

CURRENT RECEIVED DOCTRINE OF MARKETING THOUGHT: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents a number of discussion points which attempt to show how academic marketing is presently understood by some marketing scholars. -This received doctrine is not based on the notion that marketing is primarily a study of firms or of consumers (i.e., marketing management and the 4Ps), but rather a study of one aspect of human and social behavior concerned with buying and selling. This received view is not part of mainstream marketing and is not universally accepted. Its existence is probably not even recognized by the majority of students of marketing. Few are exposed to this received doctrine where managerial decision making is not the focus. At least two major reasons exist which help explain its lack of recognition. Unlike mainstream marketing, the received view is intertwined and interconnected with historical analysis and research. Secondly, the market is its focal point. Economic thinkers have been the ones who have shaped our understanding of markets and the making of economic society out of which marketing emerged. However, mainstream marketing neglects economic thinking, past and present, and draws much of its knowledge development more in the non economic and non historical domain of the social sciences. Abandoning economic thinking in marketing means removing marketing from a market setting. It also means developing marketing knowledge from sources other than from some of the world's greatest thinkers and philosophers. Marketing has not been blessed with grand social thinkers that have influenced human knowledge. In fact, unlike other fields, such as sociology or economics, marketing cannot lay claim to any world class thinker as one of its founding fathers and whose ideas spilled over to other areas of human knowledge. If mainstream marketing neglects the knowledge derived from scholars such as Aristotle, Smith, Marshall, Chamberlain, Boulding, Max, Commons, Veblen, Polanyi, Durkheim, Parsons, among others, where else can it obtain its food for thought? The current approach has made mainstream marketing too faddish and too dependent on what's happening in other social and management disciplines. New buzz words or new research methodologies can never be substitutes for sound thought and theory development. Thus, the received view suggests that for marketing to be less faddish, and more intellectually independent, it needs to borrow a lot more from the past in order to move forward in its quest for more legitimacy and scholarliness.

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