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On Foundations Research In The Social Sciences

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Abstract

Among the hallmarks of a mature science are a concern with foundations and an effort to secure those foundations as firmly as possible. Even for the youngest of social sciences, a conceptual foundations study should prove worthwhile. After a brief exposition of foundations issues, the authors illustrate a foundations study in marketing through a semantic analysis of the expression 'market', as typically defined in standard marketing textbooks. The findings of this analysis suggest that 'market' is a normative rather than descriptive expression, and therefore denotes nothing measurable. The authors discuss the importance of this finding to social scientists and the opportunities for other foundations studies in the social sciences.

Introduction

The foundations of a science are those concepts and claims that are too basic to be meaningfully supported by other concepts or claims within that science. The epistemic warrant for one of these foundations may come from any number of sources: direct experience, indirect experience (that is, measurements), logic, or the results of other empirical sciences, to name but a few sources. Thus, if one is to evaluate the epistemic warrant of an isolated foundation of some science, one must stand outside that science.

The present paper argues that social scientists can and should undertake foundational research within their own fields. That social scientists can fruitfully undertake foundational research in any field is made plausible by a foundations study in a peripheral social science, marketing. That

social scientists should undertake foundational research is made plausible by the discussion surrounding the study. Therefore, the paper, though built around a narrow foundational issue, has general import for all areas of social science.

Foundations studies, as we conceive them, are closely related to studies in the philosophy of science. A foundational concept, however, while sometimes shared qua concept by several disciplines, usually plays a conceptual role qua foundation that is unique to the discipline that it grounds. For example, an analysis of probability is a philosophical study, whereas an analysis of the degree of support that sociology demands from probability is a study in the foundations of sociology. Therefore, foundations studies are (1) more empirical than philosophy of science in that they describe and analyze how things are in fact conceived by the scholars of a given discipline, and (2) narrower in scope and hence more sensitive to the unique flavor of a given discipline or subdiscipline. The task of making various foundations consistent across disciplines, however, is clearly one for philosophy of science.

By way of preliminaries, we review a standard version of the structure of justification and the special status of foundational claims within that structure. After discussing the place of foundations studies within mature sciences, we extend the discussion to an issue central to marketing: What is a market? There follows a brief outline of the foundational study, and then the study itself. Following the conclusion of the study proper are some further thoughts about the value of foundations studies to the social sciences.

Foundations

The Structure of Justification

There are two sorts of knowledge claims: claims justified within the context of their discipline and claims not so justified. Even the most complete and systematic compendium of a science must contain some unjustified claims. To call a claim unjustified, however, is neither to deny it nor to doubt it. An unjustified claim is simply a claim with no explicitly stated justification. Thus, unjustified claims are not derived from other claims.

Justified claims, on the other hand, are derived from other claims. Justification is always a purely linguistic process: the process of justification begins not with experience, but with statements of experience; not with internal states, but with descriptions of internal states; not with a moral sentiment, but with moral claims.

Justification is analogous to definition. In a standard dictionary, words define other words. Some words (e.g., specific colors), however, may be best explained by an illustration. Likewise, a request for justification in psychology is sometimes best answered by an appeal to something other than psychological concepts, such as an appeal to a theory of neuroscience or an appeal to a result of introspection.

Some degree of certainty attaches to any given claim. This degree may be variously thought of as a subjective measure of one's feelings of confidence, or as an intersubjective measure, or as an objective probability. The rationale by which a degree of certainty attaches to a claim is its ratification. Justification is only one such form of ratification.

To justify some claim, C_1 , one may cite a claim, J_1 . If asked to justify J_1 , one may then cite J_2 , and so forth. Let us call such a sequence of claims, taken together with the appropriate rules of inference, a chain of justification, or a "J-chain." The degree of

certainty attaching to C_1 can be no greater than that attaching to its weakest supporting justification. The degree of certainty depends also on the inference rules: strong inference rules maintain a steady level of certainty, whereas weak rules reduce certainty. Thus, for example, a valid deduction from empirical data is exactly as certain as the data; whereas an inductive inference from empirical data is less certain than the data.

J-chains are usually thought of as finite, or at least finitely producible in principle.¹ Because all chains (and hence, all linear chains) are finite, every linear chain must contain a first claim. Any first claim in a J-chain must be unjustified, else some prior claim would justify it. So too with pyramids: every branch ends in an unjustified claim.

Foundations Studies

The preceding discussion of J-chains brings into relief three crucial parts of every science: the justified claims, the rules of inference, and the unjustified claims. Each part is a separate field of study. Thus, normal science establishes the justified claims, philosophy of science questions the rules of inference, and foundation studies explore the unjustified claims.²

If only a small degree of certainty attaches to some unjustified claim, no greater certainty can attach to any claim it supports. This last statement, clearly true when sample data grounds a theory, applies also when the foundations are conceptual.³

The Illustrative Foundations Study. To illustrate a conceptual foundations study in the social sciences, we propose to analyze the term 'market' as used in marketing.

The discipline of marketing was chosen because it is relatively young and has no unified theory. This latter problem is recognized by marketers. Fifteen years ago, Leone and Schultz set out to catalog the laws of marketing, but found that

when the same standards used to define generalizations in other fields were applied to marketing, our scientific foundation appeared to be more marsh than bedrock.⁴

Marketers disagree about the general paradigm of marketing. For example, some believe it to be Hunt's framework, which delimits the scope of marketing to three dichotomies: micro/macro, nonprofit/profit, and positive/normative.⁵ Others believe it to be social exchange, which defines marketing as "the process of creating and resolving exchange relationships",⁶ or the study of potency variations in product assortments that result from an exchange of values.⁷ Still others believe it to be the marketing concept: the idea that "the key to achieving organizational goals consists in determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors".⁸ As a result, marketing has multiple versions; and much confusion in marketing results from each version's using the same foundational terms while meaning different things. Clearly, the first foundations studies that marketers must engage in are those that aim at disambiguating foundational terms. This study, even if it does nothing else, at least takes an important step toward sorting out incommensurable paradigms.

The term 'market' was chosen for several reasons: (1) it is not defined by other marketing terms; (2) it is used to define many other marketing terms; (3) the definition of 'market' in marketing is not borrowed from another discipline; (4) the definition is not fixed by a professional society, but varies among marketers; (5) 'market', as used by marketers, is an original contribution to the language; and (6) even though multiple definitions exist, they are broadly similar and hence easily confused.

The current definitions cluster around two distinct models, both of which we will

explain and clarify. In doing so, we will try to address the following questions:

- (1) For each of these definitions, what are the truth conditions for the sentence schema 'M is a market.'?
- (2) To what does the definition ontologically commit marketers?⁹
- (3) How do the extensions of these different definitions compare with each other?
- (4) What type of theory does each definition best support?

Outline for the Foundations Study. The central argument of the study rests on two empirical premises, both of which will be empirically supported at the outset. Premise (P1), that the term 'market' is currently fundamental to marketing, will be established by a list of some terms that are typically defined by reference to the term 'market'. Premise (P2), that marketers currently accept only two definitional models of 'market', will be established by a literature review. These premises supply the raw material of the study. What follows will shape this material into a philosophically interesting, yet nontrivial claim about the limits of marketing science. We have elected to conduct the analytical portion of this foundation study along philosophical (linguistic) lines, but other approaches are possible. Historians would analyze the same data quite differently, as would sociologists.

Next, the two definitional models will first be explained intuitively, then strengthened and clarified. Where ambiguities exist, they will be either eliminated or expressly incorporated in the revised definitions. A brief discussion of the similarities and differences among these models will serve to highlight the uses for which each model may be best employed.

Three expressions will then be stipulatively defined: 'normative sentence',

'explicitly normative expression', and 'is normative at time T'. A fourth expression will be partially defined: 'descriptive science'; that is, a necessary, but not sufficient, condition will be offered.

Working with these premises, models, definitions, and partial definitions, we will show, as a lemma, that both models of 'market' contain explicitly normative expressions. Using this lemma, we conclude that marketing theory, as now taught, cannot be part of a descriptive science.

The argument has profound implications for all social sciences that have certain economic notions among their basic concepts. For example, one could make a similar argument that consumer behavior and economics, as currently taught, are not descriptive sciences; consumer behavior and economics are normative disciplines because certain core terms, such as 'needs' and 'income', are explicitly normative terms.

Much of the discussion in this sample foundations study will be quite familiar to many readers. In fact, our intention is for the study to be self-contained, thorough, and uncontroversial. This latter point is most important because we are trying to apply philosophical analysis to an existing empirical discipline, marketing. Any such attempt is fraught with pitfalls, especially because the results cast a pall over the very idea of marketing as a descriptive science.

Background For The Argument

The Premises

(P1): As marketing is now taught, the notion of a market is fundamental to marketing theory.

To establish premise (P1), we scanned the glossaries of a convenience sample of 12 recent Principles of Marketing textbooks.¹⁰ These twelve textbooks alone contained over two-hundred expressions that either (1) contained the term 'market',

(2) contained 'market' in their definitions, or (3) contained in their definition terms that fit (1) or (2). If these textbooks fairly represent how marketing is currently taught, much of the typical marketing student's vocabulary rests on 'market'.¹¹

(P2): As marketing is currently taught, there are only two ways of defining 'market', the Present Properties Model and the Future Purchasers Model.

A review of eighty-eight marketing textbooks that have appeared since 1920 reveals not only that three models have predominated — the Present Properties Model (PPM), the Future Purchasers Model (FPM), and the Economic Model (EM) — but also that the latter model has suffered a severe decline in popularity since 1970. This shift in models has been so pervasive that a library search of three major southwestern universities uncovered no post-1979 textbook that used the EM. (A complete listing of textbooks is available upon request.)

The wordings and the completeness of definitions vary from one textbook to another. Nonetheless, most definitions are captured by at least one of three models:

- (1) The Economic Model (EM): The market, M_x , for a product or service, X , is the economic, geographic, social, or physical environment in which or through which an exchange of the ownership of X can occur.
- (2) The Present Properties Model (PPM): M_x is the set of people with certain measurable properties, such as needing X , being willing to buy X , being financially able to buy X , and so forth.
- (3) The Future Purchasers Model (FPM): M_x is the set of people who might purchase X .¹²

Marketing Schools of Thought

Which major schools of marketing support each of the above definitions? Given the declining influence of economics in marketing, few marketing scholars continue to support EM-style definitions. After World War II, the academic theories of economics became less relevant to marketing scholars, who sought applicable rather than esoteric theories.

The microeconomic paradigm looks at an abstraction of a market, usually pure competition in a one-level structure. It tells us to study resource allocation by asking questions about supply, demand, transaction efficiency, and levels of information. The reason most often given by marketers for rejecting this paradigm is its excessive abstraction. . .¹³

Two major schools of marketing thought emerged after World War II: the managerial school and the buyer behavior school. The managerial school arose in response to practitioner needs for effective solutions to post-World War II business problems.¹⁴ This school was grounded in concepts borrowed from marketing practitioners and a "branch of economics focused on the theory of the firm, rather than on demand theory."¹⁵ Many of this school's key concepts, such as the product life cycle (analogous to epidemiological life cycle models), the marketing mix (a way to dissect marketing problems into the product, its price, how to promote it, and how to distribute it), and market segmentation (a way to increase profits by targeting products at homogeneous submarkets), have dominated scholarly and applied marketing thought during the past thirty years. "In fact, a strong argument can be made for positioning the managerial school as the most comprehensive school among the galaxy of marketing schools of thought."¹⁶

By shifting "the focus of marketing to individual behavior"¹⁷ in the 1950s, the managerial school paved the way for the buyer behavior school. Buyer behaviorists use "demographic information [to determine] how many and who are the consumers . . . [and] address the question of *why* customers behave the way they do in the marketplace."¹⁸ Because consumer behavior is considered a subset of human behavior, buyer behaviorists tend to borrow explanations of human behavior from other social sciences. Furthermore, they limit their study to consumer (rather than industrial) products, brand choice (rather than product class or timing of choice) behavior, and purchase (rather than consumption or disposal) behavior.

Despite their differences, both schools share at least three important beliefs:

- (1) internal states and the behaviors of consumers are the fundamental explananda of marketing;
- (2) consumer behaviors are attributable to consumer perceptions, whether founded or unfounded;
- (3) the marketing concept is the guiding principle of marketing.

The marketing concept, which posits that companies will achieve their goals by first determining and then satisfying customer needs more effectively than competing firms, became the guiding principle of marketing during the 1960s. This concept was pivotal to the evolution and rapid dissemination of the managerial and buyer behavior schools. Whereas the managerial school used the marketing concept to promote its philosophy of profiting from the satisfaction of customer needs, the buyer behavior school probed the psychological processes that lead consumers to express their needs through purchase-related behaviors.

In part, proponents of the managerial and buyer behavior schools embraced the

marketing concept as a way to overcome the negative public image of marketing. Marketers were (and to some extent, continue to be) portrayed as unprincipled, manipulative, quick-buck artists. For example, in his famous book entitled The Hidden Persuaders, Vance Packard preached that marketers used the results of motivation research — a form of commercial psychoanalysis for the masses — to turn consumers into helpless purchasing automatons.¹⁹ Consumer reporters such as David Horowitz made their reputations by cautioning the public about unscrupulous marketers who used questionable selling practices (e.g., bait-and-switch), deceptive advertising, and other unfair tactics. However, once all marketers accept the reactive-rather-than-proactive marketing concept, the possibility of unfair marketing practices is eliminated; marketers who follow the marketing concept are passive servants to the existing needs and wants of consumers.

In the more volatile and internationally-competitive 1970s and 1980s, marketers began to question the marketing concept. For example, Bennett and Cooper argued that

strict adherence to the marketing concept has damaged American business. It has led to a dearth of true innovation and it has shifted the strategic focus of the firm away from the product to . . . elements that can be manipulated very successfully in the short run but which leave the business vulnerable in the long term.²⁰

The customer orientation of the marketing concept implies that marketers win customers through direct customer appeals. However, this philosophy assumes that customers know what they want, that marketing research can ascertain what they want, that satisfied customers will reward marketers

with repeated purchases, and that differences between competitive offerings are meaningful to customers. By contrast, a competitor orientation implies that marketers win customers at the expense of rivals and in ways other than offering a better match between products and customer needs.

Because the marketing concept treats of only buyers and sellers, it ignores the other parties and forces that determine a firm's long-run success (e.g., competitors, governments, environments). As a result,

. . . strategic marketing has emerged in response to criticisms that marketing has failed to consider adequately the development of long-term competitive advantage.²¹

Strategic marketing examines the "fundamental pattern of present and planned objectives, resource deployments, and interactions of an organization with markets, competitors, and other environmental factors."²² Key questions addressed by strategic marketing include the direction of corporate strategy — What business are/should we be in? What distinctive competencies should we develop and maintain so as to sustain a long-run competitive advantage? — and marketing strategy — How should we allocate and coordinate marketing resources and activities to accomplish our objectives within a specific product-market?

Rather than the passive orientation dictated by the marketing concept, strategic marketing is proactive.

Another characteristic of strategic market management is that it doesn't necessarily accept the environment as given with the strategic role confined to adaptation and reaction. Rather, the possibility exists for strategy to be proactive with the

possibility of affecting environmental change. Thus, governmental policies, customer needs, and technological developments can be influenced—and perhaps even controlled—by creative, active strategies.²³

Clearly, members of the managerial and consumer behavior schools would support PPM-style models of 'market', and members of the emerging strategic marketing school would support FPM-style models of 'market'.

The Models

The Economic Model. This foundations study is concerned with only the conceptual (not the historical or economic) foundations of marketing science; therefore, the EM will not be treated in detail. However, because the EM could revive, a description follows.

The EM draws some of its support from etymology. 'Market' derives from the Latin word 'mercatus', meaning (1) trade, traffic, or buying and selling; or (2) a place for trade, market-place, or mart.²⁴ Thus, 'market' originally referred to either a physical place in which buying and selling activities occur, or to those activities themselves. This parallels the two aspects of the EM: (1) an environment, or (2) an exchange relation.

The EM treats 'market' as a relation-term, not a descriptor. Changes in communication technology, credit systems, and transportation have extended the scope of the EM to include many buyer-seller relationships. For example, whenever a market relation occurs between social units A and B, with respect to a brand X, it is said that A markets X to B. Clearly, this verb, 'to market', is the origin of 'marketing'.

"Market-as-a-verb" is common to several disciplines, and has its place within marketing; "market-as-a-noun," however, denoting a group of people, has no

etymological support. Locutions such as 'the hobbyist market' or 'the first-time-home-owner market' is an original and recent contribution of marketing science to the English language.²⁵

The Present Properties Model (PPM). Marketers often describe markets as groups of people who share certain features. We will translate this kind of talk into more philosophical language and speak of "sets" of people who share some "property" or "properties."²⁶ Marketers find their approach useful because they cannot directly measure the future, so the only accessible bases for sales forecasts lie in the past and the present. Drawing upon past sales information, marketers try to correlate properties that are measured at a certain time with subsequent sales. If they can show a significant correlation in the past, they project future sales from present data. They reason that if certain types of people have bought certain types of product, it is the types, not the people themselves, that correlate with sales.

Intuitively, the PPM makes great sense. For example, first-time mothers, new home-owners, computer users, and boating enthusiasts are each likely to make some typical purchases. Suppose Sammy is a first-time homeowner. Although he may in fact fill his tool shed with gardening supplies, a PPM-style marketer would treat him as a member of the gardening-supplies market.

Ideally, facts about the future should enter into the measurements of markets; but no practicable definition can transcend facts about the present and past. According to PPM-style reasoning, any knowledge we can have of Sammy qua member of the gardening-supplies market is justified by Sammy's membership in some set of people who typically buy garden supplies. Thus, on a PPM-style approach, it is the present indicators of future behavior, not the future behavior itself, that determine membership in a market.

A sample PPM-style definition appears is as follows:

... a market is an aggregate of people who, as individuals or as organizations, have needs for products in a product class and who have the ability, willingness, and authority to purchase such products.²⁷

The PPM accommodates some unusual circumstances. A PPM-style market for product X could exist without a single purchase of X. For example, before a software company develops a specialized software package, it might require proof of a sufficiently large market to warrant the cost of development. If the market is a group of people with a set of properties, then scuttling the project will not dissolve the market. Clearly, marketers must be able to think about markets for nonexistent products, and the PPM condones such thinking.²⁸

The following characterization of the PPM considers two types of purchase: individual and organizational. Two ceteris paribus clauses, in the spirit of the PPM, have been added to strengthen the model. Thus, the revised PPM reads:

Where X is a product class, p is a person, A is an aggregate of people, o is an organization, R(p,o) is p acting as a representative of o, and M_x is the market for X,

$M_x = A$ if and only if for every $p \in A$,

either

- (1) (a) p has a need for member(s) of X, and
 (b) p has the ability to purchase member(s) of X, and
 (c) p is willing to purchase member(s) of X, and
 (d) nothing prevents p from purchasing a member of X;

or

- (2) (a) o has a need for member(s) of X, and
 (b) o has the ability to purchase member(s) of X, and
 (c) R(p,o) is willing to purchase member(s) of X, and
 (d) R(p,o) is authorized by o to buy member(s) of X, and
 (e) nothing prevents p or R(p,o) from purchasing a member of X.

'Market', defined thus, seems straightforwardly descriptive. Thus, if Betsy has a craving for chocolate (1a), has some spare change (1b), is near the candy rack in a store (1b again), thinks the price fair (1c), and is neither allergic to chocolate nor on a diet (1d), then she is part of the chocolate market, whether she buys any chocolate or not. The new ceteris paribus clauses (1d and 2e) may also come into effect whenever p has a principled objection (say, a consumer boycott) or when the seller refuses to sell an X to p (say, because the customer is too young).

Except for the newly introduced clauses, (1d) and (2e), there seems to be no problem in principle with matching market-relevant properties and people. Admittedly, practical problems could arise in determining the willingness of some people to purchase, or in persuading them to reveal their financial resources. Nevertheless, the PPM, even with the ceteris paribus clauses, seems to be a purely value-free definition.

The Future Purchaser Model (FPM). Some authors describe the market for X as the set of people who will or who might purchase an X. Any such definition will be called a "Future Purchasers Model." Thus described, the FPM is ambiguous between deterministic and nondeterministic world-views: any version emphasizing people who will purchase X (the "will version") favors psychological determinism, whereas the "might version" favors nondeterminism. A brief statement of the FPM appears in the following passage:

A market is the set of all current and potential buyers of a particular product or service.²⁹

Several ambiguities must disappear from this definition before it becomes usable. How far does the scope of 'current' extend: today? this month? this year? What makes one a potential buyer? Is potentiality-to-buying a measurable property? Can it be correlated with measurable properties? Is there any connection between potentiality and probability? between potentiality and possibility? When one says that Keith is a potential buyer of X, does this mean that he is a member of a set of people, each of whom might buy X (a potential-buyer of X), or does it mean that he is a member of a set of people, some of whom will buy X (potentially a buyer-of-X)?

Philosophical puzzles about potentiality prevent a satisfactory formalization of the FPM.³⁰ Some observations, however, may be ventured:

- (1) The set of potential buyers of X is a proper subset of the future population of the world.
- (2) The set of actual buyers of X is a proper subset of the set of potential buyers of X.
- (3) The set of potential buyers of X indiscriminately includes both heavy and light users of X.

To define markets as future purchasers is to invoke the consequences of the firm's decisions about products, pricing, promotion, and distribution. Presumably, some decisions will result in purchases by some people, whereas other decisions will yield purchases by others. Therefore, talk about "the" potential buyers of a product would seem to require some mention of the available marketing strategies as well.

Many people who actually buy a brand (or a product) X seem to be influenced by the marketing strategies actually adopted by the producer(s); so to determine who potentially could buy X, one must consider every reasonable strategy. However, the notion of a reasonable strategy is not clear. Some reasonable strategies may not be actually adopted, and some strategies actually adopted might be unreasonable. For marketing purposes, the potential buyers of a product might best be thought of as those who will (not "might") be influenced by any reasonable strategy, if it is adopted. Therefore, because a strategy's reasonableness is independent of its actual adoption, the following further constraint on the FPM seems useful:

- (4) The set of potential buyers is independent of any marketing strategy that is actually adopted.

Any member of the total future population could, under some bizarre set of circumstances, purchase any product. If the set of potential buyers is to be kept distinct from the total future population, reasonable possibilities must be differentiated from unreasonable ones. Potential buyers should be the future buyers of X somehow correlated with reasonable strategic decisions about marketing X. Thus arises a fifth condition:

- (5) The set of potential buyers of X includes the set of people whose purchase of X, should it occur, would be a consequence of some reasonable marketing strategy.

Some constraint like (5) seems necessary — one can hardly speak of a set of future purchasers without thereby assuming at least some minimal marketing strategy. For example, if X is manufactured and stored in total secrecy (that is, without any marketing at all), then the number of purchasers could be zero.

Constraint (4) is also important. Imagine several possible futures, each

differing from the others only by a different strategy having been adopted (and by the consequences of this adoption). Some strategies will be more successful than others, but the potential buyers could be the sum of buyers from all these futures. Suppose that a finite number of reasonable marketing strategies is available to a firm marketing X, and that each possible future, each arising from a different strategy, has a set of purchasers of X. Call every future-purchaser set yielded by a strategy a "strategy-dependent" set of purchasers. Thus, the FPM reads:

$M_x =$ df the union of all sets of future people who, in their respective possible futures, are members of the strategy-dependent set of purchasers of X.³¹

This statement of the FPM complies with the five constraints listed above.

The foregoing statement of the FPM has two advantages over other statements. First, it differentiates potential buyers of X from the total population. Second, it treats purchasers' potentialities as marketers' opportunities, rather than as mere abstractions. These changes are fully in the spirit of the typical usage of the FPM.

The FPM is not, however, foundational, because it uses 'marketing strategy' to define 'market'. This non-foundational definition may be efficient, but it can skirt circularity only if 'marketing strategy' is defined without reference to markets.

We have intentionally left the above definition ambiguous between products and brands. To implement the FPM, a marketer must decide between treating X as a product or as a brand, but that decision is strategic, not semantic.

One final point of paramount interest for the present study: though non-foundational and ambiguous, the FPM

nevertheless appears to be a descriptive model, devoid of normative overtones.

Similarities and Differences between the Two Models. The PPM and the FPM are not the same, but they are easy to confuse. For example, forecasters, believing themselves to be using the FPM, might occasionally think of the market as the set of all people who will have certain properties. This is not the FPM. Markets composed of future-people-with-properties are really just future PPM-style markets.

The FPM has a major advantage over the PPM. Consider a project requiring many years to develop, such as a space station, undertaken on behalf of future generations. The PPM cannot handle any such initiative on behalf of a currently nonexistent market, whereas the FPM can.

According to the PPM, people must be financially able to purchase the product, if they are to be part of the market; however, consider children. Although they consume expensive products, they cannot, according to the PPM, constitute a market; nor can animals, prisoners, and so forth. Nor can they do so according to the FPM because no reasonable marketing strategy will cause nonpurchasing end-users to actually purchase the product themselves. But children, animals, and prisoners do show preferences, and should perhaps be thought of as a "purchase-influencer market."

The PPM and the FPM differ in the theories they support. Consider, for example, Kotler's notion of "negative demand" (or no demand or latent demand).³² If negative demand for a product exists wherever "a major part of the market dislikes the product and may even pay a price to avoid it,"³³ then, because the PPM-style market for X contains only people willing to buy X, negative demand requires that a market not be a market. In contrast, the FPM supports negative demand: reasonable marketing strategies might convert a hostile group, making potential purchasers of them. Thus, the PPM, but not

the FPM, directly contradicts such notions as "negative demand."

This concludes the exposition of the two major approaches currently used by marketers to define 'market'.

'is normative'

Among marketing scholars, there has been some discussion in the past as to whether or not marketing is a science, as opposed to an art, or as opposed to a practice.³⁴ Despite some dissenting voices, the consensus seems to be that marketing either is a science, or is becoming a science.

Much of the discussion hinges on what is meant by 'science', of course, but the claim that marketing is a science would seem to be trivial should the language of all sciences contain such value-laden concepts as right and wrong, good and bad, ought and ought not, fair and unfair. Even if we grant that the most "scientific" of theories is value-laden, it must at least make sense to rank the various sciences on the basis of how explicitly value-laden they are. For instance, when a chemist says that two atoms exchanged electrons, it doesn't make sense to ask if the exchange was a fair one. When legal experts discuss exchanges, on the other hand, or anything else for that matter, questions of fairness always lurk nearby.

Therefore, our argument's first assumption is that the more descriptive a science is, the fewer the normative terms it uses on a daily basis. By 'descriptive science', we mean a science that is on the descriptive end of a spectrum. Relativistic thinkers may object to this assumption. Because all observations are value-laden, they might argue that the assumption is wrong. But this objection concedes the point. If all observations really are completely value-laden, that is, if all sciences are equally pervaded by normativity, then descriptive sciences simply do not exist. Marketing, in that case, would not be a descriptive science simply because to call it such would be

meaningless. Thus, (D1) is a partial definition that supplies one necessary condition for any discipline's being called a descriptive science:

- (D1) If a discipline is a descriptive science, its theories contain few or no normative expressions.

Notice that (D1) does not claim that descriptive sciences exist, nor does it claim that being devoid of normative expressions is sufficient for a science's being descriptive. Notice, too, that the contrapositive of (D1) asserts that any discipline that contains numerous normative expressions cannot be a descriptive science.

What is a normative expression? Presumably, it is an 'ought' as opposed to an 'is'. The 'is-ought' distinction, taken for granted in some philosophical circles and denied vehemently in others, is infrequently mentioned and virtually never debated by marketers. According to one rule of thumb, uncontested among marketers until recently, any sentence that merely uses the words 'should' or 'ought' is normative. Otherwise it is descriptive.³⁵

In a study of the conceptual foundations of marketing, a certain amount of philosophical baggage is necessary. Therefore, we must lay some fairly basic groundwork vis-a-vis the is-ought distinction. For the purposes of this foundations study, however, we need not labor over issues that puzzle philosophers, such as whether an 'ought' can be derived from an 'is' within institutional contexts.³⁶ On the other hand, merely injecting philosophical claims as needed and tagging them with scholarly references will not do, either. Students of conceptual foundations must actually do some credible philosophy.

If we are to prove that marketing is normative, we must have a workable definition of 'is normative'. The difficulty of this task is compounded by the fact that the same sentence may be normative in one context and descriptive in another, thus

preventing a purely semantic definition of 'is normative'. For example, 'His next pitch should be a slider.' is equivalent to one of the following: (1) 'I predict, knowing his pitching style, that he will throw a slider.'; and (2) 'The correct pitch for him to throw now is a slider.'. Meaning (1) is descriptive, because if the pitch is not a slider, the speaker was wrong. But meaning (2) is normative, because if the next pitch is not a slider, the speaker would claim that the pitcher was wrong. Thus, the normativity of sentences seems to depend on the context of utterance.³⁷

We suggest the following definition:

- (D2) Within a specified context, an utterance expresses a normative sentence if and only if it supplies a reason for acting.³⁸

The consequences of (D2) may not be obvious at first glance. After all, may not any sentence supply a reason for acting? Therefore, a sketch of the most important consequences follows.

A mere statement of physical fact can never supply a reason for acting, except elliptically. Statements of fact must be coupled with motivating statements before they motivate action. For example, the mere belief that a fire rages in my house supplies no reason to act. Only if I want to save some possession, or if I fear for my life, or if I desire to die, do I have a reason to grab my possessions, to run, or to remain seated, respectively. Furthermore, a reason need not be good, persuasive, or effective to be nonetheless a reason.³⁹ For example, though thieves may have reasons for stealing, they do not always have good reasons; and though they always have a reason to not steal, they are not always persuaded by such a reason.

To believe a normative claim is to have a reason for acting; to make a normative claim to another person is to offer a reason for acting.

Consider a previous example.

- (S1) His next pitch should be a curve ball.

Definition (D2) captures the fact that sentence (S1) is normative in some contexts and descriptive in others. If (S1) is offered as a reason for the pitcher to act in a certain way, then (S1) is normative; otherwise (S1) is descriptive. Consider another example.

- (S2) The temperature in this room is too cold.

Sentence (S2) is normative in most contexts. Typical utterers of (S2) would be objecting to the temperature and offering a reason to adjust the thermostat; they would not be simply reporting facts. Furthermore, (S2) is not subject to empirical test — what temperature is "too cold?" Definition (D2) captures the normativity of (S2): If the room is too cold, there is a reason to leave, or to change the temperature or to put on a sweater, or the like.

Thus far we have considered the expression 'is normative' only as it applies to sentences within a context, but we need to understand how it applies to individual terms or expressions within a sentence. Roughly speaking, if a sentence is normative solely by virtue of a particular expression, then that expression is normative. The expression causing a sentence to be normative may be discovered by substitution. Starting with a normative sentence S and a suspect expression E, select a grammatically appropriate, descriptive expression and substitute it for E. If the resulting sentence is descriptive, then E is explicitly normative. In the following definition, clause (2) handles several normative expressions appearing in the same sentence.

- (D3) An expression E, as it is used within a normative sentence S, in a specified context, is explicitly normative if and only if it passes at least one of two tests:

- (1) There is an expression E^* such that replacing E with E^* in S changes S , in the same context, from normative to descriptive; or
- (2) There is an expression E^* and a descriptive sentence S^* containing E^* and not containing E , such that the result of replacing E^* with E in S^* is that S^* becomes a normative sentence, within the same context.

This substitution technique has been implicitly used in earlier examples. If the expression, 'too cold' were to be replaced by '32 degrees Fahrenheit', (S2) would no longer be normative. Thus, by (D3), 'too cold' is normative in the context of (S2).

Definitions (D2) and (D3) both deal with normativity within a context. Is 'market', considered apart from a context, normative in meaning?

Some words are chameleons; they change back and forth between normative and descriptive upon even the subtlest contextual variations. Other words tend to be most often normative or most often descriptive. We may imagine a continuum of expressions, with one endpoint being expressions that are extremely context-sensitive, and the other being expressions that are invariant within all contexts. The terms 'flexible' and 'rigid' suggest themselves as appropriate adjectives.

Thus, let us call expressions rigidly normative if they are explicitly normative within virtually all of their usual contexts, whereas flexibly normative expressions are explicitly normative in many normal contexts but descriptive in many other normal contexts.

Words that change in meaning occasionally, can now be made tractable to analysis:

- (D4) An expression E is normative at time T if and only if every accepted definition of E at T includes rigidly normative expressions.

The Argument

If we are to show by (D4) that, currently, 'market' is normative, we must first demonstrate the following lemma.

Lemma: Every current definition of 'market' includes rigidly normative expressions.

We will separately consider the two definitions of 'market' that are currently in use: the PPM and the FPM.

Case 1: The Present Properties Model (PPM)

According to the PPM, four properties determine membership in a market: authority to purchase, ability to purchase, willingness to purchase, and needing a member of the product class.

To say that someone needs a product is to make a normative claim, because 'need' is a rigidly normative expression. If Erich believes that he needs something, he has a reason to act in a certain way. Likewise, if Erich believes that others have needs, he has a reason to act on their behalf. Clearly, a need, like a need for a tool or for a new dress, is both a reason for acting and a standard for judging action, and is not an observable, behavior-causing, physical state. The urgency with which 'need' demands action in virtually all normal contexts shows that its normativity is more rigid than flexible.⁴⁰

In the eighty-eight textbooks we examined, the citations most frequently given for the term 'need' were from Maslow, and less often from Dichter or Freud. Maslow frequently and explicitly rejects empiricism. For example, in the preface to the second edition of Motivation and Personality, Maslow says:

This revised edition is an example of the increasingly firm rejection of traditionally value-free science — or rather of the futile effort to have a value-free science. It is more frankly normative than it was [before revision], more confidently affirming science to be a value-instigated search by value-seeking scientists who can, I claim, uncover intrinsic and ultimate and species-wide values in the structure of human nature itself.⁴¹

Dichter, a disciple of Freud's, replaced the notion of a conscious value, norm, or motivation with that of an unconscious value, norm, or motivation. As he states, "We never buy anything or take action unless there is some kind of deep psychological need for it."⁴² In other words, needs are, according to Dichter, the only reasons we act. Assuming the "psychological reality" of values, he ignores the is-ought distinction, and argues that the only important motivations (read 'value systems') are the ones we "really" have without knowing we have them. Thus, one finds passages throughout like the following:

We drive the car we do because it gives us more prestige, buys us respect with others, gives us a feeling of success. Of course, we may also buy it because it is more economical and better engineered. But even there the final motivation is that we want to be successful as buyers. We don't want to have the feeling that we have been made fools of, that we did not shop or buy wisely.⁴³

The most important message a psychologist can deliver is that life has deep and rich meanings even within our human limitations

This meaning is hidden inside every individual. It takes conscious effort to bring it to light and to have it permeate our thoughts and deeds with its fertile radiance.⁴⁴

Of course, unconscious needs are no less normative than conscious ones. One cannot remove needs from the realm of human values merely by turning them unconscious and removing them from the privacy of consciousness. Conscious needs are conscious reasons to act, but so-called unconscious needs are either unconscious reasons to act (whatever that means), or they are not needs at all.

Therefore, whether marketers depend on Maslow's notion of need or on Dichter's, the PPM contains a rigidly normative expression.

Case 2: The Future Purchaser Model (FPM)

The FPM is made normative by the rigidly normative expressions 'purchaser' or 'buyer'. To say that a person has purchased something is to offer a reason to act toward them in certain ways and not in other ways. Instantly George has purchased a crystal vase, he becomes its owner and acquires the rights of ownership. Removing the vase from his grasp, in itself a value-neutral action, becomes stealing it; striking it with a tire iron becomes vandalizing it, and so forth.

Buying, at first glance, does not seem to be a normative activity: it seems to be measurable and describable in value-free, observational terms. It would further seem that if buying really were normative, the enumeration of purchases would be impossible in principle. That is, purchases could not be distinguished from non-purchases.

Surprisingly, purchases indeed cannot be told apart from certain nonpurchases. The following considerations help make this point clear. Various behaviors might count as

purchasing an item: (1) handing legal tender to a person standing behind a cash register; (2) signing a credit card voucher; (3) signing a personal check; (4) filling out a purchase order, and so forth. But these same behaviors would count as fraud, should (1) the cash be counterfeit; (2) the credit card be stolen; (3) the checking account be closed; (4) the purchase order be unauthorized, and so forth. Mere behavior is never sufficient to distinguish between a purchase and a fraud.

For a purchase to occur, ownership must be exchanged. Exchange of ownership is no more an observable event than ownership is a physical property. Sales records, in the form of an entry into a daily sales report, may be physical, measurable objects, but purchases are not. Therefore, because the FPM necessarily uses either 'purchaser' or 'buyer', which are rigidly normative, it is rigidly normative.

Note that all four conditions of the PPM include rigidly normative terms. Not even by omitting the 'need' clause can the PPM be made descriptive. For example, in one textbook a market is ". . . (1) people (2) with the desire and (3) with the ability to buy a specific product"; in another textbook a market is ". . . market means a group of people (or organizations) with the ability and willingness to buy a product or service for consumption."⁴⁵ These PPM-style definitions, which omit mention of needs, are nonetheless normative because two conditions — ability to buy and willingness to buy — use the rigidly normative term 'buy'.

Therefore, the PPM and the FPM, which are the only current definitions of 'market', both contain rigidly normative expressions. This concludes the lemma.

Some Implications

If the lemma is correct, sentences containing 'market' must also be normative. Let us see if this is so. Consider the following sentence:

(S4) The firm is marketing its product to people who are not in the market.

Is (S4) normative? Recall that norms supply reasons for censure. If one takes a PPM-style view, (S4) claims that the firm is marketing to people who do not need the product (fabricating needs), or to people who cannot afford it (encouraging people to overextend their credit), or to people who are unwilling to buy it (coercing), or to people who are not authorized to buy it (selling contraband). By whichever clause (S4) is made true, there is a reason to blame the firm.

On the other hand, on the FPM-style view, (S4) claims that the firm is marketing the product to people who are not potential buyers. Serious moral implications attend such a strategy, because promotion to nonpurchasers encourages theft. Suppose a firm publishes a book that urges people to defy the law, and then distributes it in a handy, pocket-sized paperback edition, packages it in cardboard "dumps" for prominent display at bookstore entrances, and entitles it, "Steal This Book." Such a strategy would not be absurd, because any shoplifting that would occur would be the retailer's loss, not the publisher's. Promoting this product to those who will not buy it encourages theft. Therefore, (S4) is an ethical accusation.

Conclusion of the Argument

The lemma has shown both models of 'market' to be normative. From the lemma and premise (P2), which says that these are the only definitions currently used by marketers, it follows that every definition of 'market', as it is currently taught, depends on a rigidly normative expression. Thus, by the definition (D4), 'market' currently is a normative expression. By premise (P1), 'market' is fundamental to marketing; thus, a normative expression is currently fundamental to marketing. By (D1), marketing, as it is currently taught, cannot be

a descriptive science. This concludes the foundations study of the expression, 'market'.

The Future

The preceding argument analyzed a single foundational term within marketing. The study was confined to definitions of 'market' as found in recently published textbooks. If our analyses are correct, an important fact has been established: marketing, as it is now taught, is not a descriptive science. One may justifiably wonder: What action is indicated? Are marketers' options now limited in any new or interesting way? What lessons can other social scientists learn from this exercise? All these issues are touched on in the remaining three sections of this paper.

The future of 'market'

Is a value-free definition of 'market' feasible? We, the present authors, doubt that the notion of a market, if defined as sets of people, can be value-free before "folk psychology" has disappeared from the marketing literature (an unlikely event in the foreseeable future). Marketing, however, is not alone in the struggle to quarantine value from fact; all the social sciences are caught between the Scylla of materialism and the Charybdis of subjectivity.⁴⁶ Within marketing, a microcosm of social science, both sides of the issue have champions.

Suppose one were to modify the PPM along value-free lines. Obviously, the clauses dealing with willingness, ability, and authority to buy must drop out; so too must the need clause. But less all these conditions, the PPM is nothing. Other properties must replace the dropped ones. The older, economic models (EM) suggest some possibilities — geographic location, age, sex, occupation, and so forth — but such a solution would meet with great resistance, being a throwback to the early days of marketing. Even so, outdated as the EM is, it may be the best solution.

As hard as it would be to modify the PPM, modifying the FPM would be harder still, using as it does words like 'purchaser' or 'buyer', or the like. For example, the FPM could not be revised into a definition that is based on strategy-dependent sets of expected sales figures. Although it makes sense to speak of marketing a product to a set of people, it makes no sense to speak of marketing a product to a set of sales figures. To define markets as sets of sales figures would be to confuse a measurement with the item measured.

Of course, the PPM and the FPM are not the only possibilities. We will now examine two radical approaches: first, a dyadic model, which treats marketing as a species of exchange; second, a novel set-theoretic model, suggested by the FPM-style notion of a "strategy-dependent set."

A Dyadic Model for 'market'. Kotler (1972) indirectly suggests a model that has a few advantages over the PPM and the FPM. Kotler was offering a definition of 'marketing' not of 'market', but the latter can be extrapolated from the former. Necessarily, the following presentation is highly abbreviated.

For the Kotlerian Dyadic Model (KDM), marketing activity occurs under quite specific circumstances. Where 'unit' means 'a non-empty set of human beings', the term 'market' denotes any unit filling the functional role denoted by 'B' in the following set of conditions, whereas the marketer fills the role denoted by 'A':

- (1) two units, call them A and B, exist; and
- (2) unit A seeks a particular response R from unit B concerning some object k; and
- (3) in the absence of marketing activity, the probability that B will exhibit R

with respect to k is greater than 0 and less than 1; and

- (4) the probability that B will exhibit R with respect to k is not fixed (that is, B has some degree of free choice, but can be influenced); and
- (5) by creating values and offering them to B , A is attempting to increase the probability that B will exhibit R with respect to k .

That the KDM is trivial in some contexts may be a cause for concern. For example, legitimate questions about whether a marketer can reach the entire market are rendered absurd, because a KDM-style market is just those people whom the marketer is in fact contacting.

Nevertheless, the KDM has some worthwhile characteristics. First, the marketer, solely by the effects of his efforts (intended or not), can transform any social unit into a KDM-style market; the size of the market is limited by the marketer's own energy.

The extension of the KDM differs from those of the PPM and the FPM. For example, suppose that thirty-three year old Harold receives, by an advertiser's error, a mail-out intended only for men of retirement age. Though not of the mail-out's intended audience, Harold is yet in the market: (1) Harold is a human; (2) he is being solicited for a response; (3) he might have his own reasons for seeking the product; (4) his response probability is not fixed (for his response is neither forced nor precluded); and (5) he is being offered response-producing values created by the marketer. In this example, the PPM would exclude Harold from the market if Harold does not need the product in question. The FPM would exclude Harold, if no reasonable marketing strategy would have led Harold to buy the product (an erroneous mailing does not count as a reasonable strategy).

Recall that neither the PPM nor the FPM could justify a campaign that targeted purchase influencers, because purchase influencers often are not purchasers. Such campaigns, however, are common (as in advertising to children). The KDM, not being confined by the notion of a purchase, could justify such a strategy, because the KDM views marketing as seeking only a response, without specifying the kind of response, and one possible response could be an effort to influence a purchaser. As a purely descriptive definition, the KDM, by avoiding 'purchase', represents a major advance over the other two models.⁴⁷

The PPM differs, on a psychological level, from the other models by encouraging the marketer to take a passive role vis-a-vis the market. The FPM or the KDM demands activity. A PPM-style marketer can only react to the properties that people have. An FPM-style marketer, however, is limited only by his or her skill at inventing reasonable marketing strategies, and a KDM-style marketer can reach as far as his or her enthusiasm reaches.

Both the FPM and the KDM use the notion of a marketing strategy in different ways. The FPM-style market is independent of any actually chosen strategy — it is the reasonable possibilities that delimit the market. But, for the KDM, the actually chosen strategy defines the market.

The KDM and the PPM assume free will to be operative in the market. According to the KDM, the response probability (independent of any marketing activity) must be between zero and one; according to the PPM, the market must contain only people who are willing to buy.

Finally, the major feature of the KDM — that markets are marketer-determined — makes sense of the notion of a new-product market, a market of people who have had no prior experience of the product. The PPM, on the other hand, requires that need and

willingness be demonstrable (and hence that there be past experience).

The KDM poses some interesting analytical problems. The KDM itself uses no rigidly normative expression. Nonetheless, marketing, as described by the KDM, appears to be highly normative. According to the KDM, a value must be offered by the marketer to the market. By offering this value, the marketer hopes to elicit a particular response from the market. If the marketer entertains no such hopes, his or her action is not marketing. Clearly, KDM-style marketing counts as offering reasons. Any sentence that offers a reason for acting is a normative sentence, so every sentence spoken or written by a marketer qua marketer is a normative sentence. Desired responses, free individuals, judicious creations, and values indicate normative activity. It is not clear how the KDM would fit into a descriptive science of marketing.

A Strategy-Dependent, Set-Theoretic Model. A radical approach, suggested here for the first time, would be to omit all mention of people and speak instead of sets of strategic decisions. Let us call this approach the "Decision Theory Model" (DTM).

When fully developed, the DTM might describe a market as the set of strategic marketing decisions that, if adopted, would produce the maximum dollar/unit sales figure. Dollar/unit sales figures, unlike purchases, are measurable. A strategy, D , could be thought of as a set of decision-procedures, $\{d_1, \dots, d_m\}$, for every eventuality.

The set D could serve as the starting point for more sophisticated and specific definitions. For example, a market could be identified with an ordered 4-tuple $\langle X, D, T, R \rangle$. The first element, X , would be a set of objects (or actions) $\{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$ that have a certain history (say, that were manufactured at a specific location).⁴⁸ The second element, D , would be a set of decision-procedures as described above. The third element, T , would be a temporal duration. The fourth element,

R , would be a geographic region, denoted perhaps by zip codes or area codes. Other positions would be added as needed to characterize different types of markets: product markets, industrial markets, government markets, and so forth. Thus, if a monopolistic firm manufactures exactly one product, X , the 1995-New Mexico market for X would be:

$\langle \{x : x \text{ was assembled in buildings } a, b, \text{ or } c\}, \{d_1, \dots, d_m\}, 1995, \text{New Mexico} \rangle$

Although this family of set-theoretic definitions, or something much like it, looks promising, defining 'market' in this way creates numerous hazards for the unwary, chief among them being the danger of reintroducing the term 'market' through descriptions of marketing decisions. Could these hazards be avoided, the DTM might succeed.

The KDM and the DTM suggest a broad range of possibilities still available to the marketing theorist who is determined to develop a set of value-free foundations for marketing. Clearly, though two doors have been closed — namely the PPM and the FPM — the larger project of making marketing into a descriptive science may still be viable.

The Future of Marketing

A battle has raged for many years over the scientific status of marketing.⁴⁹ Under their various banners—humanism and positivism,⁵⁰ relativism and realism,⁵¹ normative and descriptive⁵²—marketers have squared off against each other in a war of the world-views.

The study of 'market' has made a small but important contribution to this larger debate; however, that contribution must be weighed along with the following four disclaimers. First, because at any time anyone could invent a descriptive use of 'market', the argument does not imply that 'market' always will be normative. Second, even if one could show that 'market' is

essentially normative, one would not thereby have proven that marketing is essentially a normative discipline. Both the normativity of 'market' and the centrality of its position in marketing may be merely contingent facts. Third, the argument says nothing about whether marketing should be a descriptive science. The argument does not assume that a value-free science is mandatory, desirable, valuable, or even possible. Fourth, even if no descriptive definition of 'market' ever appears, our argument would not show that a positive science of marketing is impossible. Describable and measurable markets might be unnecessary for a science of marketing, though marketing theory bereft of markets would hardly resemble current marketing theory.

The disclaimers having been made, there follow some thoughts about marketing in general, and the future of positivistic marketing.

For hard-nosed empiricists, marketing is a set of value-free mathematical equations, which describe changes in aggregate behavior. On this view, any reference to a person, or to a person's beliefs and values, is merely a heuristic device that must be discarded as soon as possible. Thus, they treat as metaphors all discussions that are couched in terms of values and beliefs.

But people, even hard-nosed empiricists, explain other people by referring to value-and-belief systems. This is a slight embarrassment to the empiricist's program. Folk psychology is so strongly rooted in the English language and Western thought that even the staunchest of positivists must, at times, feel twinges of self-doubt and feel his or her protests to be feeble in the face of introspection. For example, even when demographic analysis works satisfactorily, a marketer may be dissatisfied at not being able to explain the success by citing those simple "thought-processes" that so clearly seem to drive consumer behavior.

However, this dilemma for the positivistic marketer is not so horned as it may seem. Although methodologically incompatible, positivism and value-conscious analysis need never run up against each other. By "value-conscious analysis" is not meant "analysis couched in value-laden terms." For example, a currently nonexistent discipline of second-level marketing — or the study of the language of marketing claims — could be value-conscious analysis, without also being value-laden in the same ways that marketing is. Second-level marketing would assume the existence of normative sentences, whereas marketing assumes the existence of norms.

Consider the PPM for an example of how this would work. Because a "need clause" demands action from the marketer on the behalf of the market, it is normative. But suppose some definition of 'market' were to relate two sentences: say person P's claim at time t_1 , "I need X," and P's subsequent claim at t_2 , "I own X." Such a definition would not be normative, because only a linguistic relationship between two sentences would be at issue, not any normative facts. Thus, the marketer would be under no obligation to act. Furthermore, because it would be the normative claims that were studied, rather than the norms themselves, the usual positivistic reservations would not apply.

The Future of Foundations Research in the Social Sciences

Even for a discipline in turmoil, such as marketing, the results of a foundations study can be at least as informative as the results of an empirical research study. Furthermore, the most interesting results seem to come from bringing the most important terms into focus. In this investigation, it was discovered that 'market' is currently conceived in two different fashions, and not only that both conceptions are normative but also that 'needs', 'buy', and 'purchase' are rigidly normative. The implications of these findings reach far.

The present foundations study was an argument, but not all foundations studies need be arguments. For example, instead of simply rejecting 'market' as an unsuitable foundation for a descriptive science, we could have taken it as a suitable foundation for a normative discipline, and asked: What obligations do marketers have to markets?

The foundations study of 'market' relied heavily upon linguistic analysis. In general, it would seem a good practice to make every foundations study similarly self contained, but not necessarily to restrict the analytical tools as we have done. For instance, logical analysis, historical analysis, phenomenological analysis, and others, each have a legitimate claim to a proper place in foundations studies.

One cannot help but hesitate at the sheer enormity of the proposed undertaking. Every term that composes the foundation of a social science must be examined. A student of conceptual foundations must surely be daunted by the ever-growing and highly eclectic nature of the social sciences — no sooner has one foundation been strengthened than another is added.

Notes

1. cf. A. Quinton, "The Foundations of Knowledge," in British Analytical Philosophy, Williams and Montefiori, eds. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp.55-86; G. S. Pappas and M. Swain, eds. Essays on Knowledge and Justification (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).
2. Currently, most foundation studies appear in journals that are devoted to the philosophy of science, rather than in scientific journals. One should not, on this account, confuse foundation studies with philosophy of science. Although many articles will not fit neatly under one rubric or another, those that mostly explore concepts that are unique to a discipline and assumed by that science are what we would call foundation studies, whereas articles that explore scientific reasoning in general, reduction of one science to another, experimental method, concepts shared by several disciplines, or the like are what we would call philosophy of science.
3. One does not have to be a foundationalist to endorse the study of foundations. As we have defined them, foundational terms are only the technical terms that are not defined by the technical terms within a discipline. Bootstrappers and other coherentists should be comfortable with this notion. One may even think of a cluster of expressions that are defined in terms of each other but are collectively foundational, in which case the foundations study could bring the entire cluster into focus.
4. R. P. Leone and R. L. Schultz, "A Study of Marketing Generalizations," Journal of Marketing, 44 (Winter 1980), 10-11.
5. S. D. Hunt, "The Nature and Scope of Marketing," Journal of Marketing, 40 (January 1976), 17-28.
6. R. Bagozzi, "Marketing as an Organized Behavioral System of Exchange," Journal of Marketing, 38 (October 1974), 77.

7. F.S. Houston and J.B. Gassenheimer, "Marketing and Exchange," Journal of Marketing, 51 (October 1987), 3-18.
8. P. Kotler, Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control, 6th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 17.
9. To be aware of a theory's ontological commitments is to be aware of what sorts of things must exist (abstract, mental, material, or probabilistic?), how many of them there must be (finite or infinite?), and how they must look or behave (unremarkable or fantastic?), in order for the theory to be true.
10. F.C. Allvine, Marketing: Principles and Practices (San Diego: Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987); E. Berkowitz, R.A. Kerin and W. Rudelius, Marketing (St Louis: Times Mirror Mosby College Publishing, 1986); D.W. Cravens and R.B. Woodruff, Marketing (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1986); W.H. Cunningham and I.C.M. Cunningham, Marketing: A Managerial Approach (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co., 1981); J.R. Evans and B. Berman, Marketing, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1985); O.C. Ferrell and W.M. Pride, Fundamentals of Marketing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982); P. Kotler, Principles of Marketing, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1986); D. Kurtz and L.E. Boone, Marketing (Chicago: The Dryden Press, 1981); M.I. Mandell and L.J. Rosenberg, Marketing, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981); D.J. Reibstein, Marketing: Concepts, Strategies, and Decisions (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985); C.D. Schewe and R.M. Smith, Marketing: Concepts and Applications (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980); B.P. Shapiro, R.J. Dolan and J.A. Quelch, Marketing Management: Principles, Analysis, and Applications, Volume 1 (Homewood: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1985).
11. Note that we are not trying to establish a general consensus among marketing scholars, but are trying to discover how marketing is taught. We want to know what standard is typically impressed upon students who are being introduced to the field. Had we been interested in the logical foundations of marketing, we would have turned to the work of theory builders. To express the matter in a more Kuhnian fashion, introductory marketing textbooks do not show us the paradigm battles that are currently being fought, but they do give us insight into the dominant paradigms.
12. The three models are not mutually exclusive. Thus, for example, a hybrid model of P. Kotler, Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, and Control, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976), contains features from all three. Consider also the following: "A market is a group of actual or potential customers [read 'buyers'] for a particular product" (W. Zikmund and M. D'Amico, Marketing (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984), p. 86). This definition is clearly the FPM. But the text continues, "More precisely, a market is a group of individuals or organizations who may want the good or service being offered for sale and who meet these three additional criteria . . ." The three criteria are part of the PPM. Finally, a method of converting PPM-style data into FPM-style information appears in D.C. Schmittlein, D.G. Morrison and R. Columbo, "Counting your Customers: Who They Are and What Will They Do Next?" Management Science, 33 (January 1987), 1-24. Nonetheless, textbook authors usually confine themselves to only one model.
13. J.M. Carman, "Paradigms for Marketing Theory," in Research in Marketing: A Research Annual, Sheth, ed. (Greenwich: JAI Press Inc., 1980), p.3.
14. J.N. Sheth, D.M. Gardner, and D.E. Garrett, Marketing Theory, Evolution and Evaluation (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1988).
15. Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett, 1988, p.15.
16. Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett, 1988, p.104.

17. J.N. Sheth, B.L. Gross, "Parallel Development of Marketing and Consumer Behavior, A Historical Perspective," in Historical Perspectives in Marketing: Essay in Honor of Stanley C. Hollander, Nevitt and Fullerton, eds. (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1988), p.9.
18. Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett, 1988, p.110.
19. V. Packard, The Hidden Persuaders (New York: Pocket Books, 1957).
20. R.C. Bennett and R.G. Cooper, "The Misuse of Marketing: An American Tragedy," Business Horizons, 24 (November-December 1981), p.53.
21. Sheth and Gross, 1988, p. 4.
22. O.C. Walker Jr., H.W. Boyd Jr., and J. Larréché, Marketing Strategy: Planning and Implementation (Homewood: Irwin, 1992), p.8.
23. D.A. Aaker, Strategic Market Management, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1988), pp.12-13.
24. C.T. Lewis and C. Short, A Latin Dictionary (London: Oxford University Press, 1879).
25. Independent evidence for this claim can be found by comparing the entries for 'market' as found in the first and the second editions of the Random House Dictionary of the English Language (Unabridged) (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 1987); The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Random House, 1966). The Second edition (1987) contains the following definition, which did not appear in the first edition (1966): "a body of existing or potential buyers for specific goods or services: the health-food market."
26. Loosely speaking, a property is anything denoted by an adjective, adjectival phrase, or predicate noun. Thus, being recently married, being male, and being a home owner are all properties denoted by expressions in the following sentence: "George is a recently-married male home owner."
27. W.M. Pride and O.C. Ferrell, Marketing: Basic Concepts and Decisions, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), p.140.
28. Not every author who uses the PPM mentions all four conditions stated in Pride and Ferrell, 1980. For example, willingness and authority-to-purchase are omitted by R.R. Gist, Marketing and Society: Text and Cases (Hinsdale: The Dryden Press, 1974), and by T.N. Beckman, W.R. Davidson and W.W. Talarzyk, Marketing, 9th ed. (New York: The Ronald Press, 1973). Such omissions do not materially affect the argument presented here.
29. P.S. Busch and M.J. Houston, Marketing: Strategic Foundations (Homewood: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1985), p.28.
30. For some already classic treatments of the difficulties, see D.K. Lewis, Counterfactuals (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); E. Sosa, ed., Causation and Conditionals (London: Oxford University Press, 1975); or N. Goodman, Fact, Fiction, and Forecast, 4th ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).
31. The summing of persons across possible futures invokes a questionable semantics. Possible-future analysis à la Brody (B.A. Brody, Identity and Essence (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) is very different from possible-world analysis à la Lewis (Lewis, 1973), and the proposed definition of the FPM mixes features of both analyses into what is probably a technically unworkable conflation. Having tried many other approaches, we are convinced that the problem lies, not so much with contemporary notions of possibility as with the FPM itself. Rather than dwell on fussy semantic problems, we simply assume that the FPM is expressible, and that it looks something like the version here given. Of course, no part of the criticism of the FPM hinges on problems arising from possible futures.

32. P. Kotler, 1988.
33. P. Kotler, 1988, italics added.
34. See, for example, S.D. Hunt, Modern Marketing Theory: Critical Issues in the Philosophy of Marketing Science (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company, 1991).
35. See S.D. Hunt, 1991; M.R. Hyman, R. Skipper, and R. Tansey, "Two Challenges for the Three Dichotomies Model," in 1991 AMA Winter Educators' Conference Proceedings, Childers, et al., eds. (Chicago: American Marketing Association, 1991), pp.417-422.
36. See J.R. Searle, "How to Derive 'Ought' from 'Is'," Philosophical Review, 73 (April 1964), 43-58.
37. This point is important, because we will later want to say that concepts may be descriptive in the mouths of some scientists, but when a marketer uses them they become normative (for instance, exchange of electrons versus exchange of utility).
38. This definition is inspired by J.L. Mackie, Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), Chapter 3.
39. Inspiration for this notion comes from T. Nagel, The Possibility of Altruism (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).
40. One might object that the notion of a human need derives from psychology, not ethics: if 'need' is descriptive in psychology, why not in marketing? The term 'need' is almost always normative, even in psychology. In A.R. Louch, Explanation and Human Action (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), this point is forcefully made: "To introduce need, then, is not to introduce a stimulus of any kind, either observable or hypothetical, but is to seek an account of behaviour informed by a conception of values, reasons and principles for action. As such it cannot possibly conform to a hypothetico-deductive or a causal model of explanation (p. 78).
41. A.H. Maslow, Motivation and Personality, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970), p.xxiv.
42. E. Dichter, The Strategy of Desire (Garden City: Doubleday), p.32.
43. E. Dichter, 1960, p.37.
44. E. Dichter, 1960, p.272.
45. E. Berkowitz, R.A. Kerin, and W. Rudelius, 1986, pp. 12-13; D.W. Cravens and R.B. Woodruff, 1986, p.91.
46. A.R. Louch, 1966.
47. Yet another advantage of the KDM is that it, unlike the PPM, is compatible with Kotler's notion of "negative demand," or consumer hostility. According to the PPM, people who neither want nor need nor are willing to buy a product cannot be a market for the product. Marketers, however, constantly seek ways of overcoming the resistance of people who are thought of as being in the market. Any effort to convert a hostile group automatically creates a KDM-style market. Thus, in choosing a foundation for the Kotlerian notions of "negative demand," "no demand," and "latent demand," one is better off with Kotler's definition than with the PPM (P. Kotler, "The Generic Concept of Marketing," Journal of Marketing, 36 (April 1972), 46-54).
48. Obviously, this first element must be described without normative language. Thus, for example, "All X-type items sold in March," would not be legitimate, due to the rigidly normative term 'sold'.
49. R. Bartels, "Can Marketing be a Science?" Journal of Marketing, 15 (January 1951), 319-328; R.D. Buzzell, "Is Marketing a Science?" Harvard Business Review, 63 (January/February 1963), 32-40, 166-170; J. O'Shaughnessy and M.J. Ryan, "Marketing, Science and Technology," in Conceptual and Theoretical Developments in Marketing, Ferrell, Brown and Lamb, eds. (Chicago: American Marketing Association, 1979), pp.557-589.

50. E. C. Hirschman, "Humanistic Inquiry in Marketing Research: Philosophy, Method, and Criteria," Journal of Marketing Research, 23 (August 1986), 237-249.
51. P.F. Anderson, "On Method in Consumer Research: A Critical Relativist Perspective," Journal of Consumer Research, 13 (September 1986), 155-173; P.F. Anderson, "Marketing, Scientific Progress, and Scientific Method," Journal of Marketing, 47 (Fall 1983), 18-31; S.D. Hunt, "Should Marketing Adopt Relativism?" in 1984 AMA Winter Educators' Conference: Scientific Method in Marketing, Anderson and Ryan, eds. (Chicago: American Marketing Association, 1984), pp.30-34.
52. S.D. Hunt, 1976; M. Etgar, "Comment on the Nature and Scope of Marketing," Journal of Marketing, 41 (October 1977), 14, 16, 146; D.P. Robin, "The Positive/Normative Dichotomy," Journal of Marketing, 42 (July 1978), 6, 42; D.P. Robin, "Comment on the Nature and Scope of Marketing," Journal of Marketing, 41 (January 1977), 136, 138.

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