Parallel universes and disciplinary space: the bifurcation of managerialism and social science in marketing studies

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Abstract The field of marketing studies embraces a striking contradiction. On the one hand, it originated in a spirit of critique and dissent which has since been manifest in a rich, diverse and fiercely contested outpouring of marketing scholarship and research. On the other, it is a highly packaged brand with a remarkably uniform identity as a set of universal managerial problem-solving techniques. This paper explores this deep contradiction, positing the notion of parallel universes of disciplinary space, the one characterised by a critical social scientific orientation, the other by a naïve managerial orientation. While such a dialectical figure may lead to some blurring of important distinctions, this paper suggests that an investigation of the historical, political and ideological undercurrents of this bifurcation can contribute significantly to a re-orientation of the disciplinary space of marketing studies.

Keywords Critical theory; Marketing history; Neo-liberalism; Marketing ideology.

INTRODUCTION

After more than 100 years as a university teaching subject, originally in North America and Germany (Jones and Monieson 1990; Bartels 1951) and some 70 years later in Europe, Asia and Africa, marketing studies remains an enigma. It has attained a degree of global success and influence which have been much commented upon (Willmott 1999; Fırat and Dholakia 2006). Marketing has boomed with the rise

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of popular management studies in the 1970s, the perceived triumph of capitalism over state planning in the 1990s and the global ascent of university business and management education. It has benefited from the prodigious literary, rhetorical and advocacy skills of gurus such as Peter Drucker, Philip Kotler and Ted Levitt (Aherne 2006; Brown 2005). Today, marketing studies enjoys continued success and its web of professional associations, academic research journals and university courses seems to be on a perpetual growth trajectory. The field has been characterised by tension and contest with regard to its aims, values, predominant theories and methods (Levy 2003), given its status as an ideological and cultural phenomenon (Wilkie and Moore 2003; Marion 2006). This tension has been regularly aired in its leading journals, as befits a vibrant and politically and intellectually engaged disciplinary subject.

But, in spite of the scale of its reach and popularity, marketing studies occupies an unenviable position as the butt of the most corrosive criticism to be levelled at any management field, and indeed at any academic discipline, not excluding golf studies and homeopathy. A perusal of its published research papers supports its claims to be a plural and cross-disciplinary enterprise (Wilkie and Moore 2003) which is engaged with management practice but informed by a critical social scientific spirit of inquiry. At the same time, it stands accused of being an instrument of cultural domination, and of lacking the critical intellectual elements which would render it fit for purpose as a field of thought, and of practice (Lowe et al. 2005; Scott 2007; Sheth and Sisodia 2005; Morgan 1992, 2003).

Such diametrically opposing viewpoints can only be explained if marketing studies is two quite different things. This paper posits a putative bifurcation of marketing along axiological and methodological lines. It suggests that marketing studies operates as two parallel universes of disciplinary space, the one social scientific, the other managerial, each mutually dependent but also a mutual challenge to each other’s legitimacy. The paper explores the historical, thematic and political influences in this bifurcation with the aim of illuminating some of the many contradictions which define marketing’s disciplinary space, and which will inform its orientation in the future.

The paper will firstly reprise some of the key criticisms levelled at marketing studies. It will then review some points in the field’s development as a subject of academic study, drawing on historical accounts and thematic analyses. Particular interest falls on accounts of the institutional and political influence over the spread of marketing studies and the development of the marketing concept. Following from this analysis, the paper explores in more detail the charge that marketing is a vehicle of managerial ideology which promotes the values of economic neo-liberalism. Finally, the paper concludes with implications for the future of marketing’s disciplinary space. The aim, overall, is not to reinvigorate a moribund managerial agenda, nor to move towards a manifesto for critical marketing studies but, rather, to try to pick apart some of the influences which have given rise to the disciplinary schizophrenia of social science and managerialism in marketing studies, and to gain a sense of the kind of intellectual space which might emerge if these are acknowledged and picked apart.

CRITICISMS OF MARKETING STUDIES

The crimes of which marketing studies stands accused might surprise even some of its fiercer critics from outside the academy. Lowe et al. (2005), for example, argue
that marketing studies are deeply implicated in “the material enslavement of modern societies” (no less) because the subject legitimises “amoral scientism” as the guiding principle of marketing practice (p. 198). For these authors, the failures of marketing practice can be traced to failures of marketing research and education. They suggest that a solution lies in formal marketing management and administrative education which is “re-focussed - away from a heavy, positivist, technical orientation and more toward a value reflexive and processual dialectic orientation” (p. 199).

Among other charges are that marketing legitimises self-serving corporatism (Klein 2000), that it wilfully neglects or marginalises ethical issues and environmental concerns in marketing training, education and practice (Smith 1995; Crane 2000), and that it negatively affects children’s moral and social development by treating them as marketing means and not as human ends (Nichols and Cullen 2006). The intellectual standards of academic marketing studies have attracted equally forceful criticism, for, for example, failing to develop viable theory (Burton 2001; 2005), for promoting an ahistorical worldview which suppresses important strains of influence in marketing thought (Fullerton 1987; Tadajewski 2006a; Tadajewski and Brownlie 2008a), for pursuing managerial values at the expense of social, intellectual and ethical values (Thomas 1994, 1996), for failing to address the gap between academic marketing research and marketing practice (Wensley 1995; Bolton, 2005; Katsikeas et al. 2004; Piercy 2002; Gummesson 2002a; Brownlie et al. 2007), and for pursuing a research agenda which is “autistic” and “egotistical” (Skålen et al. 2008, p. 164).

In sum, marketing studies stands accused of being part of a relatively “homogenous” and “uncritical” business school agenda which is incapable of “meeting the challenges of either practice or ethics” (Scott 2007, p. 7). As a result, as Scott (2007) notes, it is roundly mocked by academicians of other disciplines. Marketing practitioners have been no less damning in their judgment on the contribution of marketing academics to the field. “People resent Marketing. Marketing has no seat at the table at board level … Academics aren’t relevant. And we have an ethical and moral crisis.” (Sheth and Sisodia 2005, p. 10).

A further criticism has focused on the cultural fit of the marketing management model and the way it allegedly universalises North American values in general (Dholakia et al. 1980) and neo-liberalism in particular (Witkowski 2005). This charge seems especially paradoxical given the success marketing has enjoyed in non-capitalist, and collectivist societies. The first marketing text to be adopted in the former Soviet Union was Philip Kotler’s (1967) classic (Fox et al. 2005). In Mediterranean Europe (Cova 2005) and Scandinavia (Gronroos 1994; 2004; Gummesson 2002b) there have been calls for a regional adaptation of marketing theory and practice away from the traditional transaction, Mix-focused approach and toward a more relational and service-based orientation. In Asia, a reaction of “techno-orientalism” (Jack 2008) has been observed, with Asian cultures adapting the Western managerial model to their own ends, divested of its strains of liberal individualism and tailored to profoundly relational cultural values. Not only that, but Asian countries have even adapted the conspicuous consumption lifestyle to fit the norms of group-oriented rather than individualistic values (Chadha and Husband 2006).

So, criticisms of marketing studies seem to expose some serious contradictions in the light of its global success as a field of academic research and university courses. Therefore it might be useful to re-examine some historical and thematic analyses of the development of the subject to try to explain the presence of such resonant paradox in the discipline.
THE HISTORY AND SPREAD OF INFLUENCE OF MARKETING STUDIES

One important criticism of marketing studies is that it has forgotten its own history. This has, according to some, (e.g. Tadajewski and Brownlie 2008b) condemned the subject to endless repetitions and reassertions of the same ideas (Fullerton 1987). For example, the idea that marketing practice evolved through three clearly demarcated eras from product, to sales and, finally, marketing orientation (Keith 1960) has been thoroughly debunked (e.g. Fullerton 1988; Hollander 1986) yet is still often repeated as fact in mainstream marketing text books. Contested as historical accounts are (Hollander et al. 2005) they do nonetheless shade current ideas by elucidating something of the forces which gave rise to them. In particular, some historical accounts suggest that marking’s bifurcation has come about because the discipline took a wrong turn somewhere in its history.

Modern marketing studies is often dated to the 1960s but it did in fact enjoy a university presence long before. The collegiate School of Business at Wharton, University of Pennsylvania, was established in 1881 and was offering its first courses in product Marketing by 19041, though E. D. Jones of the University of Wisconsin is credited with teaching the first university course in Marketing (Jones and Monieson 1990; Bartels 1951). Jones and Monieson (1990) concede that there may have been earlier university courses in Marketing distribution in Germany. The rest of the world was much slower to take up the marketing challenge. For example, the first professorial university Chairs in Marketing in UK universities were instituted in the early 1960s, at the universities of Strathclyde and Lancaster, but many other leading UK universities did not institute their first business schools with marketing courses for another 30 years. The Said Business School at Oxford University was established in 1996 while The Judge Management School at Cambridge University was established in 1995, though at both institutions management studies was taught for a few years before.

As marketing studies and management education became well-established in the universities of Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Harvard, a constellation of professional bodies and academic journals began to emerge, wielding varied influence over the way the field evolved. The number of academic journals publishing research and comment on marketing studies has since grown to well over 100. According to some, the top ten in rank exercise considerable influence over the field’s agenda (Sividas and Johnson 2005; Baumgartner and Pieters 2003) although for others (Wilkie and Moore 2003) this influence is uneven and fragmented. Another important source of influence was created in 1935 when the key professional body for the discipline, the Academy of Marketing, published the first of its authoritative definitions of marketing. These are periodically updated, ostensibly to reflect the broadening scope and changing emphasis of the field. For Tadajewski and Brownlie (2008b) though, they act to close down disciplinary space rather than broaden it, anchoring marketing to its managerial and positivistic themes and progressively eliminating marketing and society issues (p. 4, citing Wilkie and Moore 2006).

It has been argued that the character of modern marketing studies is very different to the way the subject was originally conceived by its pioneers in at the turn

of the century. Jones and Monieson (1990) suggest that early Marketing education aimed to place a secure foundation of well-founded knowledge under marketing management practice. Early courses drew on the German Historicist School of social science and adapted its method of inductive fact-gathering (about consumption and distribution patterns) supported by descriptive statistics. The aspiration was to create a positivistic Marketing management science rather than to create formulaic management prescriptions. This inductive scientific model was aimed at improving efficiency in the activities of market “middlemen”. Forty years later, Paul Converse (1945) published a well-known paper which reiterated the managerial and scientific aims of marketing science. However, Witkowski (2005) argues that the academics who first established marketing management university education were concerned not only with profit and managerial efficiency but also with ways in which more efficient marketing activity could increase social welfare in general. Successful marketing activity was seen as a means to an end, not as an end in itself.

Tadajewski (2006a) argues that there have been political influences framing the way marketing research and education is conceived, specifically the Cold War and McCarthyism. These influences elevated marketing to a matter of ideological as well as academic importance. One implication of this is that those marketing scholars who expressed concerns for social welfare risked being tainted with a pinkish hue. Brown (1995) has noted the influence of the Ford and Carnegie reports into marketing management education in the USA in the 1950s (Gordon and Howell 1959, Pierson, 1959) over the style of research in the field, pushing it toward a natural science model in response to criticisms of its rigour and relevance. This emphasis was renewed in 1988 with the American Marketing Association Task Force report on the continued lack of the relevance of research in marketing for practitioners (Saren 2000; Kniffin 1966; AMA 1988). All in all, there was a need to legitimise market capitalism, and one discourse which seemed to support this legitimacy was the discourse of science.

Under such political and cultural influences, Witkowski (2005) argues that marketing studies lost its intellectual, and, by implication, its moral, compass. The social welfare and historical perspectives which once lay at the heart of the discipline have, he argues, been abandoned in favour of an uncritical managerialism. As Contardo and Wensley (2004) point out, the Harvard Business School case method, which still remains so influential in management education, divorced theory from practice and led to a sense that management skill could be taught in the classroom. This classroom-orientation for teaching has remained, even as the research enterprise for marketing continues to seek scientific legitimacy. Witkowski (2005) suggests that, as a result, “marketing educators should lead a movement toward a more balanced discipline” (p. 228) with a change of emphasis away from teaching the simplistic managerial techniques with which the discipline is so closely identified and toward a renewed emphasis on intellectual rigour (especially through a historical perspective) and issues of social welfare and public policy and Marketing.

Social issues and historical perspectives are unquestionably still a major part of academic marketing’s remit, as evidenced by many specialist journals (for example, the Journal of Macromarketing and the Journal of Marketing and Public Policy) and countless contributions on marketing and society, marketing ethics and consumer policy in other journals. But there is a perception that these contributions have been pushed to the margins by the impetus for managerial solutions which prioritise shareholder value over other concerns.

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Criticisms of marketing’s scope and methods can, apparently, be dismissed by a cursory review of published studies by marketing academics. However, the negative attention the discipline has attracted for its perceived axiological and methodological myopia has persisted for some years. Arndt (1985), for example, called for paradigmatic pluralism in the intellectual traditions and research methods academics use, arguing that it should not remain a “one-dimensional” science concerned only with “technology and problem-solving” (p. 21: in Tadajewski 2006b, p. 168).

Since Arndt’s (1985) call, marketing academics have produced a veritable torrent of studies from practically every intellectual purview. Marketing and consumption phenomena have been investigated using theoretical approaches drawn from postmodernism and post structuralism (Brown 1995; Shankar et al. 2006; Skålén at al. 2006) literary studies (Stern 1990; Tonks 2002), art history (Schroeder 2002), neo-Marxist critical theory (Murray and Ozanne 1991; Alvessson 1993), anthropology (Belk et al. 1988; Penaloza 2000) and feminism (Caterall et al. 2005; Fischer and Britor 1994) among many others. Marketing studies have investigated topics as eclectic as the psychoanalysis of kleptomania (Fullerton 2007), Nestle’s Marketing strategies in the Ottoman Empire (Köse 2007), the inversion of the male gaze in advertising (Patterson and Elliott 2002) and the tragic life and death of jazz legend Chet Baker (Bradshaw and Holbrook 2007). Some of these studies, admittedly, are deliberately distanced from the managerial marketing approach and positioned as pure human or social scientific inquiry, but that does not necessarily mean that they lack relevance to managerial practice, as evidenced by, for example, socio-cultural research in branding (e.g. Schroeder and Salzer-Mörling 2006; Holt 2004).

Yet, more than thirty years after Arndt’s (1985) paper, Brownlie (2006) makes the same appeal, writing of the possibilities for a critical Marketing which is not narrow or prescriptive but draws on “the wider social sciences” (p. 506). True, the two calls have a somewhat different emphasis. Arndt (1985) responded to a certain order of solipsism in the kinds of research topics and methods deployed in the field’s top journals. Brownlie (2006), on the other hand, wrote of a change in the axiology of the discipline, seeing marketing studies as a social scientific pursuit, with all the intellectual ideals that entails, rather than merely an accessory to organisation management.

Some other calls for change seem self-contradictory. For example, in one of the occasional critical self-reflection issues of the Journal of Marketing Bolton (2005) hints at the perceived failures of the discipline, calling for creative advances in “the science and practice of marketing” (p. 1). Yet this is couched in terms of an example from medical research in-keeping with the Journal of Marketing’s stated aim to “contribute generalizable, validated findings” for “new techniques for solutions to marketing problems”. The implication is that research in the field should remain guided by managerial values and a positivistic, natural science model. Other, similar calls for change are couched in terms of a re-iteration of marketing’s goals as a managerial science (e.g. Hunt 1991; Day and Montgomery 1999), each ignoring the possibility that marketing may be more art than science (Brown 1996, 1997).

Many assertions about marketing studies seem to treat the discipline as a relatively uncontested and stable thing. Yet there is evidence in its development that there have been fundamental disagreements over key issues which have reached only a tentative

3 http://www.marketingjournals.org/jm/
resolution. One of the most important surrounds the character of the marketing concept itself.

THE ROLE OF THE MARKETING CONCEPT IN MARKETING’S TRADITION OF DISSENT

Firat and Dholakia (2006) suggest that

Marketing has emerged as the principle mode of...all relationships that all institutions have with their constituencies (or ‘markets’, as now widely used)...In part, this success is due to the fact that the marketing concept captured the essence of modern culture and of democracy...with institutions serving citizens’ wishes.

(p. 124)

Yet the marketing concept itself embodies the perpetual tension in the field. It is, at once, a taken-for-granted maxim about the customer focus of the (managerial) discipline and, at the same time, a profoundly contested and unresolved question at the core of the field.

The nature of the consumer as subject and object of the marketing concept embodies the very essence of the discipline. Wroe Alderson (1957, 1965) wrote of the limitations of classical economics in explaining how markets “cleared”. He looked at Marketing as an economic system driven by heterogeneous, and not homogeneous, consumers. Alderson’s (1957) work positioned marketing as the discipline which articulated the variegated voices of consumers and translated them into diversified strategies of market management. This work, idiosyncratic in style though resolutely managerial in focus (Brown 2002; Wooliscroft et al. 2006) is not acknowledged in typical marketing management texts and courses today yet remains influential, at least according to some authors (e.g. Wooliscroft et al. 2003; Hulthén and Gadde 2007). In particular, it expressed a spirit of dissent in marketing studies by opposing the economic model of the consumer as an entity driven by rational evaluations of product utility.

Skålén et al. (2008) argue that, while many histories of the marketing concept refer to Wroe Alderson (1957) and earlier authors, most reiterate the view that “the marketing concept became the nodal point of marketing management discourse at the beginning of the 1960s” (Skålén et al. 2008, p. 88). This may have been an important dynamic in the popular acceptance of marketing discourse but, according to some critics, the popularity came at an intellectual cost as it pushed social and “macroscopic” aspects of marketing to the margins (citing Hollander 1986, p. 23).

One way of interpreting the marketing concept is to see it as the management mentality which articulates the voice of the consumer in the organisation (Wensley 1990; following Drucker 1959; Levitt 1960). Assumptions about the consumer are the key dynamic in the discipline, given that marketing is privileged over other management disciplines because of its supposed access to consumer needs and wants and social and cultural trends in the marketplace. Sidney Levy’s (1959) work, drawing on influences from anthropology, extended the idea that consumers are heterogeneous in their needs and wants and emphasised the non-rational, symbolic and identity-forming aspects of consumption. This position challenged the philosophical basis of conventional marketing thought at that time (Harris 2007). Today, Levy’s (1959)
notion of “brand image” is part of the lexicon of business management, even though the full implications of thinking about marketing management through a consumer cultural lens remains under-developed in mainstream marketing thought (Holt 2004). Yet Levy (1996, in Tadajewski 2008) bemoans the way that many mainstream marketing academics still cleave to the idea of a rational, utility-seeking consumer, the very idea to which marketing evolved as a counterpoint.

Levy’s (1959) anthropological idea that the consumer generates meaning from the symbolic practices of marketing was at odds with the drive to place marketing on the level of physical science (see also Gardner and Levy 1955). Symbolism does not easily lend itself to measurement. Today, one aspect of marketing’s bifurcation is seen in the different models of the consumer which prevail in the parallel universes of marketing and consumer research. That they are, or should be, one and the same thing might seem obvious to the lay person. Marketing is nothing if it is not grounded in the consumer experience. Yet marketing and consumer research have somehow become separated academic enterprises. The anthropological and social scientific investigation of consumers and consumption has become identified with the consumer culture theory movement (Arnould and Thompson 2006: see also Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). This research has investigated the nature of the consumer experience with regard, for example, to its hedonistic, existential and sexual motivations (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Elliott 1997; Gould 1991). Tadajewski (2006b) has argued that this “interpretive” tradition of research can actually be traced back much further, to the work of motivational researcher Ernest Dichter (e.g. 1947, 1949) who incorporated influences from the disciplines of economic geography, political science, psychoanalysis and psychology. It is, perhaps, significant that Dichter’s work, like much of Levy’s, seems to be relatively ignored in the research agenda of the top marketing journals.

MARKETING STUDIES, MANAGERIAL IDEOLOGY AND NEO-LIBERALISM

It can only be speculation as to whether such selectivity is unconscious or not, but it is a feature of ideology that certain truths become regarded as so self-evident that oppositional views are rendered illegitimate. Marion (2006) argues that marketing’s ideological character is evident in its reliance on a set of relatively unquestioned beliefs. These include, for example, the free operation of markets, the virtues of consumer orientated organisation, consumer sovereignty, and the distributive efficiency of placing the satisfaction of consumer needs and wants at the apex of organisational activity. These axiomatic truths provide legitimacy for marketing professionals and for the market economy. Again, such a view is predicated on a bifurcated discipline in which managerial and social scientific values respectively inform two quite opposed yet mutually dependent research and teaching agendas. It is clear by now that there are significant social scientific traditions within marketing studies giving the field a plural and intellectually liberal character. This leads to the possibility that, while the bifurcation of marketing studies may have historical and political elements, ideological issues should also be considered.

The charge that marketing studies is a vehicle for neo-liberal ideology needs to be taken seriously by the discipline because of what it implies about the intellectual integrity of university academics and business schools. For Scott (2007) there is no debate to be had- according to academics of other disciplines, we don’t have any integrity. It must be admitted that particular texts in any intellectual field will have
their ideological undercurrents. Two things stand out about marketing studies. One is that discussion of the ideological influences in the field does not generally occur in the top managerially and scientifically focused journals, nor in its typical text books. The other is that the discipline has become globally popular because one particular set of truths and assumptions about marketing studies has come to represent the entire discipline with a striking degree of uniformity.

For Witkowski (2005), marketing studies has, from its origins, embodied the neo-liberal values of individualism, freedom and choice. As such, it carries strong ideological undercurrents, making its success in other cultures all the more notable. He argues that modern marketing’s theoretical foundations in classical and neo-classical economics link it ineluctably with deep assumptions about “the existence of private enterprise, competitive firms, the rule of law, and the free international movement of goods, services and capital….individualism and utilitarianism.” (Witkowski 2005, p. 222, citing Bartels 1988, and Wilkie and Moore 2003).

This neo-liberal spirit is expressed in the managerialism which connects academic marketing with values which have become pre-eminent in public and commercial life in the Western world (Skålén at al. 2006). As a conduit for managerial ideology, marketing is said to wield influence as a discourse of organisational control (Willmott 1999; Brownlie and Saren 1997: Morgan 1992) and a force marketising not only non-profit and charitable areas, but even relationships, experiences and emotions (Reuter and Zitziwitz 2006).

In marketing studies, the notion of ideology is rarely engaged with in depth (O’Reilly 2006). Partly as a result, where it is discussed there has sometimes been confusion between the concept and specific ideologies. In some cases it is identified naively with neo-Marxism, echoing the politically charged Cold War ideas about free markets as oppositional positions to “ideology”. This misconstrues the concept, as Marion (2006) points out, alluding to Dumont’s (1977) distinction between ideology as a distortion of truth, and ideology as beliefs which are unquestioned and taken-for-granted. The second version is not a distortion of an absolute reality but, rather, one manifestation of a socially constructed reality.

Hirschman (1993) cites Eagleton (1991) on ideology as the ways in which a particular “world-view or value and-belief system of a particular class or group of people” is reproduced through various strategies (p. 538). Ideological strategies include representing particular norms as if they are taken-for-granted as being good for all groups (“normalisation” and “universalisation”). Another, instrumentalism (Eagleton 1991), defines the character of relationships so, for example in typical marketing text books, the greater good is equated with consumption. Marketing is referred to as an ideology not only because, as a management philosophy, its values are a matter of faith rather than reason (Whittington and Whipp 1992) but also because it demonstrates Eagleton’s (1991) ideological strategies in its texts and courses (Hackley 2003).

The suggestion that marketing studies can be seen as an ideological vehicle carrying the values of neo-liberalism and managerialism might seem far-fetched, given that marketing studies are typically understood in terms of a politically and ethically neutral discipline made up of a patchwork of managerial problem-solving concepts and techniques. What is more, as we have seen, the discipline is characterised by enormous vitality and divergence, at least if its full range of research journals, encompassing consumer research, public policy and marketing theory, are considered. But the marketing studies which attracts such vilification is the other half of a bifurcated discipline, one identified strongly with the “tools and concepts”
managerial approach. Marketing is marketed as an applied and technical discipline in hundreds of stylised and almost identical text books (Brown 1995; Holbrook 1995; Hackley 2003) which generally ignore the critical social scientific strains of research in the field.

Managerialism, as a manifestation of neo-liberal ideology, does not refer only to the practical processes of organising resources and people, but also to a discourse of power and domination. Skålen et al. (2006) argue that marketing has been a fundamentally managerial discipline since its earliest origins and this gives marketing a “governmental” character (Foucault, 2000) which frames human subjectivity in terms of the values and priorities of marketing. So, workers as well as consumers orient their thinking around a neo-liberal set of values about the primacy of markets and marketised relationships. Marketing discourse acts to impose the values of managerialism as ideology, so that they are internalised (Alvesson 1993; Morgan 1992).

For Enteman (1993), managerialism replaced socialism and capitalism as the pre-eminent ideology of our time. It acts to justify business activity at the expense of all other forms of relationship and economic organisation. Its dangers lie in the displacement of public debate through elected representatives, with technocratic decision-making, by-passing the needs and interests of individual citizens. There can be little doubt that marketing discourse has indeed reached into every form of organisation. Kotler and Levy (1969) and Kotler and Zaltman (1971) argued that marketing management principles could and should be applied to any form of organisation. This is reflected in the wide use in the public and non-profit sectors of marketing discourse and managerial values, sometimes referred to as the New Public Management (Cousins 1990; Laing 2003).

Marion (2006) refers to ideology as the third level in three inter-acting elements in marketing studies, the other two of which are practice and (codified) knowledge. Practice refers to the almost pre-historical character of marketing activity, given that it could be said to have originated with the earliest forms of trade and barter and may even have been the reason why writing was developed (Brown and Jensen-Schau 2008). Layer two, the knowledge of marketing, performs the discipline, both “conceptualizing and enacting market economy” (Marion 2006, p. 247). In drawing on marketing’s codified knowledge, its normative “tools and concepts”, (Hackley 1998), marketing practitioners enact and legitimise both the practitioner and the practice of marketing (Svensson 2007). Marketing’s ideological component lies, according to Marion (2006), in its attempts to legitimise itself by spreading its values and ideas so that they are shared by many.

THE SOCIAL MARKETING MOVEMENT

The social marketing movement (Gordon et al. 2007: Hastings and Heywood 1994), alluded to above, serves to highlight some of the issues surrounding managerialism and neo-liberalism in marketing studies. On the face of it, social marketing is an enterprise which opposes and resists the values of managerialism and individualistic, economic neo-liberalism. But some critics suggest that, in fact, social marketing is just as ideologically loaded as managerial marketing studies (O’Shaughnessy 1996). Charities and public sector organisations seek socially responsible ends but, like commercial organisations, they also use marketing concepts to justify many kinds
of change (Willmott 1993; Morgan 1992). State-sponsored promotional campaigns for energy-saving, environmental protection, anti-cigarette smoking, safer levels of alcohol consumption and so forth seem to be expressing the voices of citizenship and social responsibility in opposition to the excessive zeal of marketing. Yet the use of marketing techniques, especially advertising, to address the negative externalities of marketing activity carries a potential contradiction. Social marketing can be seen to reassert the values and power of the prevailing state authority (Witkowski 2005; Brenkert 2002). Social marketing messages may be well-meaning but they are cast in the same pro-marketing ideological hue as the marketing messages which they are ostensibly designed to counter, since they potentially carry the same neo-liberal undertones as other forms of marketing activity.

**CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

One could argue that the idea of a bifurcated discipline, occupying two parallel universes, is an over-elaboration. So what if managerial marketing, with its physical science model of research and anecdotal teaching style is one distinct discipline, while the critical social science perspective forms another, largely conducted under the interpretive consumer culture research banner? For many commentators there are serious intellectual, social and, by implication, moral implications of having a discipline in which ideology is disengaged from social science. Witkowski (2005) and Lowe et al. (2005) suggest that marketing studies needs to be reconnected to its original ethos focused on social welfare. It can achieve this through a more historically informed and intellectually engaged approach, which, they argue, can enable it to rediscover its integrity as a branch of management education. For Brownlie (2006), it is an intellectual imperative that marketing studies justifies itself not only as a managerial discipline but as a field of social scientific study conducted in universities, with the purist and disinterested intellectual values that implies. Bradshaw and Firat (2007) offer the view that marketing studies requires a reappraisal from the neo-Marxist intellectual tradition of the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory. They argue that, as a “unifying pillar” (p. 41) in the field drawing on the capitalist critique of social Horkeimer and Adorno (1944), this perspective can confer insights into the taken-for-granted power relations implicit in marketing discourse. Tadajewski (2008), on the other hand, offers the pessimistic view that the ideological character and institutional infrastructure of the field is unlikely to change, and critical, revisionist or interpretive work in marketing studies is likely to remain outside the ideologically-driven mainstream.

Holt (2004) has written of iconic brands which resolve dilemmas of identity. Marketing studies, as a commodity marketed and sold in itself (Holbrook 1995) has, arguably, assumed a quasi-branded character, perhaps resolving dilemmas of identity for individuals and cultures faced with the task of reconciling some of the contradictions of neo-liberalism. It serves the purposes of those who engage with it, including academics. The historical, political, institutional and ideological influences which inform the bifurcation of the marketing studies discipline have an enduring influence on the field, and inform what this paper has characterised as parallel universes of social science and managerial marketing. Working through this influence and engaging with the contradictions it generates would seem to be a central task for a critical reorientation of disciplinary space in marketing studies.
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