Another discipline for the market economy: marketing as a performative knowledge and know-how for capitalism

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> Thanks to various circumstances . . . one discovered how to disconnect experiences from the businesses in which they had been acquired, to gather, keep and transmit them as an objective form of capital. It is this formidable mass of experience that entails, when used, the forwarding of economic rationalism to the highest degree of perfection. (Sombart, 1966)

How does the market economy work? On the one hand, orthodox economists have long argued that market equilibrium depends on the automatic adjustment of supply and demand; on the other hand, heterodox economists (Williamson, 1985; Arthur, 1989), but also historians (Chandler, 1977; Tedlow, 1990) and sociologists (Prus, 1989) have tried to show that supply and demand are socially constructed (Granovetter and Swedberg, 1992), that managerial practice shapes the contours of the market.

Our objective in revisiting this debate is not so much to radicalize the classical opposition between the two camps but, paradoxically, to outline their common ground. Firstly, the arguments of both groups are always rooted in an examination of supply and demand and of their 'natural' or contingent aspect; secondly, their propositions always entail a separation of science (economics) from practice (management) in order to investigate the complex correspondences between the one and the other.

Discussing the foundations of this endless dispute seems to be a good way to resolve it. In order to understand the market economy, one can look somewhere else, and ask other questions: does the functioning of markets rely on *instances* other than supply and demand? does the functioning of markets rest on *processes* other than those of science (economics) and/or practice (management)? In asking those questions, one discovers that, between economics and managerial practices, there lies the relatively unknown set of management sciences. These 'sciences of practices' or 'practices equipped by science' work to perform the whole economic game (both theoretical and empirical).

Let us go a bit further. Among management sciences, among the third parties animating the market, marketers surely deserve a particular attention. We intend to show how marketing experts have long played a mediating role, and have occupied a central position in the history of modern capitalism. Half-way between producers and consumers, half-way between economics and managerial practices, marketing specialists have gradually re-invented the fundamental market actors and processes; they have succeeded in disciplining (mastering/codifying) the market economy.

How have marketers performed the market economy? Our argument is that the progressive 'performation'[1] of the economy by marketing followed a fourfold process. Firstly, marketing pioneers tried to train themselves in the empirical study of markets and to educate similar specialists (performation through peer-formation). Marketers reached that first objective by inventing special human and conceptual frames for market knowledge and practice (performation through pre-formating). From that point onward, the adepts of the discipline of markets played the game of managers and management, of economists and the economy (performation as performance: acting and playing). Eventually, they reshaped their own activity, but also the market and the economy altogether (performation through reformation).

Performation through peer-formation: marketing as learning and teaching

Of course, the *discipline* of marketing (the control of markets) began well before the *discipline* of marketing (the science of markets). From that point of view, speaking of marketing as a contributor to the construction of markets is not particularly innovative. Numerous studies have long documented the fact that the marketing know-how of managers played a decisive role in the rise of contemporary capitalism: since the middle of the 19th century, the progressive internalization of markets in big companies (Cochran, 1972; Chandler, 1977), the recurrent practice of market segmentation (Tedlow, 1990), or even the social construction of demand (McKendrick *et al.*, 1982; Mukerji, 1983; Campbell, 1987; Strasser, 1989; Ohmann, 1996) have confirmed the victory of the 'visible hand' of managers over the invisible hand of the market. As long as marketing is no more than an ordinary weapon of business forces, its study does no more than reinforce the idea of a social construction of markets. As long as marketing is viewed as the simple extension-cord of supply power over demand, one can conclude that the theoretical economy is an obvious by-product of classical economic interactions: ie, interactions between the producer and the consumer.

However, the history of marketing is also that of a progressive separation of marketing knowledge from market practices. The objective of this paper is to show that the birth of marketing as a distinct body of knowledge located half way between supply and demand, but also between science and practice, changes everything: the emergence of marketing as an alternative discipline (rule/reference) of the market economy favours the circulation of knowledge, the improvement of new men and concepts, thus the implementation of new ideas and practices. In turn, these transformations are able to renew not only the social identity of marketing actors but also to modify the general orientation of economic activities.

From economics to marketing: marketing as learning

In order to understand how the emergence of marketing as a management discipline contributed to the functioning of markets, it is useful to observe that, from its very beginnings, the academic study of marketing found its origins in the science of economics itself. The founding fathers of modern marketing theory were economists of the American Middle West who were disciples of the German historical school of economics. They were economists, because at that time economics was the only discipline dealing with market phenomena (Bartels, 1976). But as disciples of the German historical school of economics, their dual education contrasted sharply with the classical orientations of their peers educated in the United States: the German historical school insisted that the approach to economic matters should be simultaneously historical, statistical, and practical; in short oriented toward the empirical study of real markets (Jones and Monieson, 1990). Eventually, they were Mid-West economists who, as members of Land Grant Universities, were exposed on a daily basis in the complex difficulties of agricultural exchanges, which led them to study the functioning of real marketing channels, and more precisely the shipment of perishable commodities from rural areas to urban places (Converse P.D., 1959).

Distanced from classical economics and remote from the business world, the economists who founded marketing were forced to invent everything. This extreme marginality paradoxically was also their source of strength. In order to build a new knowledge, these men undertook to follow physically the movement of commodities along marketing channels; they decided to make an inventory of marketing institutions, procedures and practices. From that point of view, the testimony of L.D.H. Weld, who authored the very first marketing textbook, is particularly enlightening:

> When I began to teach marketing in the fall of 1913 there was practically no literature on the subject. I had to get out and dig up my own information. I studied at first-hand the movement of grain through and the use of future trading in the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce. . . . I personally followed shipments of butter and eggs and other commodities from the country shipper in Minnesota through the wholesalers, jobbers, and retailers to New York, Chicago, and other cities. I analyzed each item of expense involved in this passage through the channels of trade. I studied the methods of determining price quotations, the operations of butter and egg exchanges, and the auction markets in Eastern cities. I also studied at the first hand the operations of the co-operative shipping associations of Minnesota and issued bulletins on this subject. (Weld, 1941)

As a man from 'nowhere', knowing nothing, the future marketing teacher goes through the domains of others and picks up their knowledge. In visiting other areas, he builds a transversal knowledge. Before him, knowledge existed, but concealed in every link in the chain After him, the knowledge is revealed, integrated, redistributed. The whole picture is eventually ready to be displayed:

> By the end of two years of this work I had written my book, 'The Marketing of Farm Products'. (Weld, 1941)

The academic doesn't know anything, but when he learns something, he tries to teach it. And from that point onward, this outsider, this intruder in the historical competition between private actors, proposes a transversal dissemination of his stolen/new knowledge; he anticipates a possible performation of the economy by his new management science.

From marketing practices to marketing classes: marketing as teaching

But in order to fully perform the market economy, the marketer had still to become the trainer of merchants. In the early years, this was far from obvious: why would businessmen listen to the lessons of teachers who until then knew less than themselves? Why would they give up learning on the spot, through practice? Why would they accept the inventory and divulgation of their precious knowledge, at the risk of losing their expertise and market advantages? Why would they barter a local but improved knowledge for a general but uncertain science.

When trying to answer this fourfold question, one may begin by observing that the invention of academic marketing coincided with the grouping of two important movements. On the business side, at the beginning of the century, executives emerged as a distinctive social group, and gave birth in 1919 to the American Administrative Management Association (in 1925, it became the American Management Association). At the same time, university education developed and unified itself: the Association of American University was created in 1900, the American Association of University Professors in 1915, the American Council on Education in 1918.

Business activities were growing, and *management* became a profession—the profession of executives. Universities were spreading, and higher education became a profession—the profession of academics. The professionalization of the one was indistinguishable from the professionalization of the other. The mission of universities was to carry on the standardization of education and the criteria of careers. Educational institutions were the only bodies which could set up the diplomas that would testify to the skills of the anonymous actors arriving on the new labour market of management specialists. In return the executives, having no other wealth than their exclusive know-how, were the only persons in the business world who were directly interested in the construction of the sciences that could legitimate their action, warrant their jobs, and build a common identity for them well away from the group of stockholders.

Here lie the reasons why the business schools grew and gathered, in 1916, around an American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business. Business schools were the rallying point of the convergent rise of executives and universities. The business schools, as their name implies, allowed the mixing of business and knowledge, a new definition for each side. From that point of view, it is necessary to outline how marketing pioneers were hybrid-men, easily crossing and combining the identities of manager and academic. They went from the university to business, then from business back to the university (Cochoy, 1995).

The first group of men (the group of deviant economists who became marketers: Ralph Starr Butler, L.D.H. Weld, Paul H. Nystrom) was able, through the alternation of academic and business positions, to develop the marginal knowledge of business margins gathered by marginal men, so that it finally reached the centre, the knowledge and power places of the big American Universities (NYU, Columbia) and businesses (Procter and Gamble, U.S. Rubber). Just like the bees that carry pollen from flower to flower, these men could cross-fertilize each of the fields encountered with the knowledge acquired in the others.

The second group of men, by migrating from business to academia, obtained the distant and over-arching position necessary to integrate business experiences, Arch W. Shaw in particular, as a businessman who had interests in *several* companies of Chicago and was thus inclined to compare and synthetize the varied situations he encountered, was successively hired by Harvard and Northwestern University to contribute to the development of business curricula. Shaw took advantage of the broad perspective provided him by the multiplicity of his positions in order to invent the references, devices and methods that could gather and unify the new community of management specialists.

On the business side, Shaw founded *System, the Magazine of Business* (the direct ancestor of our modern *Business Week*), a forum where business professionals could discover general ideas on business conduct, a place where they could share and improve their common wisdom, beliefs, and experiences. On the academic side, Shaw made two decisive innovations. On the one hand, he established the first business laboratory—the bureau of business research. This institution permitted the construction of a systematic, cumulative and transversal body of knowledge and thus made academic business skills superior to individual business visions. On the other hand, Shaw developed the case method. This educational device made it possible to transfer practice to the classroom and thus gave business teachers the privilege of a pedagogy of practice, but also a means to simulate real business operations, to gather business experiences (as knowledge) by the conduct of experiences (as experiments)—to *learn practice* without the risks of a real job.

All these first endeavours aiming at generalizing local business practices and knowledge soon favoured the emergence of some global unifying procedures, and this occurred because the circulation of men in the market economy (the invention of executive careers) demanded the standardization of their languages, qualifications, and skills. In marketing, this standardization followed a double path.

Performation as pre-formating: the discipline of marketing

The first standardization of marketing: from marketing knowledge to marketing people

The first standardization of marketing was ascending and interactive. It was the progressive connection between the observations and knowledge acquired in local fields about marketing commodities, institutions, and functions. We already saw that in order to elucidate the mysteries of marketing channels, the economist-marketer had chosen to follow the movement of products. The following of commodities led to the naming of their origin, transit, and destination places. In the second and third decade of the 20th century, the founding fathers of modern marketing—who received their background education in institutional economics (Brown, 1951)—undertook to describe all the institutions involved in the marketing process, from big wholesale establishments to the smallest retail store (Bartels, 1976). From this double inventory (what circulates: commodities; what they circulates through: institutions) a first generalization became possible. The double entry through products and institutions led to the functional approach, at a time when, precisely, the 'marketing function' began to be institutionalized in American companies (Faria, 1983).

The study of marketing functions was introduced by Arch W. Shaw (1912) who proposed a taxonomy of the 'general functions of middlemen' (*ibid.*). The functions he described were the sharing of risk, transportation, financing, selling. Because it separated men, things, and concepts, the functional approach led to a transversal generalization and integration of local knowledge. Indeed, this approach was reproduced in the first marketing textbooks which, from Weld's *Marketing of Farm Products* (1916) to Clark's *Principles of Marketing* (1922), tried to complete, refine and generalize Shaw's original taxonomy.

Thus, step by step, the knowledge of networks led to a network of knowledge; the empirical and inductive approach going from products to institutions, then from institutions to functions, gave birth to an entirely new body of disciplines and group of specialists. As a consequence, the ascending and decentralized standardization of marketing knowledge was soon furthered by a descending and centralized standardization of marketing people.

The second standardization of marketing: from marketing people to the marketing discipline

The academics interested in the marketing world met in the context of the professional associations they originally belonged to. The Associated Advertising Clubs of the World favoured the meeting of marginal psychologists among the new advertising community; the American Economic Association facilitated the recognition of marginal economists among the crowd of their orthodox peers. Indeed, the meeting of professional associations gave to deviant persons the opportunity not only to discover their marginality among their former community but also to gather together. The two groups of deviant economists and deviant psychologists, because they shared a common interest for marketing activities and a common identity as deviant academics, ended up merging into a National Association of Teachers of Marketing and Advertising (Agney, 1941). Eventually, this first group was soon joined by a third one: the group of executives and technicians specialized in market surveys who, because they felt they were on the margins of business power and academic knowledge, had gathered since 1931 in an American Marketing Society. The marginal specialists of the management of margins decided to merge: on January 1st, 1937, they launched the American Marketing Association (Agnew, 1941).

The appearance of an *ad hoc* professional association helped marketing men to increase their control over business education and management—thus over the American economy as a whole. We have already suggested that the implementation of new knowledge and know-how depended on their generalization and abstraction by means of pedagogic devices. However, this first ascending standardization, because of its iterative and decentralized character, was slow and uncertain; it relied on hazardous encounters, on providential discoveries, on the variable availability of references, or on the goodwill and perspicacity of authors and publishers. On the contrary, a professional association provided the means that were necessary to overcome such difficulties. As early as in the 1920s, the *AMA's* ancestor—the *National Association of Teachers of*

Advertising—set up a *Committee on Teachers' Materials*. This committee was asked to gather pedagogical elements from advertisers and publishers. Later on, the *NATA* launched its own editorial activity: it published the proceedings of its annual meeting through special bulletins (Agnew, 1941). Gathering and publishing texts helped the marketing community to have a simultaneous access to the same type of references: marketers, through these writings, were for the first time able to communicate, to know about the action of the others, to adjust their own positions to the one of their colleagues.

The gathering was eventually possible but it created more problems than it solved. Indeed, the publication of the different works emphasized the heterogeneity of local endeavours, the proliferation of concepts, the extreme polysemy of the 'marketing' word, which was alternatively synonymous with selling, distribution, advertising, and so forth. The comparison was possible, of course, but it produced an impression of cacophony that jeopardized the intellectual and social coherence of the association. That is why the association leaders decided in a second movement on a reordering of the elements they had helped to collect; that is why they undertook to build a common language.

In 1930 they instituted a *Committee on Definitions*, whose members were commissioned to legislate, to standardize, to construct the *official* vocabulary of marketing. Because the *AMA* occupied a central position, it could harmonize, then redistribute, the meaning of words and things, and thus put together a glossary. Because the actors—members and non-members—had other things to do, and because they found it convenient that someone worked on their behalf for them to codify their language, improve their communication and ease both their exchanges and their personal affairs, they became more and more inclined to adopt the *AMA* definitions. Any objections they might have voiced if they had participated directly in the negotiation of marketing terms were waived by delegating the standardization problem, thereby saving time and energy.

But the aim of marketers was not only to produce words and concepts, it was also to make sure that their concepts and words were adopted and adapted in business practices, that this gathering constituted an implementable body of references—that marketing would perform the market economy. To prevent *AMA* definitions from becoming a dead language, one had to show how those tools could play together; one had to quit the paradigm for the syntagm; one had to organize the vocabulary into a coherent whole, so that it could be used by its potential locutors. Meanwhile, because the interest for market surveys was arising, and because *AMA* members were far from becoming the only persons to master this type of surveys, it was urgent to find how to remain in the race, it was necessary to itemize and piece together the knowledge acquired here and there into a coherent whole. In order to do so, the *AMA* launched in 1937 a *Committee on Marketing Techniques*, which all of a sudden published a reference book (Wheeler, 1937). Thanks to this book, the *AMA* could reinforce its role as a reference-institution (but also as an institution that produced references) for the discipline as a whole and for its clients.

However, *AMA* leaders, thanks to their identities as marketing specialists, were well aware that any attempt at acquiring a monopoly position was condemned to failure; they knew that neither language nor knowledge could be fixed for ever. How could they reconcile the reference (the fixed marker) with the upgrading of references (the continuous revision of knowledge)? In order to consolidate their reference position, *AMA* men had to invent a device that could stabilize their disciplinary and institutional identity and enable its ongoing revision. This device was the *Journal of Marketing*. A journal is a place where knowledge is always evaluated and updated. But a journal is also the official outlet of a particular domain, always recognizable as such through its permanent title. Scientific journals are always the same and nevertheless different. They can bring a community together, but they can also register, trigger and communicate the displacements, the movements, the transformations that reach it.

A survey of the first 10 years of the *Journal of Marketing* made it clear that the original themes (agricultural marketing, relations between economic theories and marketing, teaching and marketing) had progressively given way to new orientations, such as sales management or market surveys (Applebaum, 1947). The initial concerns aimed at building the conceptual foundations of the new discipline, describing marketing practices, and finding the proper methods of business teaching. But this first marketing scholarship, which started from the outside to discover the internal knowledge of business, had progressively given rise to a set of concepts, principles and techniques liable to master the relationships between a business and its market.

Marketing texts underwent a thematic evolution through the standardization and generalization of marketing vocabulary and know-how, the spreading of lexicons, directories, textbooks and journals. The resulting maturation of marketing institutions, meetings and human societies—the progressive pre-formating of marketing practice by marketing knowledge and networks—testified to the implementation of a tight link between knowledge and practice. In short, it permitted the performation of concepts through action frames that were both disciplinary and managerial. From that point onward, through the double action of marketing teaching (at the local level) and marketing standardization (at the global level), cognition became synonymous with management. The tight connection between teaching materials and persons was successful in moving the whole marketing world together in spirit if not in totality. In theory and practice, the discipline of marketing influenced the general orientation of the American economy, at both the micro and macro levels.

Performation as performance: playing with and within the economy

A microeconomic performation: on taylorian marketing

At the micro level, the pacing of American marketing by a common spirit and toolkit was prepared and furthered by the progressive interrelation of the new science of markets and the principles of rising taylorism. Since the 'scientific management' of work gave management the means for a better control of production organization, some thought that the taylorian model could be transferred and adapted to the marketing world so that the distribution system could be scientifically mastered (Cochoy, 1994b).

First, as early as 1912, a man named Charles W. Hoyt managed to taylorize the sales department in the same way as Taylor had taylorized the workplace. In Hoyt's proposals, the definition of sales quotas, the description of precise selling routes, and the prescription of a standardized sales education became for the salesmen what production objectives, analysis of working tasks, and planning procedures had been for the taylorized worker (Hoyt, 1912). For the first time in history, the inception of a 'scientific sales management' programme extended the scientific management of work outside the workplace, it spread the optimization of managerial activities beyond the business plant.

Then, in 1927, another author named Percival White radicalized and generalized Hoyt's project. Hoyt had extended the taylorian control of production towards the realm of sales; White proposed to reverse the relation, ie, to start from a 'scientific marketing management' in order to control production as a whole. Foreshadowing the marketing concept and marketing management of the 1950s—which, as we will see, aimed at subordinating the management of the firm to the prerequisites of consumer satisfaction—White proposed putting the entire productive process under the scientific mastery not only of sales, but also of advertising, of distribution, and more generally of the market and the consumer (White, 1927). With this taylorian marketing, the taylorism within was eventually framed by a taylorism without; from one end of the American market to the other, from production to consumption, or rather from consumption to production, the American market was trapped, defined, managed and optimized through the implementation of the same doctrine, the same procedure and the same control.

Between 1912 and 1927, from Hoyt's propositions to White's formulations, in the background of the shift from a simple sales management to a management inspired by the methodical observation and control of the market, there occurred the maturation of marketing knowledge, of marketing glossaries, of marketing techniques, of marketing associations, networks, and institutions. The taylorian marketing of the one and the more descriptive marketing of the other were not the same. But the two forms of marketing went forward on parallel routes, they reinforced each other, they made it possible to *apply* to American businesses a whole set of concepts and devices thanks to which one could conceive each business no longer as a single atom lost in the marketing universe, but as a universe that encompassed its own market. With marketing, the circle of scientific management was closed: the whole economic *circuit*, from each business to the big market, was amenable to a systematic control—marketing was smoothly but surely sliding from microeconomics to macroeconomics.

A macro performation the marketing of the New Deal

At this point of our account, it is important to observe to what extent the rise of company and disciplinary marketing coincides with a sudden weakness of the autoregulative market economy. The decisive affirmation of marketing, both as a management science and as a management technique, is contemporary with the 1929 crisis. In the 1930s, marketers took over a new research domain—the governmental regulation of marketing—and their community welcomed a new type of members—the civil servants of the Federal

State. A few signs show it: during the crisis years, in the *Journal of Marketing* pages, governmental concerns had taken second place (16.7 per cent of the papers) and state personnel represented the third human force of the *American Marketing Association* (15.1 per cent of its members) (Applebaum, 1947). What had happened?

For us, who know the end of the story, the answer is easy: the economic crisis of the 1930s *had gone that way*, the *context* had produced its *effect*, the economy had performed marketing rather than the contrary. But for the actors of the 1930s, things were not as obvious. In those years, it was not the context which imposed its effects on the actors, it was rather the actors who took advantage of the context in order to forward their own position. From this point of view, the very first issue of *The American Marketing Journal*, published in 1934, included a suggestive foreword from its editors:

> [1] All of us realize that extremely important problems in business during the next decade or more will almost certainly fall in the field of marketing and distribution. [2] As this first issue goes to press, the National Recovery Administration and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration are making bold attempts to hasten the return of prosperity. [3] Whatever may be their ultimate success and accomplishment, they will certainly have made a lasting impression upon business thinking. [4] Under the descending spiral of the depression, business men have developed a frame of mind which makes them willing to accept leadership along lines which a few years ago they would not have been willing to consider. [5] The Administration assumes that steady employment and adequate wages are of first importance in providing a mass market for our mass production, and the nation is united in a great practical effort to put this conception into universal operation. [6] The results will be watched closely by marketing executives, who will give greater attention to data on wages and hours, as indices of sales possibilities. . . . [7] The purpose of the *American Marketing Journal* is first of all to present worthwhile material which will be of interest to those in charge of marketing operations in business organizations. [8] In other words, we hope to be one factor in helping to sell the results of true market research to management. [9] One of the troubles with much business research is that its practical results are seldom placed before management in such a way that they can be used in modifying the methods of buying and selling commodities. (*The American Marketing Journal*, 1934)

The great depression, because it was disastrous for business, was a fantastic opportunity for the new marketing specialists. The economic chaos jeopardized the beliefs of the old managers, and so it made them more receptive to the implementation of new management principles. Of course, for the new marketers, the crisis was positive only as far its effects favoured the new expertise. That is why they carefully managed to associate the economic disorder with marketing problems [1]. 'Your problems are marketing problems, and you cannot solve them by yourself anymore': this was the way marketers spoke about the crisis to managers—their clients [7; 8]. Actions by the Roosevelt administration gave an ultimate endorsement to marketers. Not only did economic conditions change, but management principles were not the same anymore. The autoregulative economy was being replaced by the Federal interventionism, with its array of codes, rules, specialized agencies, accounting devices, new economic principles [2]. Because the acceptance of the New Deal was universal [5], to the point that the business community itself seemed to accept its fatality [3; 4], one had more or less to 'cope with it', one had to rethink the whole of business life along the lines of an economy giving a larger role to the State regulative action [6]. The new discipline of marketing took note of the New Deal, it formulated concepts adapted to its effects, it offered businesses the means of microeconomic interventionism [8]. The *Journal*, from that point would carry on the job aiming at gathering and codifying these means, and bringing them to its public knowledge [9].

The New Deal, as a macroeconomic context with capital letters, became a new deal, a microsocial complex with small letters. The Federal State project served the formulation of a new discipline. The state rejection of market autoregulation gave marketing the opportunity to quit the economics of its origins (one would take the economic world as it was, and not as what it should be); the setting of the new principles of economic action would serve as a basis for the construction of new marketing techniques.

Just as in the case of the modern welfare state, marketing was built at a time when everything collapsed (Fullerton, 1988b); marketing was dwelling upon the weaknesses of the invisible hand in order to impose its own mediation. For the Prince counsellors as for the management consultants, the jolts of the liberal economy served as foundations for the building of new sciences; the representatives of the public and private sectors advocated the consequences of the lack of an adequate economic science in order to justify the emergence of macroeconomics on the one hand, of marketing on the other hand. On both sides, a general reappraisal of the market was being proposed—the visible hand of the manager and the provident hand of the State were supposed to gain a decisive control over economic fluctuations, providing that they unified their effort.

The parallelism between the two projects deserved to be noticed. While marketers were trying to organize themselves, by promoting the *AMA* regulation over their profession, the Roosevelt administration was working to master the economy, by putting it under the State regulative action. On the one hand, marketers were defending market surveys as a means to answer the precise wants of consumers. On the other hand, the Federal State was strongly supporting the use of industrial standardization as a tool that could increase market visibility. The definition of industrial codes was particularly close to marketing thought: if the State aimed at the construction of *conventions* that could help a better identification of products (in Lewis' sense [Lewis, 1969]), marketers saw the same device as a strategic weapon for the conquest of competitive advantages: the State opened the door to a technical management of market exchange, the building of conventions (at the global level) was becoming the key-tool of product differentiation and market segmentation (at the local level).

Moreover, State interventionism—the taking over of the economy—contributed to legitimate market studies. The State shifted the emphasis from the study of local markets to the study of the *national market*: it gave a universal implementation and justification to what, until now, had only been a local and peculiar practice. Thus, the launching in 1929 of the first national *Census of Distribution* justified not only the study of marketing phenomena (the completion of the census worked as an implicit recognition of the importance of studying distribution channels) but also its methods (the bureaucratic use of statistics legitimized their increasing use in business [Desrosières, 1993]) and its aims (the State recognized the importance, for businessmen, of the availability of general factual information upon which they could develop their action [Brown, 1951])—as Luc Boyer and Noël Equilbey (1990) put it: 'Marketing found its letters patent of nobility in this market crisis'.

Thus, the parallelism between marketing and the New Deal was shifting into a convergence: marketers wished to rely on the existing connections between their project and the Roosevelt administration policy in order to justify their action; they bet on the success of the macroeconomic regulation in order to promote their own science of market regulation. The performation of the market by marketers met the performation of the economy by public management. Thus, from the 1930s, the development of the public statistical apparatus became indistinguishable from the formidable rise of market surveys and corresponding methodologies (correlation measurement, sampling theory, multivariate analysis, panel studies) (Bartels, 1976). Indeed, the contribution of the new *economic policy* to the advancement of marketing was not only symbolic. Firstly, the production of federal data provided useful information for the improvement and development of new techniques and knowledge (Converse J., 1987; Boyer and Equilbey, 1990). Secondly, at a time when business employment was dropping, the development of high technical skill positions within the federal administration offered alternative job opportunities to the young executives educated in the business schools (Cochran, 1972). Thirdly, and foremost, the conceptual renewal of economics led to a radical shift of marketing thought. The New Deal argument justified the discarding of the old knowledge and techniques, which had been developed to master a world now obsolete. The codification of the prevalent practices was no more relevant: why would marketers have pursued the inventory of skills that did not work anymore? Economic matters now being different, marketers soon conceived the project of abandoning the inductive approach of their beginnings for a more deductive orientation—it would be worthwhile to construct, *ex nihilo*, the new *science* of marketing:

> In the future, we may hope for a very high degree of perfection in the development of scientific procedure in research in which the American Marketing Association will certainly lead. But developing technique is not enough—important as it is. What we need most is to get some basic principles which shall be the guidance for marketing processes. . . . We have passed the place where we teach only what business does. We do not hesitate to criticize business where it is inefficient in method or uneconomic in purpose. Those members who are practitioners, with few exceptions, are no longer satisfied merely to get the answer the 'boss' wants. Rather they have reached the position where, if their answer is the one the boss wants, they are dubious of their own accuracy. In short, we are well on our way to become a profession. (Agnew, 1941)

Franck Cochoy

Performation as re-formation: from the reform of management sciences to the reformation of marketing scientists

The reform of management sciences

'In the future': at the end of the interwar period, a few marketers were dreaming of a marketing that would be really scientific; they dreamed of a marketing that would reverse the historical relationship between managerial knowledge and practice. In essence, they wanted to escape from a more or less scientific management in order to build a true management science. Instead of deriving their knowledge from practice (instead of accepting that marketing proceeds from management) they called for knowledge to lead practice (they wished for a science that would precede management).

Of course, the formulation of the first marketing concepts and principles, the improvement of market survey techniques, and foremost Hoyt's and White's proposals had paved the way. But the first notions were only codifying practice and the first studies remained mostly descriptive. Moreover, as can be seen from the literature of the times, although the idea of a scientific marketing management was extremely novel, it nevertheless received rather limited attention from marketing academics.

In the 1950s, however, a further important innovation appeared in the American marketing realm: the so-called 'marketing concept'. The marketing concept proposed a link between profit realization and consumer satisfaction and called for management operations to be submitted to the scientific study of markets in order to place all other business departments under the supervision of the marketing department. The novelty was less the idea itself, which was reminiscent of White's scientific marketing management, but rather its systematic and enthusiastic use within American management circles.

The most striking and perplexing feature of the marketing concept, however, was not its potential performative impact over the American economy but rather its evident lack of cognitive effects upon the community of academic marketers. Although businessmen had been experiencing or celebrating the marketing concept throughout the 1950s, it was only at the beginning of the 1960s that academic marketers implemented it in their own speeches and activities. What is the reason for such a discrepancy? Why did academic marketers resist so long? And why did they eventually give up at the turn of the 1960s?

At first sight, the reluctance of academics to accept the marketing concept may seem surprising: in placing the consumer at the centre of marketing and the producer at the periphery (Keith, 1960), the marketing concept was giving academics the means to fulfill their wishes, ie, to turn marketing into a science in its own right and put practice under its guidance. But we don't have to forget the disciplinary identity of the first marketers, and the particular type of science that the marketing concept was calling for. Let us remember: the pioneers of marketing, educated in institutional economics and in the descriptive analysis of marketing channels, were of course able to conduct market surveys, but they had none of the skills that were necessary to explain the mysteries of consumer behaviour and/or to draw quantitative models of the functioning of markets.

The first marketers were conscious of the vulnerability of their own positions: while observing the business world, they were perfectly conscious that the marketing concept was attracting all sorts of consulting agents, the Ernest Dichter, Burleigh Gardner or Sidney Levy—all those who proposed their 'motivation studies', all those who promoted a psychoanalysis of the consumer as a new way to control the markets (Kassarjian, 1994). In looking at American social science, marketing pioneers saw clearly that the specialists of the new technologies brought by the war—operations research, econometrics, general systems theory—were looking toward management in order to ensure their conversion in a civilian context (Reidenbach and Oliva, 1983), and they saw to what extent a marketing management based on the consumer could serve as an anchor point for the implementation of this kind of techniques. Thus, they concluded that in order to safeguard their position, it was imperative to prevent the 'consumer' object from becoming the Trojan horse of the new specialists by speaking again in terms of markets, products, institutions and functions of marketing—in brief: one had better mistrust the marketing concept.

In 1959, however, the Ford and Carnegie Foundations launched an important funding programme aiming at reforming the management sciences. This programme was conducted by Robert Gordon and James Howell, two economists who were favourable to the new social and quantitative sciences. Their idea was to fund the business schools that would, first, abandon the descriptive and inductive approach of the pre-war period and, second, adopt a perspective grounded in the implementation of both quantitative techniques and behavioural sciences (Gordon and Howell, 1959).

For the old generation, the alternative was cruel: refusing the Ford Foundation's recommendations meant missing enticing grants for their own business school; accepting the reform meant being superseded by approaches they lacked the skill to implement and thus losing their professional identity. The alternative was cruel but was not without a solution. In order to reconcile the irreconcilable, in order to preserve the contradictory interests of their personal career and collective institutions, the seniors realized they should make a little move: renouncing the fields of teaching and research, they migrated towards administrative positions inside their own schools. In accepting the role of organizing that which outstripped them, in becoming the administrators of the reform—in managing the importation of quantitative techniques and behavioural sciences to management sciences—the old business teachers were able to stay at the centre of business schools while firmly implementing the new orientations (Cochoy, 1995).

In marketing, reform was accepted all the more willingly since it could be presented as the logical extension of the marketing concept. Once institutional economics was abandoned, quantitative techniques and consumer psychology could be introduced as the 'natural' tools of a management founded on the 'consumer orientation', and the era of marketing management could begin. Thanks to the hiring of young specialists trained in the new social, economic and quantitative sciences, the marketing of the 1960s moved in a double direction. On the one hand, the implementation of operations research and econometrics led to the birth of so-called 'marketing science': a research stream that could model and optimize market activities. On the other hand, the importation of statistics, psychology and behavioural analysis gave birth to the so-called 'consumer research': an approach that introduced a systematic study of consumer behaviour.

From this double orientation, one could proceed beyond Wendell R. Smith's intuition, who proposed, well before the reform, to use the economic theory of imperfect competition developed by the Cambridge school of economics in order to clarify the old practices of market segmentation and product differentiation (Smith, 1956; Alderson, 1957). Thanks to quantitative techniques and behavioural sciences, one could develop the concepts and the procedures necessary for a true 'marketing management'—for a technical and integrated administration of markets. More precisely, the marketing management programme entailed two main proposals. First, it presented the idea of marketing mix (Borden, 1964), which seeks to set the best marketing policy as an optimal and controlled combination of price, promotion, place and product strategies (McCarthy, 1960). Second, it pretended to complete and reinforce this marketing mix model thanks to the systematic use of the taylorian model of planning, analysis and control (Kotler, 1967).

Around the marketing concept/marketing management/marketing mix triptych, the rising implementation of statistical devices in marketing increasingly showed that, beyond prices, the result of competition depended on the management of the multidimensional aspects of products—above all brands, services, packaging (Green, 1963). It showed that one had to play on these many dimensions in order to shape the markets; the use of computers, econometrics, and modelling methods also led to the construction of real black boxes for a technical management of markets (Little, 1979). The concepts of social science and the systematic study of consumption practices made possible not only the modelling of buyer behaviour, but also the implementation of these models for the conduct of marketing strategies (Howard and Sheth, 1969).

Thus, the consequence of the reform of the 1960s was the rapid implementation of a double performation of economic matters (economy/economics). On the one hand, the reform performed economics, in forcing it to migrate from State to business, in adding to the modelling of the whole economic circuit an analogous framing of managerial practices. On the other hand, the reform performed the economy, since the general implementation of the same frameworks, techniques and devices, from the State to business units, through all distribution channels, was bound to reinforce the efficiency of a management of markets.

The contemporary phrases of 'public management' (Laufer and Paradeise, 1990) or 'business governance' (Gomez, 1996) further demonstrate the extent to which economics and management sciences migrated towards politics/political sciences, and joined economics and management. As the result of a gigantic translation and combination process of modern sciences and practices, economics, management and political sciences ended up being only different dimensions of a single socio-technical network (Callon, 1991). On the one hand, at the national and public level, one had the general macroeconomic regulation, the national accounting and political apparatus; on the other, at the local and private level, one eventually obtained a microeconomic managerial regulation.

However, it has been little noticed that the one did not go without the other: if modern marketing, as we have seen, is the natural child of economic and scientific innovations of the New Deal and post-war years, modern economics is greatly indebted, as far as its relevance is concerned, to its effective performation in and through managerial sciences and practices. The microeconomic empirical management of markets is the only way to have a 'self-fulfilling economy'; it is only through the generalization of the same approaches, methods and tools—that is: through the action of the double apparatus of economic policy on one side and of marketing management on another—that modern marketing practices could definitely quit the autoregulation of the smithian market and enter the regular frame of political, technical and managerial control.

From new forms of marketing management to the reformation of marketing scientists

By the end of the 1960s, however, the success of the marketing concept, marketing management and marketing mix were producing some unexpected consequences. As previously outlined, if the new orientations were eventually implemented, it was only thanks to the hiring of new individuals; the coming of specialists was the indispensable corollary of marketing quantification and 'socialization'. Now, if the business schools were inclined to favour the use of the new sciences for managerial concerns, the new scientists were often less concerned with the managerial use of their knowledge than with the pursuit, within marketing itself, of their 'original' orientations and disciplines.

In consequence, a split in the ranks emerged during the endemic protest atmosphere of the late 1960s. Whereas some proposed a broadened concept of marketing liable to serve as the basis for a social marketing, that is: for a marketing liable to be applied to non-business organizations (Kotler and Levy, 1969; Lazer, 1969; Kotler and Zaltman, 1971), others saw this programme as a call for a societal marketing, that is: a marketing of a more fundamental character, a marketing that would be more preoccupied with the social role of commercial practices than with the search for profit and managerial efficiency (Spratlen, 1970; Sweeney, 1972; Tucker, 1974; Dixon, 1978). To some extent, the idea of societal marketing helped its adepts not only to establish some political distance from the managerial orientation, but its most significant effect was to restore the relative scientific independence of the psychology, sociology or theoretical economics from which they came. Social/societal marketing thus opened the opportunity for a certain 'disapplication' of applied science.

The marketing of the 1970s–1980s ended up juxtaposing on the one hand the more technical, practical and applied marketing and, on the other hand, a marketing more and more oriented towards social protest and/or towards fundamental research, towards the study of the consumer for its own sake, rather than towards the study of the consumer for the optimization of markets (Hunt, 1976). How should we interpret this drift? Did the liberation of specialists entail a less effective performation of the market economy by the marketing discipline? The double thematic and disciplinary broadening of marketing, the relative disapplication of the applied science, the proliferation of contradictory research streams without any managerial orientation, certainly entailed a loosening of the links between science and management, knowledge and power. A closer look, however, reveals that the slackening of the technical, cognitive and human networks of marketing led more to their reconfiguration than to their rupture, and for three reasons.

Firstly, the invention of social marketing made the spreading of marketing beyond the tiny circle of private business activities possible. The social marketing idea, far from breaking with the managerial roots of the discipline, ensured on the contrary the extension of these roots to a few sectors which, until now, had been outside its influence: the invention of political marketing, of cause-related marketing, of public marketing (etc.) ended up placing under the marketing management umbrella a whole set of institutions which, *a priori*, were totally alien to it. Just as the concept of marketing mix could apply the logic of competition far beyond the unique price variable, the broadened concept of marketing could extend marketing knowledge far beyond the private sector. Secondly, the transformation of social marketing into a societal marketing resulted in a tightening of the links between profit and not-for-profit marketing, thanks to the growing intervention of consumer research specialists in governmental services and agencies designed for consumer protection—Federal Trade Commission, Federal Drug Administration, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Office of Consumer Affairs, Office of Consumers' Education (Bloom and Greyser, 1981). The development of consumerism, paradoxically enough, far from condemning marketing for not meeting its commitments, ratified its efficiency, and thus contributed to reinforce the need and presence of marketers in the economy. Thanks to consumers' protest, marketing specialists and their research methods were called for, as expert witnesses and devices, in order to help courts when they had to examine cases of deceptive advertising, commercial frauds and other marketing abuses against the consumer (Kassarjian, 1994). The faults and virtues of marketing thus contributed to the generalization of marketing methods, concepts and persons inside all American institutions, from private companies to federal agencies and judicial institutions. Thirdly and finally, the interpretation of societal marketing as a 'pure' or 'fundamental' marketing favoured the migration of other specialists or specialities, such as epistemology, anthropology (Sherry, 1986), history (Fullerton, 1988a; Cochoy, 1994a), postmodernism (Firat, 1991) or even semiotics and literary criticism (Stern, 1990; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1992). Just like the segmentation of marketing between business marketing and not-for-profit marketing eventually put all the compartments of the American society under the guidance of the micro-marketing governance, the segmentation of marketing between fundamental marketing and applied marketing resulted in the enrolment of all humanities and social sciences around the systematic analysis of markets.

Conclusion: the two meanings of discipline

As we have seen, the marketing performation of the market economy took four successive and embedded aspects. The first two performations—performation through peer-formation; performation through the double standardization of knowledge and practice—dwelled upon the empirical orientations of German institutional economics in order to develop a network of market knowledge and experts. The third performation—the economic performance of marketing—took advantage both of the great crisis of the market economy and of the technical and economic innovations of taylorism and the New Deal in order to promote a more active management of markets, a micro-marketing policy for company use. Eventually, the fourth performation—the immersion of marketing in an ever-increasing set of disciplines and fields—tried to reverse the first three performations; it aimed at replacing the theories of practices with a practice inspired by theory, along with the double model of quantitative macroeconomics and behavioural sciences.

Here, the bringing together of the four performations is more than a mere concluding device. The historical summary shows that, at each stage, marketing came from economics in order to perform the economy without any direct use of economic frameworks! Former economists left economics in order to observe the economy, and subsequently used the economic collapse in order to reshape along their own lines the new economic interventionism. Then, the same marketers ended up importing the specialists and frameworks of macroeconomics and econometrics in order to develop the tools upon which they could perform a marketing management of business. Meanwhile, the market was more and more embedded in a double set of rules and procedures, of concepts and experts, that both defined and shaped it.

Naturally, the efficiency of marketing is still unclear (Marion, 1995). Its performances are hard to describe, complex to evaluate, and difficult to measure empirically. But in this difficulty lies the distinctive character of performative sciences. These sciences are truly *disciplines*, in the double meaning of the word: in their case, one cannot separate science from practice, the discipline-knowledge from he discipline-control since, by definition, these sciences arise in and through practice (Latour, 1996). Managers go through marketing, marketers go through management. Of course, history shows us that the one and the other can do whatever they want with marketing and management, that the one like the other can overcome or override them. But marketing management, for both of them, is always a reference for action, and its imprints are found wherever the observer of the capitalist economy may go: marketing presence, action and effects are daily evidenced in toll free numbers, market surveys, brand responsibility, consumer culture, and foremost in the extreme generalization of marketing vocabulary, that is: in the constant use, by all sorts of actors in every kind of situations, of the metaphors of segmentation, positioning, advertising, targets and niches.

The best sign of the economic performance of marketing lies perhaps less in its direct effect on the market than in its indirect impact on economists. Economists, ever since the works of the Cambridge School, have theorized imperfect competition, which is itself perfectly managed by marketers. Today, economists, sociologists, and socio-economists examine the many aspects of 'non price competition' (Debonneuil and Delattre, 1987; Guellec, 1990; Lancaster, 1975; Oliveira-Martins, 1990), the 'economics of quality' (Karpik, 1989) and the diverse 'conventions' framing the definition of markets and the qualifying of products (Eymard-Duvernay, 1989). But what did marketing do, long before the economists, if not provide suppliers and consumers with the conventions liable to help them qualify the products? What did marketing do, if not develop the relevant tools to overcome price constraints and play on product quality, services, design, and so on? Contemporary analysts of the market economy are often running, without even knowing it, after the knowledge of marketers. If economics was, from the beginning, the inspiring discipline of marketing, one can speculate if marketing did not become, as time went on, the unseen spirit of both the market economy and economics.

Note

1 The word 'performation' is coined on Austin's notion of 'performative utterance' in linguistics. According to Austin (1962), a performative utterance is an utterance that says and does what it says simultaneously (for example: 'I declare the meeting open'). According to this definition, and thanks to a suggestion by Bruno Latour (1996) and Michel Callon (see introduction of this book), a performative science is a science that simultaneously describes and constructs its subject matter. In this respect, the 'performation' of the economy by marketing directly refers to the double aspect of marketing action: conceptualizing and enacting the economy at the same time.

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