Marketing Philosophy, Praxis and Pedagogy:
A critical inquiry into the theory and practice of Marketing

Terry Smith          University of Chester
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“There is nothing so practical as a good theory”. (1951:169)

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“Experience alone does not create knowledge” and “If you want to truly understand something try and change it”.

Kurt Lewin
Experts’ ideas get lost in a fog of impenetrable jargon

If we are not contrarians, we are not academics.” (2005)

“The time for obfuscation and obscurantism masquerading as profundity has passed; the time for reasoned thinking is just beginning.” (Hunt,1994:24)
“Knowledge does not exist in a vacuum, and your own writing only has value in relation to other people's. Your work and your findings will be significant only to the extent that they are the same as, or different from, other people’s work”

(Jankowicz, 1995, p.128-9)
SD Logic is mainly a synthesis of established theoretical and practical elements. It has been given the accolade of being a new paradigm to challenge the normative managerial marketing 'product' model, but this is really not the case. It is not a paradigm shift; it is another parallax perspective. Whilst co-creation & complicity in relationships is obviously a key ingredient to successful marketing, this was phenomenon was there before Vargo and Lusch. Intellectualising practice is our raison d'être, and this is often insightful and creative, but often it merely reflects in situ praxis. Vargo and Lusch's work is a great piece of literature review and synthesis but it has been erroneously elevated beyond a statement of the 'bleedin' obvious' in my opinion.

If you want to take up the heterodoxical view that SDL is over-stated, I'd be happy to open a conversation on terry.smith@chester.ac.uk.

Marketing academics are always desperate to acclaim the latest paradigm; that's what we do. The quest for the Holy Grail of THE normative theory makes us consider various societal or social variations of how practice is reflected in theory and how theory is reflected in practice. The problem I see with the 'ground-breaking' SD Logic is that it purports to claim credit for something which had been practised long before Vargo and Lusch discovered the marketing New World: the co-creation of value-in-use with the dual complicity and symbiosis of company and customer was well-established praxis, particularly in the interconnected environs of B2B. That circular, iterative process is evident even before the authentic service marketing paradigm shifts of the '80s. Bitner et al proved that the service sector was a mirage. With precision and illumination, they articulated the all-pervasive nature of service logic and were instrumental in persuading marketing academics to 'break away from the product'.
Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to explore the dynamics of marketing practice and theory in arguing that much of the dislocation between strategy and practice is due to the inheritance and internalisation of often impractical but persistently dominant, tacit Cartesian assumptions.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper uses case methodology to examine the marketing theory into practice/marketing practice into theory conundrum and explores: their separation (marketing theory and marketing practice); their flows (context to text to context: theory into practice/practice into theory); their symbiosis (the praxis of marketing); and the dynamic and static (in situ/in aspic) nature of their duality. This work is an exploratory empirical study undertaken in what is a very under-researched area.

Findings – In this paper, marketing theory and marketing practice are recognised as occupying different epistemologies. The lifeworld of marketing theorising appears as characterised by a relatively homogenous and mostly cognitive world dominated by rationality and empirical rigour. By contrast, the embodied practitioner inhabits a more highly segmented, fragmented, heterogeneous and frequently improvised landscape.
“Marketing in situ; marketing in aspic: the relevance of marketing theory to marketing practice” at the Academy of Marketing “Marketing Relevance” Conference at Cardiff in 2013


Relationship between research and experience

Marketing Theory

Academics

Marketing Philosophy, Praxis and Pedagogy: A critical inquiry into the theory and practice of Marketing

Marketing Practice

Practitioners

Marketing Pedagogy

B2B Management

Lecturers

Conference Presentations

Academic Writing

HE Teaching

Students
Relationship between research and experience

Marketing knowledge in text and contexts

- Academics
- Practitioners
- Marketing Theory
- Marketing Practice
- Marketing Pedagogy
- Lecturers
- Students
Marketing knowledge

“Of the many marketing constituencies, the dominant discourse may be with the academy, but the hegemony is gravitating towards recognition of contextual marketing meaning. The long-established paradigm which shapes the planning and teaching of marketing is under threat from both an academic point of view and from the contextual practitioner world of ad hoc application”.

(Smith et al, 2015:5)
“The manifestation of marketing knowledge in thought, word and deed – or theory, published paper or marketing plan – is evident in “the micro-discourses and narratives that marketing actors draw upon to represent their work”.

(Ardley and Quinn, 2014:97).
Marketing knowledge

Figure 1. Integrative model illustrating flow, separation and connectedness of key actors in marketing knowledge production and consumption.
Roots of Marketing Knowledge

- Theoretical Orientation
  - Critical Marketing perspectives
  - Innovative entrepreneurial strategies

- Practical Orientation
  - Situated Logic of Practice
  - PRAXIS
  - SOCIAL MODEL

- Theoretical Normative Marketing Model

- Accepted Orthodoxy
  - Contested Heterodoxy
Thomas Kuhn Paradigms

Marketing knowledge in text and contexts
Positivism (ie: the scientific paradigm) asserts that phenomena exists independently and can be ‘known’ through observation. Knowledge can be developed from generalisable theoretical statements with reliability and replicability the key underpinning pillars of ‘rigorous’ research.

Interpretivism, described by Crotty (1998:67) as “culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world”, offers a serious paradigmatic alternative to a positivistic perspective.

Critical theory is concerned with power relations and patterns of dominance and how that power influences other groups.

The scientific paradigm seeks to generalise; the interpretive paradigm seeks to understand; and the critical paradigm seeks to emancipate (Scotland, 2012:15).
Marketing knowledge

Praxis is “the struggle to link theory to practice, action and reflection in order to bring about transformation”. (Humm, 1995:2)

“a more fruitful agenda resides in the development of a polyphonic and creative micro-discourses that essentially champion context, difference and individual meaning in marketing knowledge production”. (Ardley and Quinn, 2014:90).