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**Agri-Food Marketing in Bottom of the Pyramid-Subsistence Markets in Developing Economies: A Stocktaking and Reflection of Previous Research Conducted**

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**ABSTRACT**

The article is a stocktaking and reflection of research conducted over a two decade period in developing economies on agri-food marketing, set in bottom of the pyramid-subsistence market contexts. The article is based on previously published research provided by the author, research work conducted that was not published formally and publicly, and on personal experiences of the author in working and researching in developing economies in Africa and the Middle East in terms of, for example, development projects, and collaborations with private enterprises, public organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities and research centres. The article provides for an ‘all under one roof’ stocktaking and reflection of the findings from the numerous researches conducted over the years and is based on evidence from such findings. It provides, based on such evidence, conclusions on agri-food marketing in bottom of the pyramid-subsistence markets in developing economies in terms of practices and what needs to be done, to improve such practices.

**Keywords:** agriculture, food, agri-food, marketing, agri-food marketing; bottom of the pyramid, subsistence markets, developing economies,

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**Introduction**

This research is a stocktaking and reflection of previous research conducted over a two decade period in developing economies on agri-food marketing in in bottom of the pyramid-subsistence market contexts. This article stocktakes previously published research provided by the author. Further, the article also stocktakes on the research work conducted that was not published formally and publicly, that derived from, for example, development projects, research collaborations, meeting reports, etc. Moreover, the article also stocktakes and reflects on personal experiences of the author in working and researching in developing economies in Africa and the Middle East in terms of, for example, development projects, and collaborations with private enterprises, public organizations, non-governmental organizations, universities and research centres.

The idea about this research budded, among one, of the many conclusions, of an online meeting<sup>1</sup> on agri-food marketing in bottom of the pyramid-subsistence markets (BOP-SM) in developing economies. It was seen as being of interest to provide for an article that could report and reflect on all the findings found over the years, in a stocktaking manner and in an all under ‘one roof’ approach. It was seen also as being of interest as new findings could possibly arise from such a stocktaking and possible new lessons learnt could also emerge. The first draft of the article was open peer reviewed by three subject matter specialists. The second draft of the article was open peer reviewed by one subject matter specialist. The final version of the article was open peer reviewed by two subject matter

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<sup>1</sup> The online meeting was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The 14 participants in the meeting were subject matter specialists that derived from the private sector, public sector, NGOs, universities and research centres. The meeting was recorded and a resulting meeting document was provided for.

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specialists prior to its submission for formal publication. Thus, the article was in total, open peer reviewed by six subject matter specialists.

### **Research aim**

The main aim of the research was to carry out a stocktaking and reflection of previous research conducted by the author. This also implied the objective of attempting to appraise, diagnose and ascertain possible new findings and lessons learned that may emerge from such a stocktaking and reflection.

### **Methods used in previous researches**

The BOP-SM contexts in developing economies are particular and far from easy to make generalizations about. This has also been provided for by Viswanathan *et al.*, (2016) who provide for the specific distinctiveness of BOP-SM contexts. Indeed, this mostly implies a 'bottom-up approach' as each BOP-SM context has some highly specific characteristics as found by the author in doing empirical research in such, and as well as by, for example, Viswanathan (2017) and Venugopal & Viswanathan (2017). Further such contexts imply that research should be set in the BOP-SM people's lived experiences (Venugopal & Viswanathan, 2017), and not the other way round, and with Ingenbleek *et al.*, (2013) suggesting to adapt research methods and Chikweche & Fletcher (2012) providing for actually living directly in such contexts. However, a bottom up approach, as also cautioned by Venugopal & Viswanathan (2017), should not exclude also taking a 'top-down' approach. This is also provided for by Ingenbleek (2014).

Thus, as per the above, the research methods used were mainly qualitative and abductive. Qualitative research is commonly based on evidence from the real world in that theories must be tested against the real world (Adams, 2014) and be interpretive because it needs to make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). It enables immersion and the collecting of meaningful in-depth and detailed data and information as well as facilitating a better understanding of the economic, cultural and social contexts of people, for example (Cooper & Schindler, 2011; Myers, 2013). Moreover, qualitative research enables a good degree of techniques to be used that facilitate interpretation in the search for translating, deciphering and decoding phenomena in the real world (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

In fact, qualitative research typically looks at a smaller number of cases more in depth, using data that cannot always be reduced to numbers, it allows for richer descriptions and can be better at identifying causal mechanisms (Rosen, 2019). In terms of the abductive approach used this was because it enabled to move from theory to data but also from data to theory, thus combining deduction and induction (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Thus, it enables to 'see' from a 'top-down approach' and vice versa a 'bottom-up approach' of the ground realities.

However, qualitative research is subjective and thus can be prone to errors, and as such there is a need to have, for example, a systematic literature research and review that is carefully planned, this facilitating the composition of probing questions, a well justified methodology, a meaningful and relevant sample of research participants, a structured analysis, and peer reviews conducted on the entire research process (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). As per such matters, the previous researches conducted attempted to refer as much as possible to the characteristics of: purposiveness, validity, rigor, testability, replicability, precision, confidence, objectivity, generalizability and parsimony (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016), taking into consideration the BOP-SM characteristics and contexts.

The previous researches conducted were based on literature and sources of secondary data and information and primary data and information found within. They also involved empirical research in terms of immersion in BOP-SM contexts, observations, including videographic and pictographic research, face to face interviews, as well as phone and online interviews. Interviews conducted were mainly informal semi-structured and unstructured and involved also interviews with key informants and subject matter specialists. In some of the researches conducted, open peer reviews were provided for by subject matter specialists on the entire research processes conducted. Most of the researches conducted were mainly systematic, exploratory, descriptive and historical in nature.

## Findings

### *Agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs and the rural and urban marketing components*

In Hilmi (2022b) a research was conducted on attempting to ascertain the rural and urban marketing components within agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs. Geographical locations do influence agri-food marketing, but it is not just the geographical location as such, but reflects also diverse cultural, social and economic characteristics for example. In fact as provided by Velayudhan (2007) ‘rural consumers are located in rural areas, but exhibit behaviours that are different from the behaviour of consumers in urban areas in terms of mentality,’ while Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan (2011) provide that urban marketing tends to be ‘highly competitive, sophisticated, and often focused and targeted at middle and high income consumers.’ Interestingly what emerged from Hilmi (2022b) was that there seems to be more rural agri-food marketing than urban agri-food marketing within agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts within developing countries. In fact, agri-food marketing is very much tied to rural areas as per the very nature of the products provided. In particular Hilmi (2022b) found characteristic commonalities between agri-food marketing and rural agri-food marketing: in particular 40 rural agri-food marketing characteristics within the 69 characteristics identified of agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries. This providing for circa 58 percent of rural agri-food marketing characteristics within agri-food marketing characteristics. This can consequently provide, with a fair degree of confidence, that rural agri-food marketing, is part of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing countries.

However, and somewhat paradoxically, in the main sources of literature on agri-food marketing specifically, the evidence on rural agri-food marketing was thin, if not inexistent. This is a ‘gap’ that should be fully taken into consideration as provided from Hilmi (2022b), as there are a fair degree of commonalities between the two subject matter areas in BOP-SM contexts in developing countries. Thus, there is seemingly a need for consideration in terms of ‘streamlining’ rural agri-food marketing and making rural agri-food marketing as a ‘main stay’ within specific agri-food marketing main sources of literature.

The findings from Hilmi (2022b) on urban agri-food marketing where somewhat surprising. The growth in urbanization over the past decades and the growing and pressing need of feeding urban areas, would seemingly deem for far more urban agri-food marketing within agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries as well. The findings from Hilmi (2022b) provided that there were, in fact, both rural and urban agri-food marketing components within agri-food marketing in BOP SM contexts in developing countries, but to a far lesser degree for urban agri-food marketing. Hilmi (2022b) found 22 urban agri-food marketing characteristics within the 69 characteristics identified of agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries. This provides that circa 32 percent of urban agri-food marketing characteristics were found within the agri-food marketing characteristics.

What also emerged from Hilmi (2022b) is further evidence to suggest that rural agri-food marketing and urban agri-food marketing are distinctive disciplines, but at the same time are interrelated. Indeed, as provided by Meserole (1938), for example, urban and rural are terms that are at ‘opposite ends of a common scale and that no line of sharp demarcation can be struck through it dividing justly that which is rural from that which is urban. The transit from rural to urban-or from urban to rural, is a shading process: one imperceptibly melds into the other, however there is a vast difference when these are applied by marketers.’

Another finding that also emerged from Hilmi (2022b) was that of ‘rurban’ as provided by Jha (2012) and Berdegué *et al.*, (2014). Rurban is essentially ‘small towns and areas on the periphery of large towns, with pretensions of an urban agglomeration, but with distinct rural characteristics and cannot be treated as rural or as urban; they share elements of both, and are distinct from both and may be considered to be distinct societies’ (Jha, 2012; Berdegué *et al.*, 2014).

Yet another finding that emerged from Hilmi (2022b) was that agri-food marketing in developing economies and in particular within BOP-SM contexts, needs to consider a variety and diverse number of factors that are, for example, political, economic, social and cultural as provided previously in the research. This, consequently, provides that agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies need to be adaptable, flexible, versatile, variable and agile. However, what emerged also is the need to consider to a far greater degree agri-food marketing in a perspective specific to a BOP-SM developing country context. On this point, for example, and for marketing in general and not specific to agri-food marketing, Sheth (2011) provides for making marketing less ‘colonial’. Also, Viswanathan (2020)

considers this in terms of taking a more 'bottom-up approach to marketing in BOP-SM contexts. This seemingly points to marketing, and in particular agri-food marketing, needs to be thought out again from a completely new perspective and not just being adapted to BOP-SM developing economies. There is some evidence that suggests this in terms of marketing taking a completely new perspective as per Sheth (2011) and Viswanathan (2020) as provided previously and from the research also (Hilmi, 2022b). Indeed, marketing in general and agri-food marketing in specific, are based on a specific heritage, within a well-defined geographical, historical, economic, social and cultural evolutionary context. But even though marketing is apt for being adaptable, flexible, versatile, variable and agile, however it still seemingly needs a consideration for a different fundamental perspective, if not notion and concept, of marketing and in particular to agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing countries in specific.

*Agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs: the micromarketing, mesomarketing and macromarketing perspective*

In Hilmi (2022c) the research focused on attempting to ascertain, assess and diagnose mesomarketing in agri-food marketing in developing economies. Mesomarketing seemingly 'falls' between micromarketing and macromarketing. Agri-food micromarketing is commonly provided as the marketing performed by the 'individual decision maker in the agri-food marketing system, for example a farmer and an agri-food enterprise manager, and uses the principles of marketing management' (Kohls & Uhl, 2015). However agri-food micromarketing needs to consider within BOP-SM contexts the 'multitude and diversity of cultural factors and the chronic uncertainty, that gets exacerbated by transient shocks that may occur with untoward emergencies or calamities' (Viswanathan *et al.*, 2019; Viswanathan & Sreekumar, 2017) and consequently agri-food micromarketing needs to tender with the required variability and flexibility (Pels & Sheth, 2021) as well as the implied adaptability. Kohls & Uhl, (2015) provide that agri- food macromarketing gives the 'big picture of how the food system is organized, how well it performs its economic and social tasks, and how the food system is changing over time'. Rhodes & Dauve (1998) consider macromarketing as the 'performance of all business activities involved in the forward flow of goods and services from producers to consumers'.

In developing economies, the agri-food sector is pervaded by agri-food macromarketing matters, such as for example: poor communications and transport infrastructure in particular; weak distribution systems; lack of access to and availability of the internet and ICTs; underdeveloped legal frameworks and thus a limited rule of law and consequently unclear property rights (Sinha & Oburai, 2008; Barrett & Mutambatsere, 2005 ), all these matters, being prevalent especially in rural and remote areas, where the majority of agricultural activities take place. In fact, and for example, Dani (2015) provides that as the majority of the producers live in 'rural areas of developing countries, the development of logistics infrastructure is key to the growth of the food sector' as this infrastructure is required to create 'efficiencies of scale and to reduce the excessive post-harvest food loss' (Dani, 2015). Indeed, a good deal of food losses in developing countries occurs as a result of 'too few warehouses (to store the harvest), lack of road/rail (to deliver the harvest to the next stage of the chain) and a lack of cool chains' (Dani, 2015). These infrastructural matters being all related to agri-food macromarketing.

Interestingly, Shawver & Nickels (1981) provide that 'the distinction between micro and macro depends upon the perspective of the researcher: the dividing line between micromarketing and macromarketing is the perspective of the researcher and the objectives of the units under investigation—not the number of units being investigated or the level of aggregation'. Very much the same, as derived from the research, can be provided in terms of mesomarketing i.e. 'the dividing line is the perspective of the researcher and the objectives of the units under investigation—not the number of units being investigated or the level of aggregation.' Further Larson (1985) provides that in terms of understanding mesomarketing, this 'does not depend on an appraisal of geographic and narrowly economic factors alone, but the institutional framework—political, social, economic—within which such a marketing system exists, and thus the political economy as a whole, must also be considered' (Larson, 1985).

From Hilmi (2022c) what emerges in terms of mesomarketing is the following:

- A critical and vitally important component of the aggregation and network in a marketing system between the micromarketing and macromarketing levels (Layton, 2019; Layton & Duffy, 2018; Layton, 2015; Hunt, 1981);

- The aggregation of micro level systems into complex sequences of offers and acceptances, each contributing to an end-user assortment through the creation or co-creation of value (Layton, 2011);
- A system of higher, lower, differing and varying levels of aggregation (Akaka *et al.*, 2021; Layton, 2011);
- An assortment of goods, services, experiences and ideas (Layton & Duan, 2015);
- A formation around groups or clusters of sellers (firms) offering similar or mutually supporting products-services to groups of buyers; or a number of firms may cooperate for example in creating supply chains or sellers congregate in a market-place (Layton, 2011);
- An in country regional and/or provincial and/or city and/or town and/or village level marketing system (Layton, 2011; Layton, 1985);
- regional and rural development policies focused, for example, on 'intermediate market towns' (FAO, 2005a);
- A clustering of 'growth poles' and 'economic corridors' (FAO, 2005a);
- A rural marketing system (Larson, 1985);
- An emergent network of vertical, horizontal and facilitating marketing systems, for example networks of villages (Layton, 2015);
- A structured trading system (EAGC, 2011);
- A community marketing system (Venugopal & Viswanathan, 2015; Layton, 2015; Viswanathan *et al.*, 2014);
- A networked social capital-based community marketing system (Viswanathan *et al.*, 2014);
- A culturally-based marketing system (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006);
- A trust based marketing system (Kolter *et al.*, 2021);
- A community and a non-autochthonous -community-based organization /enterprise/ collective/ group/cooperative typology of marketing practice (Abdul-Rahaman & Abdulai, 2020; Sarreal, 2016; Hamby *et al.*, 2016; Tahkur, 2015; Gau *et al.*, 2014; Ramkishan, 2009; Donovan *et al.*, 2008; Penrose-Buckley, 2007; Shiferaw *et al.*, 2006; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006; Kindness & Gordon, 2001; Barker, 1989);
- A value creation or cocreation system provided where networks of relationships form and norms that guide and emerge as higher-order of structure: 'institutions' for example such as markets and other structures like, for example trade centres, wholesaler and logistics organizations, business to business networks such as supply chains and distribution channels (Akaka *et al.*, 2021; Layton, 2019; Layton & Duffy, 2018);
- A network of collective marketing organizations (Penrose-Buckley, 2007);
- A marketing system of urban and rural food distribution: rural primary or assembly markets, urban and rural wholesale and retail markets, wholesale market marketing, and grading systems, (FAO, 2005c; FAO, 2003; FAO, 1999a; FAO, 1999b; Schaffner *et al.*, 1998).

Also, mesomarketing can be considered, as provided previously, as being carried out by consumer-entrepreneur family microenterprises along with their micromarketing activities. A social capital perspective on such microenterprises 'would reveal that the strength of local relationships serves as the differentiator and these microenterprises at the community level are doing the same as consumers are trying to do: attempting to survive and make ends meet' (Viswanathan *et al.*, 2014). Thus, such microenterprises in their activities of marketing food and agricultural products, for example in BOP-SM contexts, are carrying out social and community services via their marketing activities as they are distributing food and can thus be seen as also providing mesomarketing activities alongside their micromarketing activities.

As per the points provided previously about mesomarketing, it is clear that it occupies a critical and vital role within the agri-food marketing system, not only as a mid-level point of conjunction between micromarketing and macromarketing activities, but as per its importance per se. Mesomarketing is an aggregation of micro level systems into complex sequences of offers and acceptances, each contributing to an end-user assortment through the creation or co-creation of value and as such is an aggregation, an assortment of goods, services, experiences and ideas as well as a marketing system of urban and rural food distribution: rural primary or assembly markets, urban and rural wholesale and retail markets, wholesale market marketing, and grading systems, for example.

Mesomarketing can be a formation around groups or clusters of sellers (firms) offering similar or mutually supporting products-services to groups of buyers; or a number of firms may cooperate for example in creating supply chains or sellers congregate in a market-place. Mesomarketing can also be an emergent network of vertical, horizontal and facilitating marketing systems as well as being both a rural and urban marketing system, a clustering of 'growth poles' and 'economic corridors' and a value cocreation system provided via networks of relationships that form and the related norms. Mesomarketing can be also seen as a community marketing system, which particularly within BOP-SM contexts, is usually based on culture and social capital and inherent to this a good deal of community trust. This creates a marketing system that not only has important institutional aspects, for example creating workable markets, but also potentially contributes to economic development at the local level. This can be for example at the village and town level in rural areas and for urban areas, cities. Such networks of community marketing can also contribute to local regional and /or provincial development within a country. Further mesomarketing can also be considered in terms of specific regional and rural development policies focused, for example, on 'intermediate market towns.'

Hence it is clear that mesomarketing is not exactly 'in the middle' of the agri-food marketing system, but can oscillate between higher and lower levels of the median position, for example between rural village and urban city. Further, mesomarketing activities can be carried out by community based-organizations, enterprises, collectives, groups, cooperatives and can also be a network of collective marketing organizations. Moreover, consumer entrepreneur family microenterprises can also provide for mesomarketing activities and mesomarketing activities can be used effectively by external organizations to BOP-SM context to market products within such communities.

Thus, the mesomarketing level is as important as the micromarketing and macromarketing levels of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing countries. Indeed, and for example, Akaka *et al.*, (2021) provide that 'marketing requires observation of the same phenomena through multiple—micro and macro, as well as meso levels of granularity'. This seemingly provides that for agri-food marketing to have far more impact in its intended objectives and outcomes of providing, not only , for far more regular, cyclical, effective, efficient, intensive, and spatially appropriate distribution of food, but also the implied social, cultural, community and quality of life outcomes intended, a micro, meso and macromarketing level perspective is required. As such, and as also provided by Layton (2009) a functioning agri-food marketing system thus 'depends on performance both in a narrow economic sense and in a wider social sense' (Layton, 2009), i.e. a macro, meso and micromarketing approach to agri-food marketing. This approach to agri-food marketing is thus much in line with that of what Kotler *et al.*, (2021) provide in that marketing activity 'has to be aligned with a focus on people-for-people benefits as the creation of human-to-human marketing establishes a new approach that puts human beings at the centre of marketing: marketing should work for the people, not against them'. This is clearly based on human values of 'trust and service to others, which are the foundations of human economic activity rather than the sale of commodities and luxuries' (Kotler *et al.*, 2021).

However, such a multilevel approach to agri-food marketing in developing countries requires the three levels of micro, meso and macro to 'work in unison,' be far more coordinated, organized, managed and time bound. This is not an easy task at all, as for example the scheduling of marketing infrastructure interventions, typically provided by the public and private sectors, needs to be in synchronicity with mesomarketing, such as for example, the utility of a rural and remote assembly market, that in turn is in line with local rural micromarketing activities of, for example, horticultural marketing. Also, each level of agri-food marketing will have differing objectives, strategies, implementation, intended outcomes as well as time horizons. For example, and inevitably agri-food macromarketing interventions will have longer time horizons as per the nature of the matters contained within, than agri-food micromarketing time horizons. Further, the differing perspectives of stakeholders involved, their differing orientations, for example more business oriented at the micromarketing level, more socially community-oriented at the mesomarketing level and more overall improved standards of living at the macromarketing level, can provide for other challenges. Also overlaps between micromarketing, mesomarketing and macromarketing are inevitable, as for example an agrifood micromarketing view cannot exclude, for example 'the behaviour of markets and wider social implications of an enterprise's policies' (Ritson, 1997). Peterson (2020) provides for much the same, in terms of the ' marketplace must go beyond a micro focus and to a focus on both the enterprise and the macro dimensions'. This provides for further challenges as the 'borders' between, for example micromarketing, mesomarketing

and macromarketing cannot be marked very clearly and dissected exactly in agri-food marketing practice. Moreover, taking a single perspective, for example from agri-food macromarketing standpoint at public policy level, requires to consider not only the macro level matters of such a policy, but also mesomarketing and the micromarketing levels of such a policy. For example, ‘market reforms alone without entrepreneurial micromarketing innovations cannot provide for development’ (Cundiff, 1982). Clearly, these matters pose further challenges on the coordination, organization, management and timing of agri-food marketing in developing countries. Indeed, this factor of agri-food marketing needing a coordinated, organized, managed and time bound micro, meso and macro perspective, could be one of the factors, among many others, that has provided for agri-food marketing not to provide for the required in terms of development in developing economies.

Thus, what emerges from Hilmi (2022c) is the importance of mesomarketing in agri-food marketing and its importance per se. This is defined not only by its critical role in the marketing system as a conduit between micromarketing and macromarketing, but as a contributor to local development in-country at the regional, provincial, city, town and village levels as well as at the community level within. Hence, as per the research findings, agri-food mesomarketing can thus be tentatively characterized as follows:

- A regional and/or provincial agri-food marketing system found within a country, which include:
  - City, town and village agri-food marketing systems;
  - Networks of local vertical, horizontal and facilitating marketing systems;
  - Socially and culturally based rural and/or urban community agri-food marketing systems composed of higher, lower, differing and varying levels of agri-food product and service assortments, with institutional structures such as markets and business to business networks, for example;
  - Community and non-autochthonous community based-organizations, enterprises, collectives, groups, and cooperatives, including consumer entrepreneur family microenterprises marketing practices;
  - An implied intended outcome for local community development, well-being and improved quality of life.

Consequently, it is clear that agri-food mesomarketing does have an important role in agri-food marketing in developing countries, and as provided before, should carry the same ‘weight’ as the micromarketing and macromarketing perspectives commonly taken in agri-food marketing in developing countries. Clearly a more holistic approach to agri-food marketing is important i.e. the combination and integration of micromarketing, mesomarketing and macromarketing.

*Agri-food marketing in bottom of the pyramid-subsistence markets: its characteristics and practice considerations*

Hilmi (2022a) considered the characteristics of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing countries, while Hilmi (2023) considered the practices of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing countries. In Hilmi (2022a) and taking into full consideration of the nature of marketing agri-food products per se, the size of enterprises commonly found, i.e. consumer-entrepreneur micro-scale family enterprises, the specific characteristics of BOP-SM contexts in both rural and urban areas as well as the need to take a micro, meso and macromarketing perspective, the research identified 93 characteristics as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Agri-food marketing characteristics in BOP-SM in developing economies

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| Micro level sensitive                  |
| Meso level sensitive                   |
| Macro level sensitive                  |
| Informal                               |
| Formal                                 |
| Formal-informal interface              |
| Resource scarce                        |
| Collective                             |
| Networked                              |
| Social networks                        |
| Adaptive by local context and location |
| Heterogeneity                          |

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Suitability  
Innovative  
Flexible  
Variable  
Versatile  
Agile  
Relational  
Trust  
Market demand knowledgeable  
Consumer critical needs research  
Customer relational  
Consumer-entrepreneur duality  
Brand loyalty  
High level of customization  
Social interdependence for consumption  
Loyalty development focused  
Partnership focused  
Partnerships with customers, NGOs, Public sector  
Exchange focused  
Non-economic exchange  
Quasi-commercial  
Commercial  
Developmental  
Holistic  
Elastic  
Public interventions  
Subsidized  
Empathy sensitive  
Culturally sensitive  
Societal sensitive  
Traditional norms sensitive  
Religious sensitive  
Community sensitive  
Language and dialect sensitive  
Visual sensitive  
Oral sensitive  
Information and communication technology focused  
Communication for awareness development  
Communication for educating  
Two-way communication and interactivity  
Needs value based  
Value creation  
Aspirational value based  
Co-creation of value  
Locally produced value creation  
Services  
Acceptability  
Affordability  
Availability  
Awareness  
Win-Win outcome focused  
Entrepreneurial  
Risk-taking  
Self-confidence (calculated risk taking)  
Uncertain

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Low production costs (resource constrained)  
Distribution focused  
Intensive  
Frequent  
Insular  
Closed system  
Process focused  
Operations focused  
Product choice  
Production  
Managing production  
Harvesting  
Handling  
Sorting  
Packaging  
Storing  
Transporting  
Processing  
Financing  
Associating  
Deciding how to sell  
Where to sell  
When to sell  
Costing  
Sales on credit  
Rural, urban and rural

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(Source: Hilmi, 2022a; Hilmi, 2022b; Dash *et al.*, 2020; Hakhroo, 2020; Hilmi, 2020; Muthuri *et al.*, 2020; MOE, 2020; Ngqangweni *et al.*, 2020; Mathur *et al.*, 2019; Das, 2018; Khaleel, 2018; Nunna, 2018; World Bank & FAO, 2018; Kripanithi & Ramachander, 2018; Achrol & Kotler, 2017; Ahmed, 2017; Bhanot, 2017; Gosavi & Samudre, 2016; Kashyap, 2016; Tutorials Point, 2016; Wiskereke, 2015; Moustier & Renting, 2015; Brown *et al.*, 2014; Ahmed, 2013; Fellows & Hilmi, 2012; Jha, 2012; Modi, 2012; Viswanathan *et al.*, 2012; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011; Mulky, 2010; Weidner *et al.*, 2010; Modi, 2009; Ramkishen, 2009; FAO, 2008; Velayudhan, 2007; FAO, 2005c; Singh & Pandey, 2005; Vaswani *et al.*, 2005; FAO, 2003b; FAO, 1999c )

In terms of the agri-food marketing characteristics identified in Table 1 these reflected, to a degree though, ground realities. However, what needs to be considered carefully is the highly heterogeneous nature of BOP-SM settings and hence the importance of ‘localized’ agri-food marketing, specific to the diverse BOP-SM contexts found. For example, agri-food marketing provided in some urban centres was diverse pending on the neighbourhood in which such marketing was implemented. This was a result of, for example linguistic diversity, cultural norms, the closed and secluded nature of such agri-food marketing systems, the informal barriers that existed, and the seclusion and isolation of both consumers and street food sellers in such neighbourhoods. This high diversity of BOP-SM contexts and the related ‘localized’ agri-food marketing was also provided to be pertinent in peri-urban areas as well as in rural areas.

Another matter that emerged as important for agri-food marketing characteristics was marginalization. Agri-food marketing systems in BOP-SM are usually, but not always, informal, as in some cases agri-food products deriving from formal enterprises are marketed along with informal agri-food products. Hence there is an informal-formal interface to be contended with, which, in fact, increases agri-food marketing marginalization within BOP-SM contexts. Most micro-scale family enterprises are secluded from ‘reaching’ other markets, are insular and as such are outside the purview, for example, of public authorities, NGOs and others. This creates a ‘mindset’ of being marginalized from the larger agri-food marketing system and hence with all related consequences of ‘feeling’ and ‘being’ secluded.

Related to the above points of high localization, marginalization and isolation of agri-food marketing systems is that of violence, both physical and psychological found within. This for example,

is provided so as to obtain monopolies or oligopolies within defined stages of agri-food marketing systems, where a trader, for example, will become dominant or a group of food processors will become dominant and thus dictate informal norms both upstream and downstream in the agri-food marketing system. Such dominant positions may also collude with, for example, public authorities, NGOs as well as consumers. Such collusive partnerships make such agri-food marketing systems far more insular, secluded and marginalized. Informal payments either in kind and /or money also provide for further isolation and marginalization and thus do not enable, for example micro-sized family enterprises to extend their marketing networks. Further such marginalization not only limits agri-food product choice for consumers, but also raises issues on food safety, hygiene and prominently much higher prices comparatively. Poverty 'premiums' seemingly are most diffused in BOP-SM markets, one of the main causes being owed to violence.

Another matter that arose was the fundamental emphasis on agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts to be process and functionally oriented that could effectively provide for food availability and affordability. These two components of the 4 A's 'marketing mix'<sup>2</sup> were provided to be the most important. In other words, the food is there for consumers to buy at a relatively affordable price, considering the poverty premium. Hence agri-food marketing takes on a far more systems perspective of operations and processes at low cost and hence providing for relatively lower prices. This primary distribution focus for agri-food marketing was seen as paramount in BOP-SM settings, as per the very nature of such contexts and the poverty found within. However, this should not undermine the acceptability and awareness components of the 4 A's marketing mix. Consumers in the BOP-SM do not only have immediate consumption needs, but also have aspirational consumption needs. For example, eating foods that are not within their cultural and social habits of food consumption, including high priced 'imported' foods. Hence also the awareness and acceptability have a role to play, but to a lesser degree than availability and affordability.

Interestingly what also emerged was that in some BOP-SM contexts, mainly in urban and peri-urban BOP-SM contexts, 'spills overs' from more 'developed markets' targeted at higher income consumer markets would occur. For example, food that was not consumed in such markets, was marketed in such BOP-SM contexts as 'high value foods' as per their organoleptic characteristics, packaging, and so forth. Thus, in terms of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts there was seemingly a parallel 'secondary market' for such high value foods. This providing, to some degree, for the consumer demand devoted to 'aspirational demands and needs' related to food products. This in turn made awareness and acceptability of such products more important, to a degree, then availability and affordability.

Another aspect that emerged was that related to freshness of agri-food products. Consumers in BOP-SM contexts, seemingly put a premium on product freshness as per, for example taste, reduced risk of food poisoning, better quality and so forth. This was also tied to another factor of family and/or social networks that provided for agri-food marketing to be provided within such networks. For example, families in rural areas would network food products to family in urban areas and in turn, the urban family would network food products to rural areas. These tended to be a closed agri-food marketing system, but with the duality of the consumer-entrepreneur commonly found in BOP-SM contexts, some of the food products, for example, could also be sold to other non-family members, within the context of such social networks. This was a prominent point, as networks, provided in terms of the marketing of agri-food products which entailed, for example, relations, high degrees of customization, empathy, credit and importantly trust as well as, and importantly, 'locally produced' value creation. This last point of locally produced value creation within agri-food products was also important for both sellers and buyers and was and is inevitably connected to freshness.

Other two aspects that emerged also were trust and sales on credit. Trust in the buyer and seller relationship were seen to be most important as well as, and tied to this, sales on credit. The extension of credit was also seen as an essential element of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts as per the poverty ridden setting this implies. These two aspects of trust and sales on credit along with the networked nature of such agri-food marketing provided for a form of partnerships among customers and sellers that effectively insulated such agri-food marketing systems and made them reliable and safe as it 'shielded' such agri-food marketing systems from the many uncertainties and risks provided by

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<sup>2</sup> See Sheth & Sisodia (2012)

BOP-SM contexts. In other words, an ‘insurance’ and ‘assurance’ based agri-food marketing system. This in turn moving agri-food marketing away, to a degree, from being only focused on commercial matters, to a quasi- commercial to a social to a developmental typology of agri-food marketing.

What also emerged was that marketing agri-food products in BOP-SM was instinctive, based on experience, intuition and the interdependence between seller and buyer, and hence was mainly focused on implementation of marketing and not, to a degree, on planning. For example, in BOP-SM contexts that are usually, uncertain and volatile, planning is more than challenging and hence only very approximate marketing plans can be provided and hence marketing implementation takes the helm. This is in line with entrepreneurial marketing and also implies that marketing in such BOP-SM contexts needs to be adaptable, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and innovative.

What also emerged was the natural environment and climate change being important factors for BOP-SM agri-food marketing. Both sellers and consumers, for example are mostly aware of natural environment degradation and climate change impacts of agri-food marketing and on agri-food marketing, even though, to a degree agri-food marketing in such BOP-SM contexts tends to be less natural resource intensive, quite simply as per the lack of resource availability and as per lack of accessibility to such resources as per the inherent poverty of such agri-food marketing systems. There was an emphasis on this point of making agri-food marketing in BOP-SM greener and climate smarter as there was already ‘fertile ground’ on which to build on, seeing both seller and consumer sensitivities on both matters and per the lack of resources implied by such poverty driven agri-food marketing systems.

Lastly what emerged from was to see agri-food marketing from a differing perspective altogether. This implying that agri-food marketing should be considered from a specific BOP-SM perspective and not adaptive to such contexts i.e. a new way of thinking and practicing marketing. This also implied to possibly consider if marketing was really apt for such contexts seeing that marketing, in its modern form, derived from a well-defined evolutionary process that has economic, cultural, social, political and other distinct and specific contextual characteristics that derived from a particular geographical area of the world. Hence adaptation of marketing to such BOP-SM contexts was questioned and possibly new thinking, theory and practices of marketing may be required that could possibly not even be termed marketing, but something different. For example, seeing the prevalence of networks found within BOP-SM, could the distribution of agri-food products be termed agri-food networking?

Thus, and by default agri-food marketing should cater for such characteristics and hence provide marketing that adapts, is versatile, variable, flexible, agile and innovative.

In terms of agri-food marketing practices in BOP-SMs in developing economies (see Hilmi, 2023) what emerged was that practices overlap, are all interconnected and there is a common thread throughout such practices. For example, the relational nature of agri-food marketing, provides for networks that are mainly consumer centric, but also consider the community to a good degree, are collective and associative, are based on trust or are trust fostering and also loyalty focused, and as a result are fundamentally insular marketing systems. As such agri-food marketing practice within BOP-SM contexts in developing economies is based on ‘locality.’ In other words, agri-food marketing practice is highly specific, and as such needs not only to be adaptable, but innovative, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and relational. As such it is also clear that agri-food marketing is highly localized and as such may be referred to as ‘localization marketing.’

What also emerged from Hilmi (2023) was that agri-food marketing practice was focused not only on the micro level, but also the meso and macro level i.e. micromarketing, mesomarketing and macromarketing as per the implied community and social welfare implications of such agri-food marketing practice, for example. Agri-food marketing practice also is formal-informal in nature as per the interface between formality and informality within BOP-SM contexts and contends with rules and regulations that may well be set by contexts more than the public sector, for example. Agri-food marketing practice is also networked, collectivist and focused on partnerships. Further, agri-food marketing practice cannot really take a planning approach as per the volatility, risks and uncertainties of BOP-SM contexts and thus is more tactical on a day by day basis, even though, for example, there can be some planning devoted to the customer and community centricity nature of such marketing. This ‘planning’ over time is enabled by the high level of market, customer and community knowledge that is gained via the marketing practice of what may be termed ‘sensing’ and in certain cases ‘sixth sensing’ of the market, customers and community. Thus, it can be provided that such agri-food marketing

practice is 'instinctive,' based on day to day learning, but as per the knowledge accumulation over time, can also enable some form of planning to take place. Consequently, such agri-food marketing practice can be seen as being entrepreneurial oriented: in other words, entrepreneurial marketing.

As provided previously agri-food marketing practice is also collective and associative and is interdependent as each player in the agri-food supply chain depends on the other for daily survival. Agri-food marketing lacks resources that can be devoted to marketing, hence such collective, associating and partnering practice to agri-food marketing is also born out of the need to survive such dire BOP-SM contexts as well as the cultural and social aspects that are commonly found within such contexts. This survival marketing focus also implies that agri-food marketing practice is also 'socially' oriented, in that agri-food micro-sized family enterprises provide also 'social services,' such as for example community welfare, within their marketing practice. This seemingly taking on the role of public sector and NGO typology of marketing practice, for example, where effectively products are tied into also services, that are social in nature. Further this social marketing practice provides that there are relationships over time between, for example customers and enterprises and also between different enterprises along the agri-food supply chain, which in turn provides for trust and loyalty. This, yet again, providing for what may be termed 'survival marketing.'

Consequently, agri-food marketing practice is 'developmental' by nature as it not only tends to cater for market-based matters, but also to community and wider social aspects. Agri-food marketing is also highly adaptive to local conditions making such marketing practice, as provided previously, 'localized' marketing. Further value is based on local co-creation by the enterprise and the customers together. This practice making the agri-food micro-sized family enterprise a 'brand' in itself for many customers within BOP-SM contexts. Also, such agri-food marketing practice is localized by the high degree of reliance on orality and visuality that is commonly provided, for example via local languages, dialects and culturally-oriented visual forms of, not only products displays, but also in pictographs and other artifacts common to such contexts, for example. This also provides that agri-food marketing is 'educational' and as such supports both the enterprise and consumer learning about each other, for example, and also supports consumers in become such.

Interestingly agri-food marketing practice provides also for an extended marketing mix, within its realm of being, for example, customer centric, via availability, awareness, acceptability, affordability plus also adaptability, association, and assistance. However, agri-food marketing practice is also system based as it considers processes, functions and operations and thus focused on availability and accessibility i.e. distributional practice. This taking on still in agri-food marketing practice the required frequency and intensity of such marketing practice that needs to cover geographical areas, for example, in 'width' and in 'depth' as well as with small quantities being sold frequently. Such coverage and frequency taking full consideration of urban and rural areas and the peculiarities that such geographical areas have on agri-food marketing practice. Moreover, and interestingly agri-food marketing practice also concerns, to a fairly good degree, ICTs and digitalization, in other words e-marketing and digital marketing practices.

As per Hilmi (2023) it is clear that agri-food marketing practice in BOP-SM in developing economies traverses differing typologies of marketing. Agri-food marketing practice is seemingly a 'mix' of entrepreneurial marketing; social marketing; relationship marketing; service marketing and 'systems-oriented' marketing. However, what also emerged from the research is that agri-food marketing is highly specific to each BOP-SM context and hence includes also what may be termed 'localization marketing.' This localization marketing practice also considers the rural, urban and rural nature of such and thus agri-food marketing takes on various and differing forms based on urban and rural areas, for example.

Thus agri-food marketing practice needs to be: localized, entrepreneurial, social, relational, service, system, localized and survival oriented. All this thus implying that agri-food marketing practice needs to be overall: adaptable, innovative, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and relational.

#### *Agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies and digital marketing*

Hilmi (2021c) attempted to find characteristic similarities between agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies and digital marketing. Most interestingly what emerged from the research was that in the comparison of the characteristics a total of 33 characteristics were identical or similar between agri-food marketing in BOP-SM and digital marketing. This provided for a good majority of

characteristics that were identical or similar between agri-food marketing in the BOP-SM and digital marketing. For example, both typologies of marketing are relational in nature and in essence; commonly they foster personalization and customization and are prone to be dialogical as per the interactivity implied; both are visual and can be oral, even though in terms of digital marketing this may mean not only voice to voice marketing messages over mobile phones, but recorded oral marketing messages that are also visual and interactive in nature; such orality can be language sensitive and provide for target marketing messaging in local languages and dialects. These are only some of the examples that provide evidence of similarities, if not amalgamation between the two typologies of marketing characteristics. These characteristic findings are interesting as it seems that both typologies of marketing have more in common, then they have in divergence. Table 2 shows the characteristic similarities between agri-food marketing in the BOP-SM and digital marketing.

**Table 2:** Characteristic similarities between agri-food marketing in the BOP-SM and digital marketing

|                      |
|----------------------|
| Relational           |
| Personalized         |
| Customized           |
| Dialogical           |
| Interactive          |
| Inclusive            |
| Interdependence      |
| Visual               |
| Oral                 |
| Language sensitive   |
| Co-creation of value |
| Partnerships         |
| Needs-based          |
| Aspirational-based   |
| Loyalty              |
| Trust-based          |
| Socially sensitive   |
| Culturally sensitive |
| Community sensitive  |
| Socially networked   |
| Social consumption   |
| Agile                |
| Adaptive             |
| Dynamic              |
| Predicative          |
| Proactive            |
| Innovative           |
| Educative            |
| Planned              |
| Strategic            |
| Tactical             |
| Monitoring           |
| Evaluation           |

Indeed, what emerged from Hilmi (2021c) was that clearly there are major characteristic similarities between the two typologies of marketing and thus this provides for evidence that effectively agri-food marketing in the BOP-SM and digital marketing have fertile ground on which to amalgamate. In fact, the amalgamation, agri-food digital marketing in the BOP-SM, having a physical and online world presence can only but increase and foster further the intended outcomes of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM. This is important, as seemingly, agri-food marketing to date, in some instances and unfortunately, in developing and transition economies, has not provided for the required in terms of regular, cyclical, intensive, effective, efficient and appropriate spatial distribution of food. In BOP-SM contexts there is

a lag between production and marketing of food as it is not just sufficient to increment food production, as what is needed in parallel is incremental investments in agri-food marketing systems, such as for example in marketing hard infrastructure (wholesale and retail markets, roads, etc.) as well as legislation and other institutional aspects governing exchange (Tollens, 2010), commonly focused on local assets so as to provide for benefits to the local economy and consequently to local communities (Poole, 2010). However, investments in digital technologies and networks, and in particular in agri-food digital marketing, may provide for the required supporting, enhancing, and ameliorating effects of such digitalization which can contribute to making agri-food marketing and its food distribution intended outcomes in BOP-SM contexts far more regular, cyclical, effective, efficient, intensive, and spatially appropriate.

*Agri-food marketing in BOP-SM in developing economies and entrepreneurial marketing characteristics*

Hilmi (2020) focused on researching within agri-food marketing in BOP-SM in developing economies the entrepreneurial marketing characteristics of street food vendors in 12 countries. The research in terms of street food vendors' entrepreneurial marketing characteristics found that: networks, knowledge of market demand, risk-taking, self-confidence (calculated risk-taking), low production costs (resource constrained), customer-relationships, and value creation were all an integral part of their agri-food marketing practices.

Interestingly each of the seven characteristics contributed to another in a logical reinforcing cycle sequence as networking and knowledge of market demand provides for social ties and puts a large emphasis on customer relations, thus self-confidence in terms of calculated risk taking in marketing, which implies value creation, to retain customers and this in turn supports and reinforces networking and customer relations that reduces marketing risk. This logical reinforcing cycle sequence of entrepreneurial marketing characteristics being influenced by the context, the BOP-SM, which is risky and uncertain, the size of the enterprise, micro, and the typology of entrepreneurship, tending in degree more to survivalist than to transformational. It was also found that street food vendors' entrepreneurial marketing characteristics were in part also based on traditional marketing characteristics and those of micro and small enterprise marketing characteristics. But also, there were divergences, pointing possibly to the fact that such entrepreneurial marketing characteristics are unique.

Consequently, the lessons learnt from the characteristics and practices of street food vendors' entrepreneurial marketing and how these may be of use to agri-food marketing in such BOP-SM contexts are as follows:

- *Market immersion:* Marketing in BOP-SM contexts seems to require market immersion, thus knowing market demand, but not only, for example, being knowledgeable of the social ties, the good locations and routes to market food products, to who and when to provide sales promotions, what opening hours to keep and so forth, are also required. This is the first lesson learnt as market immersion within BOP contexts seems to be a 'must' for agri-food marketing. Hence marketing food requires not simply knowing a market but having a full understanding of the market (immersion), which for example understands not just market demand, but the social ties and aspects behind that may underline the market demand, for example. Market immersion seemingly is an integral part of marketing in BOP settings and thus needs to be implemented to provide for more effective food marketing and thus contribute to improved food distribution and reduction, for example, in malnutrition;
- *Networking:* Networking in dire contexts enables to market agri-food products in a defined way and is based also on market immersion (knowledge of market demand). Thus, the second lesson learnt for food marketing in BOP-SM contexts is that there is a need to be immersed in such markets, so as to be able to build effective networks with, for example, social relations, word of mouth and social media. These will all contribute to more effective marketing implementation in BOP-SM contexts;
- *Risk-Taking:* This looks at the inherent and high risk of marketing food in BOP-SM contexts. Street food vendors, however, as per the BOP-SM context, their nature of survivalists and size of enterprise, micro, cannot take excessive risks in marketing and seem to moderate this risk taking for example via market immersion and networks which tend to reduce marketing risk. This is the third lesson learnt for agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts: food marketing is risky in BOP-SM contexts

- and needs to be considered, hence this risk needs to be mitigated via market immersion and networking in marketing implementation;
- *Self-confidence*: A part of self-confidence is taking calculated risks and risk management. This in terms of agri-food marketing in such a dire context of the BOP-SM seems to be natural as a wrong marketing decision could lead to business failure of a street food vendor as, for example, the resource constraints of such businesses. This provides that agri-food marketing in such contexts needs to cater for risk and manage it as per the volatile nature of BOP-SMs. This seemingly is done via market immersion and networking. The fourth lesson for agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts is thus to take calculated risks and ensure risk is managed in appropriate ways, as per the previous lessons of market immersion and networking;
  - *Low production costs*: This is part of the entrepreneurial marketing characteristic of being resource constrained as low production costs are not only a reality of such resource constrained street food enterprises, but also a necessity so as to keep low selling prices. Hence agri-food marketing in such BO-SM contexts seems to deem low production costs so as to provide for low prices that BOP-SM consumers can afford. This is the fifth lesson learnt for agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts: costs must be kept low so as to be able to provide for low food prices, for example;
  - *Relations with customers*: This aspect is paramount as customers provide income to the business and hence there is a focus and intensity with customers. This provides that in BOP-SM contexts agri-food marketing needs to have a very strong emphasis on customer relationships. This provides for the sixth lesson in agri-food marketing: customer relations are a vital necessity for agri-food marketing in the BOP-SM context. This marketing relational aspect ties in with knowing the customer (market immersion), networking (social ties, etc.), reducing risks (calculated risk taking), and low costs. The customer relational focus in BOP-SM contexts is seeing the customers as not just a primary asset, but also for example, seeing the customer in social terms;
  - *Value creation*: Leading on from the previous characteristics value must be provided to customers. Such value may not necessarily have to be innovative and/or creative, but must have value in customer terms. This is the seventh lesson learnt in terms of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts: customer value is important and must not be necessarily innovative and /or creative, but must be valued primarily by the customer, on customer terms. Such knowledge can be understood via market immersion, networking and fostering customer relations, for example.

In Hilmi (2024) much the same was provided in terms of researching within agri-food marketing in BOP-SM in developing economies the entrepreneurial marketing characteristics of street food vendors, but in Iran, and in specific within Tehran. From the findings of Hilmi (2024) what emerged was that eight entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices found were:

1. Market immersion;
2. Customer focused;
3. Customer intensity;
4. Relationships;
5. Innovative;
6. Value creation;
7. Creative;
8. Proactive.

As seen previously in Hilmi (2020) seven entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices were found as provided here below:

1. Networks;
2. Knowledge of market demand;
3. Risk-taking,
4. Self-confidence (calculated risk-taking);
5. Low production costs (resource constrained),
6. Customer-relationships;
7. Value creation.

Interestingly in comparing the eight entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices of Hilmi (2024) and those found in Hilmi (2020) what emerges is that only two characteristics and practices are the same:

1. Customer-relationships;
2. Value creation.

The rest are different and thus, imply, that by combining the findings of Hilmi (2024) with those of Hilmi (2020) provides for the following 13 entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices as provided by street food vendors:

1. Market immersion;
2. Knowledge of market demand;
3. Networks;
4. Risk taking;
5. Self-confidence (calculated risk taking);
6. Low production costs (resource constrained);
7. Customer focused;
8. Customer intensity;
9. Relationships;
10. Innovative;
11. Value creation;
12. Creative;
13. Proactive.

In terms of all the classic marketing characteristics and practices found by Hilmi (2024) and all added together, provide for 10 characteristics and practices found. These being as follows:

1. Street food vendors' community marketing practice;
2. Street food vendors' locational marketing practice;
3. Street food vendors' locational diversity marketing practice;
4. Street food vendors' community product diversity marketing practice;
5. Street food vendors' geographical speciality product marketing;
6. Street food vendors' product seasonality marketing;
7. Street food vendors' food safety and quality for customer reassurance marketing practice;
8. Street food vendors visual, physical, oral, and sensory marketing communications practice;
9. Street food vendors' low price marketing;
10. Street food vendors differing pricing range and payment typology marketing practice.

In general terms, from the above, seemingly street food vendors practice less entrepreneurial marketing (eight characteristics) and more classic marketing (10 characteristics). However, considering in detail the findings provides that entrepreneurial marketing practices are provided more than classic marketing practices and only in the findings from the interviews do street food vendors classic marketing practices find to be slightly more, by one practice, over entrepreneurial marketing practices. This confirms overall, that in a good majority of cases, street food vendors practice more entrepreneurial marketing than classic marketing. This confirming what was provided previously in Hilmi (2020) and Hilmi (2022a), for example, that micro and small-scale enterprises, like the enterprises of street food vendors, tend to, by degree, demonstrate more entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices, then classic marketing characteristics and practices. However, this should not undermine the fact that effectively both typologies of marketing practice are provided for by street food vendors and that both practices intermingle and overlap. Moreover, such practices as per the findings above are conducted mostly in informal urban agri-food marketing system to a good degree, even though some street food vendors were found to be formal i.e., have licenses. This provides much to confirm also that in the street economy, urban agri-food marketing systems tend to be informal, but also have a degree of formality, thus implying the intermingling and overlaps between the informal and the formal urban street economy.

What also emerged from the research was that in terms of eight entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices found were the same. This possibly implies that these could be specific to



street food vendors. Much the same emerged from the findings in terms of classic marketing characteristics and practices, which also seem to be specific to street food vendors. Such findings may, seemingly, start to identify marketing characteristics and practices that are indeed a mix of entrepreneurial marketing and classic marketing characteristics and practices, but are specific to street food vendors. For example, in terms of entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices street food vendors are immersed in markets, focus heavily and intensely on customers and seek customer relationships. In terms of classic marketing, for example, this implies locational marketing considerations (retail marketing), group marketing (street food vendors' clusters), relationship marketing (street food vendors' relational stance with customers) and social marketing (marketing street food vendor community food products). Thus, and seemingly, these marketing characteristics and practices by street food vendors seem to be specific to such typologies of agri-food enterprises.

### *Summary of findings*

From the various researches conducted numerous findings emerged in terms of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies.

In terms of rural and urban marketing components within agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies, in Hilmi (2022b) what was found was somewhat paradoxical. In the main sources of literature on agri-food marketing specifically, the evidence on rural agri-food marketing was thin, if not inexistent and further urban agri-food marketing was found to a much lesser degree within agri-food marketing. This is somewhat surprising as per UNCTAD (2023) 57 percent of the global population lives in urban areas and the most pronounced increase has been seen in developing economies. Hence it seems that agri-food marketing does cater, to a degree, for agri-food rural marketing, but a lot less so for agri-food urban marketing in an epoch where with the growth in urbanization and the growing and pressing need of feeding urban areas, with rising and increasing urban populations, would seemingly deem for far more urban agri-food marketing within agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts in developing countries.

Moreover, and more generally, with the world's population estimate to increase in the next 50 or 60 years, to reach circa 10.3 billion people by mid-2080s, up from 8.2 billion of today in 2024 (UN,2024) should indicate and deem for enhanced agri-food marketing both in rural and urban areas, but also between rural and urban areas and vice versa. This seemingly points to agri-food marketing needing to be adaptable, flexible, versatile, variable and agile, but also and importantly, that possibly agri-food marketing should take a far more bottom up approach in developing economies. Further, there is also seemingly, the need for agri-food marketing be thought out again from a completely new perspective and not just being adapted to BOP-SM developing economies. Indeed marketing in general and agri-food marketing in specific, are based on a specific heritage, within a well-defined geographical, historical, economic, social and cultural evolutionary context, and even though marketing is apt for being adaptable, flexible, versatile, variable and agile, however it still seemingly needs a consideration from a different fundamental perspective, if not notion and concept, of marketing and in particular to agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing countries in specific.

In terms of attempting to ascertain, assess and diagnose mesomarketing in agri-food marketing in developing economies, Hilmi (2022c) found mesomarketing to be a regional and/or provincial agri-food marketing system found within a country, which includes: city, town and village agri-food marketing systems; networks of local vertical, horizontal and facilitating marketing systems; socially and culturally based rural and/or urban community agri-food marketing systems composed of higher, lower, differing and varying levels of agri-food product and service assortments, with institutional structures such as markets and business to business networks, for example; -community and non-autochthonous community based-organizations, enterprises, collectives, groups, and cooperatives, including consumer entrepreneur family microenterprises marketing practices; and an implied intended outcome for local community development, well-being and improved quality of life.

What also emerged, still from Hilmi (2022c) was that mesomarketing occupies a critical and vital role within the agri-food marketing system, not only as a mid-level point of conjunction between micromarketing and macromarketing activities, but as per its importance per se. Thus, the mesomarketing level is as important as the micromarketing and macromarketing levels of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing countries. This seemingly provides that for agri-food marketing to have far more impact in its intended objectives and outcomes of providing, not only , for far more

regular, cyclical, effective, efficient, intensive, and spatially appropriate distribution of food, and also the implied social, cultural, community and quality of life outcomes intended, a micro, meso and macromarketing level perspective is required. In fact, a functioning agri-food marketing system thus ‘depends on performance both in a narrow economic sense and in a wider social sense’ (Layton, 2009), i.e. a macro, meso and micromarketing approach to agri-food marketing. This approach to agri-food marketing is thus much in line with that of what, for example, Kotler *et al.*, (2021) provide in that the marketing activity ‘has to be aligned with a focus on people-for-people benefits as the creation of human-to-human marketing establishes a new approach that puts human beings at the centre of marketing: marketing should work for the people, not against them’. This is clearly based on human values of ‘trust and service to others, which are the foundations of human economic activity rather than the sale of commodities and luxuries’ (Kotler *et al.*, 2021).

In terms of infinity agri-food marketing characteristics in BOP-SMs in developing economies, Hilmi (2022a) found that there was a need to take into full consideration the nature of marketing agri-food products per se, the size of enterprises commonly found, i.e. consumer-entrepreneur micro-scale family enterprises, the specific characteristics of BOP-SM contexts in both rural and urban areas as well as the need to take a micro, meso and macromarketing perspective, provided that the research identified 93 characteristics as shown previously above in Table 1. The identified characteristics could be of use to both theory and practice.

However, and interestingly, in Hilmi (2022a) other findings emerged that need to also be considered in the realms of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies. There were:

- BOP-SMs are the highly heterogeneous in nature of and hence the importance of ‘localized’ agri-food marketing;
- The linguistic diversity, cultural norms, and the closed and secluded nature of agri-food marketing systems, the informal barriers that exist, and the seclusion and isolation of both consumers and street food sellers in such contexts need to be considered;
- Marginalization, agri-food marketing systems in BOP-SM are usually, but not always, informal, as in some cases agri-food products deriving from formal enterprises are marketed along with informal agri-food products. Hence there is an informal-formal interface to be contended with, which, in fact, increases agri-food marketing marginalization within BOP-SM contexts. Most micro-scale family enterprises are secluded from ‘reaching’ other markets, are insular and as such are outside the purview, for example, of public authorities, NGOs and others. This creates a ‘mindset’ of being marginalized from the larger agri-food marketing system and hence with all related consequences of ‘feeling’ and ‘being’ secluded;
- Violence, this for example, is provided so as to obtain monopolies or oligopolies within defined stages of agri-food marketing systems, where a trader, for example, will become dominant or a group of food processors will become dominant and thus dictate informal norms both upstream and downstream in the agri-food marketing system. Such dominant positions may also collude with, for example, public authorities, NGOs as well as consumers. Such collusive partnerships make such agri-food marketing systems far more insular, secluded and marginalized. Informal payments either in kind and/or money also provide for further isolation and marginalization and thus do not enable, for example micro-sized family enterprises to extend their marketing networks. Further such marginalization not only limits agri-food product choice for consumers, but also raises issues on food safety, hygiene and prominently much higher prices comparatively. Poverty ‘premiums’ seemingly are most diffused in BOP-SM markets, one of the main causes being owed to violence.
- Process and functionality orientation: agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts tends to be mainly process and functionally oriented that could effectively provide for food availability and affordability. These two components of the 4 A’s ‘marketing mix’<sup>3</sup> were provided to be the most important. In other words, the food is there for consumers to buy at a relatively affordable price, considering the poverty premium. Hence agri-food marketing takes on a far more systems perspective of operations and processes at low cost and hence providing for relatively lower prices.

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<sup>3</sup> See Sheth & Sisodia (2012)

This primary distribution focus for agri-food marketing was seen as paramount in BOP-SM settings, as per the very nature of such contexts and the poverty found within. However, this should not undermine the acceptability and awareness components of the 4 A's marketing mix. Consumers in the BOP-SM do not only have immediate consumption needs, but also have aspirational consumption needs. For example, eating foods that are not within their cultural and social habits of food consumption, including high priced 'imported' foods. Hence also the awareness and acceptability have a role to play, but to a lesser degree than availability and affordability;

- Spills overs: In some BOP-SM contexts, mainly in urban and peri-urban BOP-SM contexts, 'spills overs' from more 'developed markets' targeted at higher income consumer markets would occur. For example, food that was not consumed in such markets, was marketed in such BOP-SM contexts as 'high value foods' as per their organoleptic characteristics, packaging, and so forth. Thus, in terms of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts there was seemingly a parallel 'secondary market' for such high value foods. This providing, to some degree, for the consumer demand devoted to 'aspirational demands and needs' related to food products. This in turn made awareness and acceptability of such products more important, to a degree, then availability and affordability;
- Freshness: consumers in BOP-SM contexts, seemingly put a premium on product freshness as per, for example taste, reduced risk of food poisoning, better quality and so forth. This was also tied to another factor of family and/or social networks that provided for agri-food marketing to be provided within such networks. For example, families in rural areas would network food products to family in urban areas and in turn, the urban family would network food products to rural areas. These tended to be a closed agri-food marketing system, but with the duality of the consumer-entrepreneur commonly found in BOP-SM contexts, some of the food products, for example, could also be sold to other non-family members, within the context of such social networks. This was a prominent point, as networks, provided in terms of the marketing of agri-food products which entailed, for example, relations, high degrees of customization, empathy, credit and importantly trust as well as, and importantly, 'locally produced' value creation. This last point of locally produced value creation within agri-food products was also important for both sellers and buyers and was and is inevitably connected to freshness;
- Trust and sales on credit: trust in the buyer and seller relationship were seen to be most important as well as, and tied to this, sales on credit. The extension of credit was also seen as an essential element of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts as per the poverty ridden setting this implies. These two aspects of trust and sales on credit along with the networked nature of such agri-food marketing provided for a form of partnerships among customers and sellers that effectively insulated such agri-food marketing systems and made them reliable and safe as it 'shielded' such agri-food marketing systems from the many uncertainties and risks provided by BOP-SM contexts. In other words, an 'insurance' and 'assurance' based agri-food marketing system. This in turn moving agri-food marketing away, to a degree, from being only focused on commercial matters, to a quasi- commercial to a social to a developmental typology of agri-food marketing.
- Instinct: agri-food marketing seems to be mainly instinctive, based on experience, intuition and the interdependence between seller and buyer, and hence was mainly focused on implementation of marketing and not, to a degree, on planning. For example, in BOP-SM contexts that are usually, uncertain and volatile, planning is more than challenging and hence only very approximate marketing plans can be provided and hence marketing implementation takes the helm. This is in line with entrepreneurial marketing and also implies that marketing in such BOP-SM contexts needs to be adaptable, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and innovative;
- Natural environment and climate change: the natural environment and climate change were and are important factors for BOP-SM agri-food marketing. Both sellers and consumers, for example are mostly aware of natural environment degradation and climate change impacts of agri-food marketing and on agri-food marketing, even though, to a degree agri-food marketing in such BOP-SM contexts tends to be less natural resource intensive, quite simply as per the lack of resource availability and as per lack of accessibility to such resources as per the inherent poverty of such agri-food marketing systems. There was an emphasis on this point of making agri-food marketing in BOP-SM greener and climate smarter as there was already 'fertile ground' on which to build on, seeing both seller and

consumer sensitivities on both matters and per the lack of resources implied by such poverty driven agri-food marketing systems;

- Different perspective: to see agri-food marketing from a differing perspective altogether. This implying that agri-food marketing should be considered from a specific BOP-SM perspective and not adaptive to such contexts i.e. a new way of thinking and practicing marketing. This also implied to possibly consider if marketing was really apt for such contexts seeing that marketing, in its modern form, derived from a well-defined evolutionary process that has economic, cultural, social, political and other distinct and specific contextual characteristics that derived from a particular geographical area of the world. Hence adaptation of marketing to such BOP-SM contexts was questioned and possibly new thinking, theory and practices of marketing may be required that could possibly not even be termed marketing, but something different.

Thus, from Hilmi (2022a) what emerged also is that agri-food marketing should cater for such characteristics and hence provide marketing that adapts, is versatile, variable, flexible, agile and innovative. However, what also emerged, yet again, was the seeming need to rethink agri-food marketing from a bottom-up perspective and reconsider, overall, agri-food marketing per se, from a BOP-SM perspective.

Hilmi (2022a) with the identification of agri-food marketing characteristics in BOP-SMs in developing economies provided to be an input for Hilmi (2023) which considered agri-food marketing practices in BOP-SMs in developing economies. From Hilmi (2023) what emerged was that practices overlap, are all interconnected and there is a common thread throughout such practices. For example, the relational nature of agri-food marketing, provides for networks that are mainly consumer centric, but also consider the community to a good degree, are collective and associative, are based on trust or are trust fostering and also loyalty focused, and as a result are fundamentally insular marketing systems. As such agri-food marketing practice within BOP-SM contexts in developing economies is based on 'locality.' In other words, agri-food marketing practice is highly specific, and as such needs not only to be adaptable, but innovative, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and relational. As such it is also clear that agri-food marketing is highly localized and as such may be referred to as 'localization marketing.' Other findings that emerged from Hilmi (2023) were that:

- Micro, meso and macro approach and practice: agri-food marketing practice was focused not only on the micro level, but also the meso and macro level i.e. micromarketing, mesomarketing and macromarketing as per the implied community and social welfare implications of such agri-food marketing practice, for example. This giving some further evidence to Hilmi (2022c);
- Formal and informal interface: agri-food marketing practice was also formal-informal in nature as per the interface between formality and informality within BOP-SM contexts and contends with rules and regulations that may well be set by contexts more than the public sector, for example;
- Networking practice: agri-food marketing practice is also networked, collectivist and focused on partnerships.
- No planning, instinctive and entrepreneurial in practice: agri-food marketing practice cannot really take a planning approach as per the volatility, risks and uncertainties of BOP-SM contexts and thus is more tactical on a day by day basis, even though, for example, there can be some planning devoted to the customer and community centricity nature of such marketing. This 'planning' over time is enabled by the high level of market, customer and community knowledge that is gained via the marketing practice of what may be termed 'sensing' and in certain cases 'sixth sensing' of the market, customers and community. Thus, it can be provided that such agri-food marketing practice is 'instinctive,' based on day to day learning, but as per the knowledge accumulation over time, can also enable some form of planning to take place. Consequently, such agri-food marketing practice can be seen as being entrepreneurial oriented: in other words, entrepreneurial marketing;
- Collective and associative in practice: agri-food marketing practice is also collective and associative and is interdependent as each player in the agri-food supply chain depends on the other for daily survival. Agri-food marketing lacks resources that can be devoted to marketing, hence such collective, associating and partnering practice to agri-food marketing is also born out of the need to survive such dire BOP-SM contexts as well as the cultural and social aspects that are commonly

found within such contexts. This survival marketing focus also implies that agri-food marketing practice is also ‘socially’ oriented, in that agri-food micro-sized family enterprises provide also ‘social services,’ such as for example community welfare, within their marketing practice. This seemingly taking on the role of public sector and NGO typology of marketing practice, for example, where effectively products are tied into also services, that are social in nature. Further this social marketing practice provides that there are relationships over time between, for example customers and enterprises and also between different enterprises along the agri-food supply chain, which in turn provides for trust and loyalty. This, yet again, providing for what may be termed ‘survival marketing;’

- Developmental, adaptive, localized, survival and customer co-value creation oriented in practice: agri-food marketing practice is ‘developmental’ by nature as it not only tends to cater for market-based matters, but also to community and wider social aspects. Agri-food marketing is also highly adaptive to local conditions making such marketing practice, as provided previously, ‘localized’ marketing. Value is based on local co-creation by the enterprise and the customers together. This practice making the agri-food micro-sized family enterprise a ‘brand’ in itself for many customers within BOP-SM contexts. Also, such agri-food marketing practice is localized by the high degree of reliance on orality and visuality that is commonly provided, for example via local languages, dialects and culturally-oriented visual forms of, not only products displays, but also in pictographs and other artifacts common to such contexts, for example. This also provides that agri-food marketing is ‘educational’ and as such supports both the enterprise and consumer learning about each other, for example, and also supports consumers in become such;
- Extended marketing mix in practice: agri-food marketing practice provides also for an extended marketing mix, within its realm of being, for example, customer centric, via availability, awareness, acceptability, affordability plus also adaptability, association, and assistance;
- System-orientation in practice: agri-food marketing practice is also system based as it considers processes, functions and operations and thus focused on availability and accessibility i.e. distributional practice. This taking on still in agri-food marketing practice the required frequency and intensity of such marketing practice that needs to cover geographical areas, for example, in ‘width’ and in ‘depth’ as well as with small quantities being sold frequently. Such coverage and frequency taking full consideration of urban and rural areas and the peculiarities that such geographical areas have on agri-food marketing practice;
- Digital-orientation: agri-food marketing practice also concerns, to a fairly good degree, ICTs and digitalization, in other words e-marketing and digital marketing practices.

As per Hilmi (2023) it is clear that agri-food marketing practice in BOP-SM in developing economies traverses differing typologies of marketing. Agri-food marketing practice is seemingly a ‘mix’ of entrepreneurial marketing; social marketing; relationship marketing; service marketing and ‘systems-oriented’ marketing. However, what also emerged from the research is that agri-food marketing is highly specific to each BOP-SM context and hence includes also what may be termed ‘localization marketing.’ This localization marketing practice also considers the rural, urban and rural nature of such and thus agri-food marketing takes on various and differing forms based on urban and rural areas, for example. Thus agri-food marketing practice needs to be: localized, entrepreneurial, social, relational, service, system, localized and survival oriented. All this thus implying that agri-food marketing practice needs to be overall: adaptable, innovative, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and relational.

In terms of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies and digital marketing Hilmi (2021c) found, most interestingly, that a good majority of characteristics were identical or similar between agri-food marketing in the BOP-SM and digital marketing. These characteristic findings are interesting as it seems that both typologies of marketing have more in common, then they have in divergence. Table 2 above shows the characteristic similarities between agri-food marketing in the BOP-SM and digital marketing.

What emerged from Hilmi (2021c) was that clearly there are major characteristic similarities between the two typologies of marketing and thus this provides for evidence that effectively agri-food marketing in the BOP-SM and digital marketing have fertile ground on which to amalgamate. In fact,

the amalgamation, agri-food digital marketing in the BOP-SM, having a physical and online world presence can only but increase and foster further the intended outcomes of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM. This is important, as seemingly, agri-food marketing to date, in some instances and unfortunately, in developing and transition economies, has not provided for the required in terms of regular, cyclical, intensive, effective, efficient and appropriate spatial distribution of food. In BOP-SM contexts there is a lag between production and marketing of food as it is not just sufficient to increment food production, as what is needed in parallel is incremental investments in agri-food marketing systems, such as for example in marketing hard infrastructure (wholesale and retail markets, roads, etc.,) as well as legislation and other institutional aspects governing exchange (Tollens, 2010), commonly focused on local assets so as to provide for benefits to the local economy and consequently to local communities (Poole, 2010). However, investments in digital technologies and networks, and in particular in agri-food digital marketing, may provide for the required supporting, enhancing, and ameliorating effects of such digitalization which can contribute to making agri-food marketing and its food distribution intended outcomes in BOP-SM contexts far more regular, cyclical, effective, efficient, intensive, and spatially appropriate.

In terms of considering entrepreneurial marketing within agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies, Himi (2020) considered the entrepreneurial marketing characteristics of street food vendors in 12 countries. The research in terms of street food vendors' entrepreneurial marketing characteristics found that: networks, knowledge of market demand, risk-taking, self-confidence (calculated risk-taking), low production costs (resource constrained), customer-relationships, and value creation were all an integral part of their agri-food marketing practices.

Interestingly each of the seven characteristics contributed to another in a logical reinforcing cycle sequence as networking and knowledge of market demand provides for social ties and puts a large emphasis on customer relations, thus self-confidence in terms of calculated risk taking in marketing, which implies value creation, to retain customers and this in turn supports and reinforces networking and customer relations that reduces marketing risk. This logical reinforcing cycle sequence of entrepreneurial marketing characteristics being influenced by the context, the BOP-SM, which is risky and uncertain, the size of the enterprise, micro, and the typology of entrepreneurship, tending in degree more to survivalist than to transformational. It was also found that street food vendors' entrepreneurial marketing characteristics were in part also based on traditional marketing characteristics and those of micro and small enterprise marketing characteristics. But also, there were divergences, pointing possibly to the fact that such entrepreneurial marketing characteristics are unique.

In Hilmi (2024) much the same was provided in terms of researching within agri-food marketing in BOP-SM in developing economies the entrepreneurial marketing characteristics of street food vendors, but in Iran, and in specific within Tehran. From the findings of Hilmi (2024) what emerged was that eight entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices found were:

1. Market immersion;
2. Customer focused;
3. Customer intensity;
4. Relationships;
5. Innovative;
6. Value creation;
7. Creative;
8. Proactive.

As seen previously in Hilmi (2020) seven entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices were found as provided here below:

1. Networks;
2. Knowledge of market demand;
3. Risk-taking,
4. Self-confidence (calculated risk-taking);
5. Low production costs (resource constrained),
6. Customer-relationships;

7. Value creation.

Interestingly in comparing the eight entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices of Hilmi (2024) and those found in Hilmi (2020) what emerges is that only two characteristics and practices are the same:

1. Customer-relationships;
2. Value creation.

The rest are different and thus, imply, that by combining the findings of Hilmi (2024) with those of Hilmi (2020) provides for the following 13 entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices as provided by street food vendors:

1. Market immersion;
2. Knowledge of market demand;
3. Networks;
4. Risk taking;
5. Self-confidence (calculated risk taking);
6. Low production costs (resource constrained);
7. Customer focused;
8. Customer intensity;
9. Relationships;
10. Innovative;
11. Value creation;
12. Creative;
13. Proactive.

In terms of all the classic marketing characteristics and practices found by Hilmi (2024) and all added together, provide for 10 characteristics and practices found. These being as follows:

1. Street food vendors' community marketing practice;
2. Street food vendors' locational marketing practice;
3. Street food vendors' locational diversity marketing practice;
4. Street food vendors' community product diversity marketing practice;
5. Street food vendors' geographical speciality product marketing;
6. Street food vendors' product seasonality marketing;
7. Street food vendors' food safety and quality for customer reassurance marketing practice;
8. Street food vendors' visual, physical, oral, and sensory marketing communications practice;
9. Street food vendors' low price marketing;
10. Street food vendors differing pricing range and payment typology marketing practice.

In general terms, from the above, seemingly street food vendors practice less entrepreneurial marketing (eight characteristics) and more classic marketing (10 characteristics). However, considering in detail the findings provides that entrepreneurial marketing practices are provided more than classic marketing practices and only in the findings from the interviews do street food vendors classic marketing practices find to be slightly more, by one practice, over entrepreneurial marketing practices. This confirms overall, that in a good majority of cases, street food vendors practice more entrepreneurial marketing than classic marketing. This confirming what was provided previously in Hilmi (2020) and Hilmi (2022a), for example, that micro and small-scale enterprises, like the enterprises of street food vendors, tend to, by degree, demonstrate more entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices, then classic marketing characteristics and practices. However, this should not undermine the fact that effectively both typologies of marketing practice are provided for by street food vendors and that both practices intermingle and overlap. Moreover, such practices as per the findings above are conducted mostly in informal urban agri-food marketing system to a good degree, even though some street food vendors were found to be formal i.e., have licenses. This provides much to confirm also that in the street economy, urban agri-food marketing systems tend to be informal, but also have a degree of formality, thus implying the intermingling and overlaps between the informal and the formal urban street economy.

What also emerged from the research was that in terms of eight entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices found were the same. This possibly implies that these could be specific to street food vendors. Much the same emerged from the findings in terms of classic marketing characteristics and practices, which also seem to be specific to street food vendors. Such findings may, seemingly, start to identify marketing characteristics and practices that are indeed a mix of entrepreneurial marketing and classic marketing characteristics and practices, but are specific to street food vendors. For example, in terms of entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices street food vendors are immersed in markets, focus heavily and intensely on customers and seek customer relationships. In terms of classic marketing, for example, this implies locational marketing considerations (retail marketing), group marketing (street food vendors' clusters), relationship marketing (street food vendors' relational stance with customers) and social marketing (marketing street food vendor community food products). Thus, and seemingly, these marketing characteristics and practices by street food vendors seem to be specific to such typologies of agri-food enterprises.

## Discussion

The research found that in terms of agri-food rural marketing and agri-food urban marketing, within agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies, there was a need not only to streamline more such within agri-food marketing, but bring them to the forefront. Indeed Hilmi (2022b) found some evidence of both, within agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs, but far more emphasis was needed, this especially seeing the rise in urbanization and the increasing role that rural areas need to fulfil to feed larger and more distant urban conglomerates. Thus, implying also far more rural to urban agri-food marketing.

This need for growing emphasis also on urban agri-food marketing implied to research further such urban contexts in terms of agri-food marketing. Hilmi (2020) and Hilmi (2024) considered agri-food marketing in such urban contexts as provided by street food vendors in 13 countries and found that prevalently agri-food marketing was entrepreneurial marketing in terms of characteristics and practices, but there was also what can be termed classic- traditional marketing being practiced. The entrepreneurial marketing characteristics and practices as provided by street food vendors found were:

1. Market immersion;
2. Knowledge of market demand;
3. Networks;
4. Risk taking;
5. Self-confidence (calculated risk taking);
6. Low production costs (resource constrained);
7. Customer focused;
8. Customer intensity;
9. Relationships;
10. Innovative;
11. Value creation;
12. Creative;
13. Proactive.

In terms of all the classic traditional marketing characteristics and practices found by Hilmi (2024) and all added together, provided for 10 characteristics and practices. These being as follows:

1. Street food vendors' community marketing practice;
2. Street food vendors' locational marketing practice;
3. Street food vendors' locational diversity marketing practice;
4. Street food vendors' community product diversity marketing practice;
5. Street food vendors' geographical speciality product marketing;
6. Street food vendors' product seasonality marketing;
7. Street food vendors' food safety and quality for customer reassurance marketing practice;
8. Street food vendors visual, physical, oral, and sensory marketing communications practice;
9. Street food vendors' low price marketing;
10. Street food vendors differing pricing range and payment typology marketing practice.



In terms of identifying further characteristics and practices of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies, Hilmi (2022a) and Hilmi (2023) considered both. With regard to identifying agri-food marketing characteristics in BOP-SMs in developing economies, Hilmi (2022a) found that there was a need to take into full consideration the nature of marketing agri-food products per se, the size of enterprises commonly found, i.e. consumer-entrepreneur micro-scale family enterprises, the specific characteristics of BOP-SM contexts in both rural and urban areas as well as the need to take a micro, meso and macromarketing perspective. Hilmi (2022a) provided that the research identified 93 characteristics as shown previously above in Table 1. These were also a conduit for the following research to attempt to find further agri-food marketing practices in BOP-SMs in developing economies as provided by Hilmi (2023).

However, and interestingly, in Hilmi (2022a) other findings emerged that need to also be considered in the realms of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies. Such findings were that BOP-SMs are highly heterogenous and thus required specific and targeted agri-food marketing that was 'localized' and could thus also cater for the linguistic diversity, cultural norms, and the closed and secluded nature of such agri-food marketing systems, the informal barriers that exist, and the seclusion and isolation of both consumers and street food sellers in such contexts need to be considered. This also implied a form of marginalization: agri-food marketing systems in BOP-SM are usually, but not always, informal, as in some cases agri-food products deriving from formal enterprises are marketed along with informal agri-food products. Hence there is an informal-formal interface to be contended with, which, in fact, increases agri-food marketing marginalization within BOP-SM contexts. Most micro-scale family enterprises are secluded from 'reaching' other markets, are insular and as such are outside the purview, for example, of public authorities, NGOs and others. This creates a 'mindset' of being marginalized from the larger agri-food marketing system and hence with all related consequences of 'feeling' and 'being' secluded.

Further violence was also found. This, for example, is provided so as to obtain monopolies or oligopolies within defined stages of agri-food marketing systems, where a trader, for example, will become dominant or a group of food processors will become dominant and thus dictate informal norms both upstream and downstream in the agri-food marketing system. Such collusive partnerships make such agri-food marketing systems far more insular, secluded and marginalized. Further such marginalization not only limits agri-food product choice for consumers, but also raises issues on food safety, hygiene and prominently much higher prices comparatively. Poverty 'premiums' seemingly are most diffused in BOP-SM markets, one of the main causes being owed to violence. Moreover agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts tends to be mainly process and functionally oriented that could effectively provide for food availability and affordability. Also, in some BOP-SM contexts, mainly in urban and peri-urban BOP-SM contexts, 'spills overs' from more 'developed markets' targeted at higher income consumer markets would occur. For example, food that was not consumed in such markets, was marketed in such BOP-SM contexts as 'high value foods' as per their organoleptic characteristics, packaging, and so forth. Thus, in terms of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts there was seemingly a parallel 'secondary market' for such high value foods. This providing, to some degree, for the consumer demand devoted to 'aspirational demands and needs' related to food products. This in turn made awareness and acceptability of such products more important, to a degree, then availability and affordability.

Another finding was freshness as consumers in BOP-SM contexts, seemingly put a premium on product freshness as per, for example taste, reduced risk of food poisoning, better quality and so forth. This was also tied to another factor of family and/or social networks that provided for agri-food marketing to be provided within such networks. For example, families in rural areas would network food products to family in urban areas and in turn, the urban family would network food products to rural areas. These tended to be a closed agri-food marketing system, but with the duality of the consumer-entrepreneur commonly found in BOP-SM contexts, some of the food products, for example, could also be sold to other non-family members, within the context of such social networks. This was a prominent point, as networks, provided in terms of the marketing of agri-food products which entailed, for example, relations, high degrees of customization, empathy, credit and importantly trust as well as, and importantly, 'locally produced' value creation. This last point of locally produced value creation within agri-food products was also important for both sellers and buyers and was and is inevitably connected to freshness. Further trust in the buyer and seller relationship were seen to be most important

as well as, and tied to this, sales on credit. The extension of credit was also seen as an essential element of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts as per the poverty ridden setting this implies. Moreover agri-food marketing seems to be mainly instinctive, based on experience, intuition and the interdependence between seller and buyer, and hence was mainly focused on implementation of marketing and not, to a degree, on planning. For example, in BOP-SM contexts that are usually, uncertain and volatile, planning is more than challenging and hence only very approximate marketing plans can be provided and hence marketing implementation takes the helm. This is in line with entrepreneurial marketing and also implies that marketing in such BOP-SM contexts needs to be adaptable, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and innovative.

What also was found was that the natural environment and climate change were and are important factors for BOP-SM agri-food marketing. Both sellers and consumers, for example are mostly aware of natural environment degradation and climate change impacts of agri-food marketing and on agri-food marketing, even though, to a degree agri-food marketing in such BOP-SM contexts tends to be less natural resource intensive, quite simply as per the lack of resource availability and as per lack of accessibility to such resources as per the inherent poverty of such agri-food marketing systems. There was an emphasis on this point of making agri-food marketing in BOP-SM greener and climate smarter as there was already 'fertile ground' on which to build on, seeing both seller and consumer sensitivities on both matters and per the lack of resources implied by such poverty driven agri-food marketing systems. Lastly what also emerged was that agri-food marketing needed to be seen from a differing perspective altogether. This implying that agri-food marketing should be considered from a specific BOP-SM perspective and not adaptive to such contexts i.e. a new way of thinking and practicing marketing. This also implied to possibly consider if marketing was really apt for such contexts seeing that marketing, in its modern form, derived from a well-defined evolutionary process that has economic, cultural, social, political and other distinct and specific contextual characteristics that derived from a particular geographical area of the world. Hence adaptation of marketing to such BOP-SM contexts was questioned and possibly new thinking, theory and practices of marketing may be required that could possibly not even be termed marketing, but something different.

Interestingly this last finding had already be evidenced before in Hilmi (2022b) where agri-food marketing needed to be adaptable, flexible, versatile, variable and agile, but also and importantly, that possibly agri-food marketing should take a far more bottom up approach in developing economies. Further, there is also seemingly, the need for agri-food marketing be thought out again from a completely new perspective and not just being adapted to BOP-SM developing economies. Indeed marketing in general and agri-food marketing in specific, are based on a specific heritage, within a well-defined geographical, historical, economic, social and cultural evolutionary context, and even though marketing is apt for being adaptable, flexible, versatile, variable and agile, however it still seemingly needs a consideration from a different fundamental perspective, if not notion and concept, of marketing and in particular to agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in developing countries in specific.

Thus, from Hilmi (2022a) what emerged also is that agri-food marketing should cater for such characteristics and hence provide marketing that adapts, is versatile, variable, flexible, agile and innovative. However, what also emerged, yet again, was the seeming need to rethink agri-food marketing from a bottom-up perspective and reconsider, overall, agri-food marketing per se, from a BOP-SM perspective.

As provided also previously Hilmi (2023) considered agri-food marketing practices in BOP-SMs in developing economies. From Hilmi (2023) what emerged was that practices overlap, are all interconnected and there is a common thread throughout such practices. For example, the relational nature of agri-food marketing, provides for networks that are mainly consumer centric, but also consider the community to a good degree, are collective and associative, are based on trust or are trust fostering and also loyalty focused, and as a result are fundamentally insular marketing systems. As such agri-food marketing practice within BOP-SM contexts in developing economies is based on 'locality.' In other words, agri-food marketing practice is highly specific, and as such needs not only to be adaptable, but innovative, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and relational. As such it is also clear that agri-food marketing is highly localized and as such may be referred to as 'localization marketing.' This also interestingly emerged as a finding in Hilmi (2022a) along with other findings still in Hilmi (2022a).

Other findings that emerged from Hilmi (2023) were that agri-food marketing practice was focused not only on the micro level, but also the meso and macro level i.e. micromarketing, mesomarketing and

macromarketing as per the implied community and social welfare implications of such agri-food marketing practice, for example. This giving some further evidence to Hilmi (2022c). In fact, in Hilmi (2022c) it was found that mesomarketing occupies a critical and vital role within the agri-food marketing system, not only as a mid-level point of conjunction between micromarketing and macromarketing activities, but as per its importance per se. Thus, the mesomarketing level is as important as the micromarketing and macromarketing levels of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing countries. This implying that such an approach to agri-food marketing had intended outcomes for local community development, well-being and improved quality of life.

Hilmi (2023) also found that agri-food marketing practice was also formal-informal in nature as per the interface between formality and informality within BOP-SM contexts and contends with rules and regulations that may well be set by contexts more than the public sector, for example. Networking is also an integral part of agri-food marketing along with a collectivist, associative and partnership orientation to it. This seen mainly as what can be termed 'survival marketing practice' that was strongly socially-oriented. This implying that agri-food marketing was also social marketing that was developmental in nature, adaptive and, as seen previously localized, with value being co-created between customers and enterprises. Such localization marketing provides, for example, for local languages, dialects and culturally-oriented visual forms of, not only products displays, but also in pictographs and other artifacts common to such contexts, for example. This also provides that agri-food marketing is 'educational' and as such supports both the enterprise and consumer learning about each other, for example, and also supports consumers in become actual consumers. Further it was found that agri-food marketing practice provides also for an extended marketing mix, within its realm of being, for example, customer centric, via availability, awareness, acceptability, affordability plus also adaptability, association, and assistance.

Further what was also found was that agri-food marketing could not be planned, and thus was instinctive and entrepreneurial in practice. This far more entrepreneurial marketing practice having also been found in Hilmi (2020) and Hilmi (2024). In this realm of non-planning in agri-food marketing, such takes on a far more systems-orientation in practice. In BOP-SM contexts agri-food marketing practice is also system based as it considers processes, functions and operations and thus focused on availability and accessibility i.e. distributional practice. This taking on still in agri-food marketing practice the required frequency and intensity of such marketing practice that needs to cover geographical areas, for example, in 'width' and in 'depth' as well as with small quantities being sold frequently. Such coverage and frequency taking full consideration of urban and rural areas and the peculiarities that such geographical areas have on agri-food marketing practice. And lastly agri-food marketing practice also concerns, to a fairly good degree, ICTs and digitalization, in other words e-marketing and digital marketing practices. This is much in line with what was found by Hilmi (2021c) where agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies and digital marketing had a good majority of characteristics that were identical or similar, this showing that both typologies of marketing have more in common, then they have in divergence. In fact, agri-food digital marketing in BOP-SMs contexts, having a physical and online world presence, could only but increase and foster further the intended outcomes of agri-food marketing in BOP-SM.

Thus, and as per Hilmi (2023) it is clear that agri-food marketing practice in BOP-SM in developing economies traverses differing typologies of marketing. Agri-food marketing practice is seemingly a 'mix' of entrepreneurial marketing; social marketing; relationship marketing; service marketing and 'systems-oriented' marketing. However, what also emerged from the research is that agri-food marketing is highly specific to each BOP-SM context and hence includes also what may be termed 'localization marketing.' This localization marketing practice also considers the rural and urban nature of such and thus agri-food marketing takes on various and differing forms based on urban and rural areas, for example. Thus agri-food marketing practice needs to be: localized, entrepreneurial, social, relational, service, system, localized and survival oriented. All this thus implying that agri-food marketing practice needs to be overall: adaptable, innovative, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and relational.

## Conclusions

From the stocktaking of findings from the various researches conducted, and reflections on such, evidence emerged to support the following conclusions on agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing economies:

- The actual nature of marketing agri-food products per se needs to be considered within BOP-SM contexts;
- The size of enterprises commonly found, i.e. consumer-entrepreneur micro-scale family enterprises, in BOP-SM contexts and their typology or typologies of marketing needs to be considered;
- The specific characteristics of BOP-SM contexts in both rural and urban areas needs to be considered;
- Agri-food marketing practice needs to have far more rural and urban agri-food marketing practice within, not only in terms of rural to rural and urban to urban agri-food marketing, but also in terms of rural to urban agri-food marketing and urban to rural agri-food marketing;
- Interestingly in agri-food marketing in BOP-SM contexts in urban areas, entrepreneurial marketing practices were found, but also mixed with classic/traditional marketing practices;
- BOP-SMs contexts being highly heterogenous require specific and targeted agri-food marketing that in practice is ‘localized;’
- The linguistic diversity, cultural norms, and the closed and secluded nature of agri-food marketing systems, the informal barriers that exist, and the seclusion and isolation of both consumers and food sellers in BOP-SM contexts need to be considered;
- The marginalization of such BOP-SM contexts and related agri-food marketing systems found within need to be considered;
- The insular nature of such agri-food marketing systems need to be considered;
- The violence within BOP-SM contexts that creates monopolies or oligopolies, for example, in agri-food marketing need to be considered;
- The poverty premiums on prices such creates in agri-food marketing need to be considered;
- ‘Spill-overs’ from more ‘developed markets’ targeted at higher income consumer markets that create in BOP-SM contexts products that are high value and are seen as aspirational for BOP-SM consumers need to be considered ;
- The focus that is far more set on agri-food products that are available and affordable than on awareness and acceptability of agri-food products need to be considered ;
- The premium of freshness placed by BOP-SM consumers on agri-food products needs to be considered;
- The importance of networks within agri-food marketing within BOP-SM contexts and the inherent importance within such agri-food networks of family and other social relations need to be considered;
- The ramifications of agri-food networks into rural areas and into urban areas and vice-versa that facilitate the marketing of agri-food products need to be considered ;
- The implied and inherent relations, high degrees of customization, empathy, credit and importantly trust as well as, and importantly, ‘locally produced’ value creation of such agri-food networks need to be considered;
- The paramount importance of both trust and extension of credit in such agri-food networks need to be considered;
- The instinctive nature of such agri-food networks and thus the need for agri-food marketing to be entrepreneurial in nature, entrepreneurial agri-food marketing, needs to be considered. Thus, entrepreneurial agri-food marketing practice being adaptable, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and innovative needs to be considered;
- The need for such entrepreneurial agri-food marketing being sensitive to the natural environment and climate change needs to be considered;
- The need to refocus, if not rethink, agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs from a bottom-up perspective, this including also new thinking, theory and practice that is seemingly needed for agri-food marketing in such BOP-SM contexts needs to be considered;

- The last point above being much in line with a previous finding of agri-food marketing within BOP-SMs, not only to be far more entrepreneurial, but also adaptable, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and innovative needs to be considered;
- Agri-food marketing practices overlap, are all interconnected and there is a common thread throughout such practices that all need to be considered;
- Agri-food marketing practices demonstrated to be localized, adaptable, innovative, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and relational;
- Agri-food marketing practices demonstrated to be focused on three levels: the micro, meso and macromarketing levels;
- Mesomarketing occupies a critical and vital role within the agri-food marketing system in BOP-SMs, not only as a mid-level point of conjunction between micromarketing and macromarketing activities, but as per its importance per se. Thus, the mesomarketing level is as important as the micromarketing and macromarketing levels of agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs in developing countries;
- The three level approach in agri-food marketing in BOP-SMs having the intended practical outcomes of local community development, well-being and improved quality of life;
- Agri-food marketing practice is formal-informal in nature as per the interface between formality and informality within BOP-SM contexts;
- Networking is an integral part of agri-food marketing practice along with a collectivist, associative and partnership orientation to it. This seen mainly as what can be termed 'survival marketing practice' that is strongly socially-oriented;
- This 'survival marketing practice' implying that agri-food marketing practice in BOP-SMs contexts is also social marketing-oriented that is developmental in nature, adaptive and, as seen previously localized, with value being co-created between customers and enterprises;
- The implied localization specificity of agri-food marketing practice implying, for example, for local languages, dialects and culturally-oriented visual forms of, not only products displays, but also in pictographic and other artifacts common to such contexts, for example, to be used. This also providing that agri-food marketing practice is 'educational' and as such supports both the enterprise and consumer learning about each other, for example, and also supports consumers in becoming actual consumers;
- Agri-food marketing practice provides also for an extended marketing mix, within its realm of being, for example, customer centric, via availability, awareness, acceptability, affordability plus also adaptability, association, and assistance;
- Agri-food marketing practice being instinctive and thus entrepreneurial does not enable planning to take place and thus implies a far more system based approach as it considers processes, functions and operations and thus focused on availability and accessibility i.e. distributional practice;
- Agri-food marketing practice also concerns, to a fairly good degree, ICTs and digitalization, in other words e-marketing and digital marketing practices;
- Agri-food marketing practice in BOP-SMs needs to be: localized, entrepreneurial, social, relational, service, system, localized and survival oriented. All this thus implying that agri-food marketing practice needs to be overall: adaptable, innovative, flexible, variable, versatile, agile and relational.

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