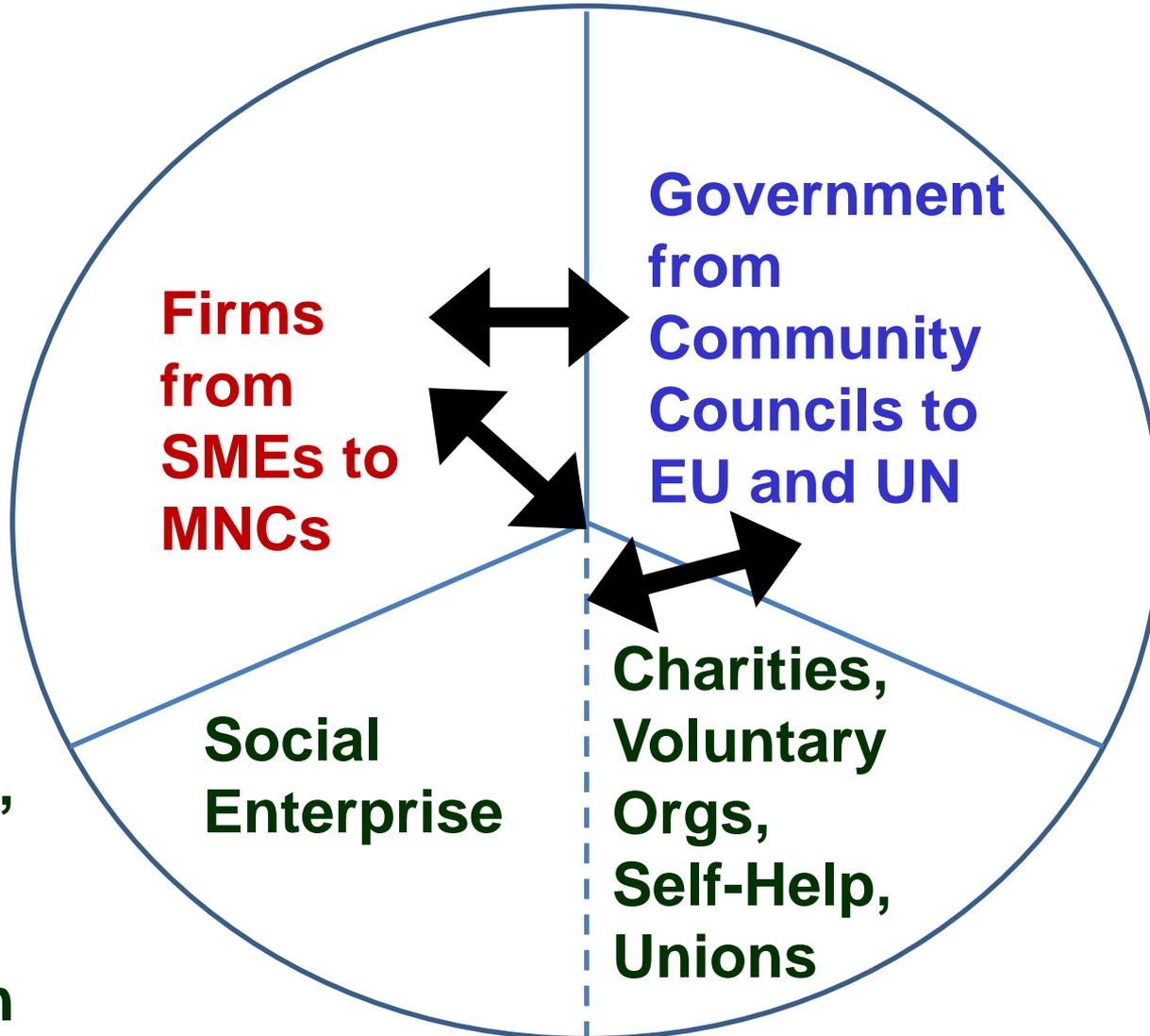
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- Partnerships and learning across the marketing sectors will be crucial;
- The future of society may depend on commercial marketers learning to learn from the social marketers!