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**MARKETING AS AN APPLIED  
DISCIPLINE OF THE ECONOMIC  
SCIENCES.**

**AN ATTEMPT AT IDENTIFYING**

## Introductory remarks

While making an attempt to determine a relationship of marketing (the theory of market and marketing) – as an applied discipline (a practical science) not separated yet from other sciences – to the basic institutional disciplines of the economic sciences which in the Polish system of sciences include economy, management sciences and the science of commodities, we will attempt to demonstrate, against the background of the existing, already established relationships of the knowledge on the marketing with the two former disciplines, the distinction of marketing as a discipline. The distinction is clear enough to justify even its institutionalisation in the field of the economic sciences.

### 1. Reasons of attempting to identify marketing as a scientific discipline

The identification of marketing as a scientific discipline is a difficult problem for a number of reasons. They are specified below without being hierarchised in respect of their significance.

1. This discipline of both knowledge and didactics has been “imported” from Anglo-Saxon countries (chiefly the USA) – the scientists there can claim, not without some reason, the final say on the issue.
2. Scientific research in the scope of marketing, in the literal sense of the term, was not developed in Poland until the 1990’s, i.e. in the period of transformation of the Polish economy (not including research work on marketing in the foreign trade) – it is a question open for the discussion whether the achievements are so significant that original generalisations with a deep cognitive and practical significance can already be made.
3. In the scientific circle, there is an understandable fear for increasing the number of the new scientific disciplines. On the contrary, the opinion is quite popular that scientists should aim at uniting, integrating them with the already existing disciplines (conservative attitude); on the other hand, there is a growing tendency (among the professors with a shorter period of work experience) to separate such disciplines, after all, and to institutionalise the discipline that have already been separated for a long time.

4. The circle of the economic sciences in Poland in the 1990's underwent a characteristic "restructuring" process caused by the impetuous, uncontrolled process of development of the non-public higher education institutions, as well as by the "inflation" of the status of a scientific expert. The process' results included the inflow to many disciplines, mainly to the management sciences, marketing (the former circle of commercial sciences), finances or accountancy, of many outsiders, sometimes even from outside the field of economic sciences. This is accompanied in Poland by a fatal practice of appointing people without sufficient qualifications (and scientific achievements) in a specified discipline to be the governmental experts.
5. Marketing as a discipline of science, and in particular as a practice of managing market-oriented entities, similarly to the science of management, faces so serious challenges of the modern times<sup>1</sup>, that the problem of its institutionalisation as a scientific discipline may seem to be a matter of minor importance, which unnecessary absorbs the researchers' attention.

Although the above reasons actually complicate the problem stated, they do not rule out the need, or simply the necessity, of identifying marketing as a scientific discipline. Why is it necessary or even indispensable?

In the first place, in consideration of the growing economic significance of marketing<sup>2</sup> in the West, but also in Poland, as observed at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in a period of recession accompanied by the spectacular bankruptcies or troubles of many well-known companies, including some trans-national ones and representing the so called new economy. Those companies did not use marketing, or they used it incorrectly, and as a result, they over-invested, i.e. excessively developed their productive capacities or created new-generation products regardless of the market, and in particular of the future market demand. This growing significance of marketing is better perceived in the periods of rapid economic growth, and marketing is then one of the key elements of the mechanism that drives and keeps up the prosperity. At the company level, it includes a diffusion of marketing approach and culture in the scale of the whole company<sup>3</sup>. Since marketing performs more and more important economic and

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<sup>1</sup> We wrote about those challenges in the introduction to *Marketing. Koncepcje, badania, zarządzanie*. Ed. L. Żabiński and K. Sliwińska. PWE, Warsaw 2002, pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> According to R. Niestrój [...] *marketing, even if for its economic significance, deserves for more distinct than presently situation of the scientific problems related to it in the science classification system* R. Niestrój: *Marketing zintegrowany – wyzwanie teorii i praktyki zarządzania*. In: *Marketing u progu XXI wieku*. Jubilee book to celebrate Prof. Jerzy Altkorn's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. Economic University, Cracow 2001, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> According to J. Dietl [...] *the decline of business functional areas and flatterer of its organisational structures, as related to the decentralization of decisions, increases the number of disaggregated decisions based on marketing criteria*. J. Dietl: *Perspektywy marketingu – zmierzch czy rozwój?* In: *Marketing u progu XXI wieku...*, op. cit., p. 38.

social roles in the economy management process, not only in the microeconomic scale, and since in this connection, more and more extensive and detailed research in the field is carried out, the postulate of separation and even institution-alisation of the discipline where the research is conducted, is worth considering.

Secondly, because this non-separated yet discipline fulfils criteria of disciplinary identification, at least at the minimum, sufficient level.<sup>4</sup>

Thirdly, there is also another reason, less significant or insignificant for the practice of business and management, but quite important for the develop-ment of the science, and in particular for the development of scientific workers, which is related to the interdisciplinary, or even the inter-field (in the meaning of a field of science) nature of marketing. Marketing is not contained completely in any of the three scientific disciplines distinguished in Poland, according to the classification of the Central Commission for Scientific Titles and Degrees (economy, management science, science of commodities). According to R. Niestrój [...] *that is of little importance to the research work itself* (which is disput-able in my opinion – L.Ż.), [...] *however, it creates certain formal problems re-lated to including scientific papers and their authors to specified disciplines. As a result, scientific papers and their authors dealing with marketing problems are classified arbitrarily either as belonging to economy or to management science*<sup>5</sup>. This would not be inappropriate if such classification was based on the substan-tive criteria, which actually exist and which are mentioned further on. However, the long-time observation of practical functioning of many institutions making such qualifications leads to the conclusion that it is not so in a large number of cases<sup>6</sup>.

Fourthly, due to the fact that scientific circles, representing both disci-plines with a longer history (such as management sciences) and those with a shorter “seniority” than marketing, e.g. logistics, more consistently and dy-namically aspire to separate or even to institutionalise their disciplines<sup>7</sup>. For instance, the circle of management science as represented in the Committee for Organisation and Management Sciences of the Polish Academy of Science aims

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<sup>4</sup> This view seems to be shared by K. Białecki and T. Gołębiowski. See. K. Białecki, T. Gołębiowski.; *W poszu-kiwaniu tożsamości marketingu: marketing a ekonomia i zarządzanie*, In: Kontrowersje wokół marketingu w Polsce – tożsamość, etyka, przyszłość. Academic editing L. Garbarski, The L. Koźmiński College of Entre-preneurship and Management, Warsaw 2004.

<sup>5</sup> R. Niestrój: *Marketing zintegrowany...*, op. cit., s. 95.

<sup>6</sup> These are such institutions as for example: faculty councils or senates of universities, especially (yet not only) non-economic ones, task commissions of the Chief Council for University Education, MNI, Polish Science Guidebook, etc.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance: M. Sołtysik: *Teoretyczno-metodologiczne problemy współczesnej logistyki*. “Gospodarka Materiałowa i Logistyka” 2001, no. 11.

at the return to the status of a field of science<sup>8</sup>. In the context of the above undertakings, the scientific circle of marketing does not look attractively<sup>9</sup>.

Fifthly, because marketing as a discipline of science and education is basically present at all 8 fields of economic studies of master's type, while, paradoxically enough, the largest share in education in the field of marketing in Poland have polytechnical schools and universities but not economic schools. If education in the field of marketing subjects is to have solid scientific grounds, and it becomes more and more important as subsequent education levels are reached (vocational studies, graduate studies, doctoral studies), it should be based on well defined scientific disciplines and not in a conglomerate of "nebulous", weakly structured "areas of knowledge".

## 2. Critical remarks on marketing and its scientific identity

### 2.1. Diffusion of market orientation and the problem of determination of the marketing research area

In the Polish literature such attitude is represented by Prof. J. Dietl, who specified the arguments in favour of it in a series of publications<sup>10</sup> and he has been maintaining this view since the 1980's, if not longer<sup>11</sup>. The author presents two basic problems of marketing (in the practice area, they are at the same time basic fields of scientific penetration) and he defines them as follows: *Marketing is useful in obtaining decision grounds for allocating economic resources pro-*

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<sup>8</sup> In few countries, sciences on managing organisations have gained the status of a separate, independent field of sciences, with all consequences of that important deed of their elevation. However, in most countries, they are treated as a group of sciences, a prevailing part of which is usually classified as humanistic and social sciences, a significant part to the field of economic sciences, and few of them to other branches of science. A similar situation is at present in Poland, after loosing in 1986 of the status of an independent field of science as possessed since 1974. L. J. Krzyżanowski: *O podstawach kierowania organizacjami inaczej: Paradygmaty. Filozofia. Dylematy*. PWN, Warsaw 1999, p. 135.

<sup>9</sup> There is also another, disturbing trend of some attempts of institutionalisation of non-separated disciplines. It consists in incorporating to those disciplines of problems of marketing, in all or in part, without referring to the marketing terminology, or even to its inspiration (this is discussed in a further part of the paper, with reference to management science). Rare exceptions include here proposals for tracing 'demarkating' lines in the fields of 'interpenetrating' areas of interest and research of adjacent or 'crossing' disciplines, as for instance logistics and marketing, as included in the work of D. Kempny: *Logistyczna obsługa klienta*. PWE, Warsaw 2001, p. 18, 27.

<sup>10</sup> See: J. Dietl: *Some Remarks on Marketing Perspectives*. In: *Marketing and Globalisation*. Ed. J. Däd'ó, J.W. Wiktor. Cracow University of Economics, Matej Bel University, Cracow 2000; J. Dietl: *Perspektywy marketingu...*, op. cit.; J. Dietl: *Dylematy badań współczesnego marketingu*. „Marketing i Rynek” 2002, no. 3.

<sup>11</sup> See: J. Dietl: *Marketing. Wybrane problemy*. PWE, Warsaw 1985.

viding for a long-range development of the organisation and its competitive edge, as well as in activities facilitating acceleration of the adaptation process and development of the target market for accomplishment of organisations' own missions within the framework of the missions performed by them, thus emphasising the role of marketing in processes of market allocation of company (organisation) resources, in market adaptation processes and in development of the target market of those entities. At the same time he declares that [...] *without questioning the increasing significance of marketing, it seems doubtful that any theorems can be formulated in this field that would be recognised as a theory of marketing, no research methods or technique have been worked out, and the scope of marketing is difficult to define.* And in a further passage [...] *since marketing has failed to work out its own general theorems (theories) and research methods, it has permanently to make use of other disciplines. [...] In our research, we have to [...] make use of theorems of other disciplines (mainly economy) and methods worked and tested by different sciences (e.g. sociology, psychology, mathematics). Hence a question arises to what extent the description in which theorems and methods commonly used in other disciplines have been applied is original and extending our knowledge [...]. The question is additionally justified by the enormous literature on marketing which may have significant didactic values, yet their scientific values are limited. My advice – maybe expressed in a slightly exaggerated form – is as follows: If you write your doctoral thesis on marketing, you should read not exactly the marketing literature but that on the disciplines used by it, especially from the area covered by your study*<sup>12</sup>.

Another Professor's argument, or a group of arguments, against separating marketing as a scientific discipline deals with the extension of its research field in the connection with diffusion of marketing and its orientation (culture) in a company (organisation)<sup>13</sup>. *We mean in particular taking it into consideration, to a greater extent than before, in marketing decisions as well as in demonstrating feedbacks with other areas of business, particularly with the its financial function [...] since [...] the share of marketing costs in general costs is increasing (even in a short period of time), and so is the significance of marketing investments. Therefore, even in research on marketing operating activity, it is difficult to separate that activity from the problems of the company's liquidity, its*

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<sup>12</sup> All the quotations cited come from J. Dietl: *Dylematy badań...*, op. cit., p. 2, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Clear separation of marketing activity will be more and more difficult, in spite of the increase of its significance, since marketing goals will be accepted and realised within all functions of the organisation [...] in consequence [...] of more and more distinct limitation of separated functional areas of the organisation, as related to the flatterling of organisational structures, the decentralisation of the decision-making process, the development of recognised information relations between those areas, the increase of significance of interdisciplinary workers teams.* J. Dietl: *Dylematy badań...*, op. cit., s. 4, 5.

*financial costs, activities related to leveraging funds, etc. At the same time [...] the phenomenon of time compression as combined with the necessity to include in the (marketing – L.Ž.) system of reasoning some environmental variables which formerly could be assumed as data extend extremely the scope of analysis. It is more and more difficult to conduct analysis based on a simplifying ceteris paribus rule seeing that [...] a significant part of marketing studies concerns individual elements of marketing mix<sup>14</sup>.*

In conclusion, J. Dietl formulates the following opinions, which are worthy of quoting in extensor:

1. *It will be difficult to establish research subjects confined to marketing if they are based on the empirical material describing the behaviour of economic entities and their adaptation process... and are limited only to the functional area of marketing (and let us add – to the close task environment of the organization – L.Ž.). Undoubtedly, that analysis will be enriched, at the same time the researcher will be exposed to various traps resulting from overlapping of individual functional areas of the company and feedbacks between them.*
2. *Since [...] in the scope of research and education, marketing includes wider and wider contents and uses methods applied in such fields as strategic planning, change management or industrial organisation, [...] and in spite of the growing significance of marketing in business, will it be swallowed up by previously mentioned fields of research and education? Maybe it is worth taking up a discussion on the subject<sup>15</sup>.*
3. *There is a fear that marketing will be pushed in the direction of operating activities, whereas it should be based on long-range thinking.*
4. *Marketing has developed from economy and not from management. Theories of imperfect [...] and monopolistic competition underlie that discipline. As a matter of fact, the issue at stake is improvement of the adaptation process of the organization [...] and achieving a competitive edge through various activities leading to competition through quality.*
5. *A marketing researcher must take into consideration non-economic variables in a much greater scope than an economist [...], since [...] he acts in a de-aggregated form [...], even in conditions where global strategies are applied [...] It facilitates development, creation of target markets within a market niche or segment [...] This poses a serious challenge and at the same time makes it difficult to qualify the research. [...] The present-day marketing opens undoubtedly a new immense research area, however its in-*

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

*terdisciplinary nature and the scope of interest which is difficult to define clearly pose a significant threat to the research in that discipline*<sup>16</sup>.

## **2.2. Marketing and micro economy in the context of the dilemma of the cognitive originality of marketing theorems**

The issue of the missing originality of cognitive theorems of marketing as a discipline is also raised by the other authors, not necessarily opposed to the marketing separation but not enthusiastic to the idea, either.

Prof. J. Szumilak quotes the opinion of H. Leibenstein on the requirements an economic theory should comply with, namely: logical cohesion, realistic assumptions on behaviours, consistence with an experience from the past...<sup>17</sup>. Consequently, he writes [...] *then if any theories were to be developed as specifying the knowledge on interrelations between the sphere of exchange and that of consumption, as the field of marketing can be named after S. Mynarski, they would have to comply at any rate with these requirements [...] It seems however that it will be a difficult task. Ideas and rules of marketing actions, as considered from the perspective of the rules of the microeconomic theory and its trends, do not seem to develop from a homogenous and well established ground. On the contrary, they are an effect of an unconstrained choice of the theoretical bases which are often inconsistent with each other, moreover, accepted without any discussion on the subject [...] This does not help to work out a coherent position, and the same goes for the situation when this position is to be formed outside the existing schemes as worked out by economy [...] Interrelations between the exchange sphere and the consumption sphere, as a field of research used for developing marketing strategies and tactics, since they cannot assume a completely different form than indicated by the basis which these relations are built on*<sup>18</sup>.

To support his thesis, the quoted author presents the below arguments as based on the comparative analysis of such problems as **the category of market, the role and significance of customers' preferences, company objectives, the**

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<sup>16</sup> *Can the research on consumption and consumers' behaviour as based on non-economic motives be recognised as economic/marketing research? It seems that they can sooner be included to sociology, applied psychology. Can studies on advertising perception be recognised as marketing research? Probably they have more to do with psychology than economy.* J. Dietl: *Dylematy badań...*, op. cit., s. 9.

<sup>17</sup> See: H. Leibenstein: *Poza schematem homo oeconomicus. Nowe podstawy mikroekonomii*. PWN, Warsaw 1988, p. 42.

<sup>18</sup> J. Szumilak: *Marketing a rynkowy mechanizm alokacji zasobów*. In: *Marketing u progu XXI wieku*. Op. cit., p. 71-72. See also: J. Szumilak: *Zasady marketingu a rynkowy mechanizm alokacji zasobów*, "Ekonomista" 2001, no 5.



**notion of competitiveness, the problem of optimisation of economic entities' behaviours**, as discussed in both economy (micro economy) and marketing. That analysis was aimed at determining how close the marketing knowledge is to the economic rules and whether or not the marketing approach formulates any significant questions as addressed to economy. The issue can be supplemented by the questions derived by the author from his comparison of the marketing category of market with the economic one (as presented respectively by Ph. Kotler, a doyen of marketing, and P.A. Samuelson and W. D. Nordhaus, eminent representatives of the neoclassical synthesis)<sup>19</sup>:

1. Does the marketing interpretation of the main category of economy (i.e. the market) according to Ph. Kotler calls into being any significant differences in the analysis of exchange processes as based on economy and marketing?
2. Does the marketing process/marketing in Ph. Kotler's presentation express anything more than participation in the market based exchange (in the meaning given to it by economy) or does it only state precisely conditions and factors of the market exchange realisation?

Prof. J. Szumilak perceives significant differences in the approach of economy (the neoclassical theory) and marketing (in Kotler's classical version) **to the problem of customers' preferences**, being a consequence of the different defining of market in the classical theory and methodology of investigation of the consumers' manifest preferences<sup>20</sup> (i.e. interpretation of the consumers' preferences as based on the information on their demand) that consist in the following:

- marketing research tends to take into consideration many factors determining consumers' behaviours (the measurement of preferences as applied to marketing needs has usually referred to a combination of many hypothetical objectives and properties of the product, in NB economic variables are represented on a small scale since it is not only consumers' needs that are to be recognised but also their wishes and the latter are not always rational),

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<sup>19</sup> According to Kotler, economists relate the notion of market to a set of buyers and sellers, who make transactions with a specific product or a class of products. From the point of view of marketing, the sellers make a new branch, while the buyers create the market. (Ph. Kotler: *Marketing. Analiza, planowanie, wdrażanie i kontrola*. Gebethner i Ska, Warsaw 1994, p. 10). According to P. A. Samuelson and W. D. Nordhaus, market is a process through which mutual interactions of buyers and sellers of particular goods lead to determination of their prices and quantities. P.A. Samuelson, W. D. Nordhaus: *Ekonomia*. T. I. PWN, Warszawa 1995, s. 82.

<sup>20</sup> In Hicks and Samuelson's opinion [...] *the demand theory is based on the notion of marginal usability is ineffective since it cannot generate any hypothesis allowing for empirical observation. Therefore, instead of dealing with unobservable tastes and usabilities, Samuelson proposes to introduce the notion of 'revealed preference' that enables to examine the consumer's current choices and to use statistical methods. However, he warned against mistakes of such analysis (e.g. different sets of indices) which is severed from economic interpretation.* W. Stankiewicz: *Historia myśli ekonomicznej*. PWE, Warsaw 2000, s. 397.

- in the neoclassical microeconomic theory the determinants of the consumers' behaviour come from an impersonal market and are regulated solely by means of the price mechanism.

However, marketing is blamed for the fact that the research strategy resulting from those differences is not consistent enough<sup>21</sup>. As J. Szumilak writes, it would seem that [...] *in the marketing orientation, there should be perceived some concurrences with proposals of the behavioural current in economy and the concept of satisfying behaviours as worked out there, originating from the so called procedural rationality of H. Simon*. However, marketing, making [...] *most often an assumption on the consumer's maximisation of usability, which is confirmed [...] also to some extent by the marketing characteristics of types of purchase decision processes where there are no statements on the question whether and when the customer discontinues searching more advantageous alternatives, hence he/she is not interested in maximisation [...], in fact [...] the customer considers branches and markets as a whole creating the allocation mechanism in the same way as it is described by the neoclassical current in economy*<sup>22</sup>, i.e. in principle, it does not contribute anything new to the description.

While perceiving parallels between the marketing approach (as regards the marketing interpretation of market and product) and the so called economic approach of G. S. Beker, based on a broad interpretation of the market as a place of confrontation, of the participant's wishes (needs, aspirations) on the one hand, and, on the other hand, that what these participants have to spare in this sense on another or what they are prepared to resign from in exchange for something else, and which, in both approaches, solves the problem of occurrence of the so called intangible products and the analysis of entities' behaviour in the non-economic sphere, J. Szumilak qualifies the below indicated differences between those approaches to the 'disadvantage' of marketing.

G. S. Beker, while extending the scope of the analysis of the human economic behaviours (to practically all their behaviours the subject of which may come under the rules of an equivalent exchange, e.g. contracting of marriages, mutual rendering of services, 'criminal market', etc.), which to some extent is convergent with Ph. Kotler's new classification of marketing products<sup>23</sup>, adopted

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<sup>21</sup> J. Szumilak: *Marketing a rynkowy mechanizm...*, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>23</sup> In the millennium issue of his manual, Ph. Kotler lists 10 basic types of marketing products: material goods, services, impressions (sensations), events, persons, places (areas), property rights (to real properties, to securities/money capital), organizations (including companies), information (knowledge), and ideas. Ph. Kotler: *Marketing Management*. The Millennium Edition. Prentice Hall, Inc Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 2000, pp. 3-5.

an assumption on stability of preferences of participants of such exchange<sup>24</sup>. According to J. Szumilak, such an assumption is an unacceptable limitation as regards the marketing explanation of the human behaviours, which assumes sensitiveness, hence also variability of the consumer preferences. For him, however, Beker's assumption is more convincing (*Wasn't Beker right after all when he spoke about the inclination to explain our frequent ignorance about reasons of human behaviours through eager pointing to changes in preferences when particular behaviours diverge from the expected ones*)<sup>25</sup>.

While considering another problem, **i.e. that of the marketing approach to competition and competing as well as the significance of that approach to the effective performance of the resources allocation process** (against the background of the neoclassical economy current and the new industrial economy (managerial economy), J. Szumilak remarks that the dichotomy of sectors and markets as actually adopted in marketing enables the departure from viewing competition from the perspective of satisfying that need by a specific product in favour of the analysis of competitiveness of satisfying that need by offers (products) of different branches (the so called market dimension of competition). In his opinion, this justifies the focusing of marketing interest on the analysis of competitive position, on the means of ensuring competitive edge and on the methods of evaluation of the conditions for stability and competitive equilibrium. Such approach seems to favour generation of competitive markets and competitiveness on the markets of many goods, which may also lead to a better (more effective) resource allocation and which can be recognised to some extent as a result of companies' activities in the field of marketing. However, J. Szumilak does not confine himself to the above conclusion and formulates the following critical remarks aimed at marketing (in respect of both practical mode of operation and discipline of knowledge):

Firstly, marketing (as a discipline) has not worked out any original rules of the decisions on the issue of competing as taking into consideration the market of the competition but used the rich achievements of the managerial current in economy based on the theory of games (problems of entry to and exit from a branch, potential competitiveness, etc.).

Secondly, the presented normative, recommended solutions of marketing/marketing management as related to competing refer to either to the above mentioned approach or to assumptions of the traditional current in economy, i.e. competing within the framework of a particular market (sector) structure, which for J. Szumilak is a symptom of inconsistency.

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<sup>24</sup> G. S. Beker: *Ekonomiczna teoria zachowań ludzkich*. PWN, Warsaw 1990.

<sup>25</sup> J. Szumilak: *Marketing a rynkowy mechanizm...*, op. cit., p. 64.

Thirdly, J. Szumilak, having quoted the first and the second theorem of the economy of welfare (the particular structure of competitive markets has a desirable property of tending towards effective allocation in Pareto's version) and having emphasized that to achieve the above the competence must actually occur and entities must behave in competitive way, which results in an effective allocation of resources, says that [...] *application of marketing strategies of competition seems to lead very often to deficiencies of competition. There are sufficient examples of creative utilization of such rules, which proved to be an introduction to monopolist practices and formal accusations for such practices (e.g. active searching for 'profit zones' by innovators and renovators)*<sup>26</sup>.

Another area of J. Szumilak's criticism deals with the **concept of marketing objectives of the companies** as formulated at the level of the company management, and not the philosophy of marketing in general. The main objection concerns the lack of identification of the theoretical grounds which would be indispensable for marketing to draw up model proposals for expressing those objectives and the dynamics of their shaping (negotiating) in a period of time. Such models are after all among the achievements of the behavioural current in economy, which marketing researchers sometimes refer to, although not generally, as the quoted author believes.

In J. Szumilak's opinion, the works on marketing more often refer to the (neo)classical or managerial theories of companies. It is characteristic for those theories that company, objective(s) are presented in a static manner. Today, the latter theory is the most exploited one since the first one assumes that the company operates in the perfect market conditions (and has only one objective, i.e. maximisation of profit in a short period of time). From the point of view of the managerial theory of the company, the company's objectives include: revenue volume, market share, the company's rate of growth, managers' preferences for specific types of expenditures as considered from the point of view of their long term maximisation, with due regard to the volume of expenditures enabling the revenue attainment. Recently the list of objectives has been supplemented, both in scientific proposals and in practice, by a long-term maximisation of the company's goodwill. Expenditures for accomplishment of those objectives are determined with regard to the limitations in respect of the level of reinvested profits as a result of the game conducted by managers regarding the parameters of profit distribution among shareholders (owners). According to this concept, marketing goals can be treated as the immediate means for accomplishment of the main objective (e.g. advertising expenditures or other elements of the marketing-

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 65-66.

-mix serving the purpose of maximisation of the long-term sales turnover). J. Szumilak not only believes that the above presentation is static but he finds the following faults with it: too large diversity within the framework of a single proposal, which transforms it into a set of miscellaneous cases that each time require a separate analysis, the lack of unequivocally formulated limitations of access to the means enabling maximisation of the goal, arbitrary nature (as regards the rank of those purposes) that results in the diversity of expenditures. Finally, he questions the validity of some of the goals proposed, also referring to the criticism from the point of view of marketing, e.g. the long-term striving for the increase in the market share, which may lead to emergence of profitless zones in a longer period of time<sup>27</sup>.

J. Szumilak charges marketing with heterogeneity (lack of homogeneity) of approach to the issue of optimum (effective) allocation of the company's marketing resources. He is of the opinion that making tacitly or overtly the assumption on maximising behaviours of economic entities, for recommends an optimum allocation of those resources<sup>28</sup>; in fact do not differ basically from the position of the orthodox neoclassical theory. Needless to say that the theory includes, as its significant component, the hypothesis on the so called material rationality, i.e. on informing comprehensively the decision-maker on conditions and criteria of the choices made, coordination of company activities which leads through the free-competition market to the optimum in Pareto's version (i.e. to the situation when position of some exchange participants cannot be improved without worsening the position of others) etc. On the other hand, ad contrario, as one can infer from the analyses of the numerous strategies recommended by marketing and taking into consideration the innovative and organisational progress, the choices made are based on the so called procedural rationality, i.e. satisfying solutions resulting from it on account of assuming a hypothesis on incompleteness of the decision-maker's information, therefore they are made in conditions of imperfect market coordination. The question must be asked – writes Prof. Szumilak – whether it is not a proof of an ambiguous position of marketing on the issue of optimisation of the company's marketing resources? It seems that the author has answered the question himself by quoting H. Simon's view on a significant achievement of marketing as regards solving optimisation problems due to making use for the purpose of the concept of the product life cycle. As it is well known, in various phases of the product life cycle, one has to do with a different competitive situation (respectively: monopoly, oligopoly, polypoly,

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 68; A. Slywotzky, D. J. Morrison, B. Andelman: *Strefa zysku. Strategiczne modele działalności*. PWE, Warsaw 2000.

<sup>28</sup> See Ph. Kotler: *Op. cit.*, pp. 102-107.

again oligopoly), so even if for this reason one can hardly expect the same assumptions as regards the nature of the competitive situation in each phase of the cycle. The originality of that marketing solution consists of using the hypothesis of a sales volume reaction in the respect of each of the marketing instruments used for establishing an optimum marketing resources allocation (separately in each phase). So in fact, as J. Szumilak concludes, one can speak [...] *about creative utilization of traditional Cournot's and Chamberlain's hypotheses, as developed by the theory of games, on the impact of competition and demand/supply relations on offers' behaviours in oligopoly conditions*<sup>29</sup>.

This 'favourable' for marketing assessment has been mitigated by the quoted author by the remark that the considered problem of the optimisation of the company's marketing resources (in respect to individual phases of the product life cycle) is, firstly, expressed statistically (i.e., we believe, statistically within the framework of a particular phase of the cycle, however dynamically rather, within the framework of the whole cycle, and not statically), secondly, only with the reference to a particular sector (to a single segmental product market), which after all follows from the concept of the product life cycle. This remark has once more prompted J. Szumilak to formulate an accusation, [...] *that in fact Kotler, as well as many other authors, in spite of marketing identification of the competition dimension, while attributing typical competitive situations to individual phases of the life cycle, accepts the traditional dependence between the number of competitors and the intensity of competing*. In conclusion, J. Szumilak repeats his 'crown' inference that marketing, despite a separate defining of the market supply side (as a sector) and the demand side (as the company's market), considers the nature of relationships of sectors (branches) and markets in a similar sense as micro economy<sup>30</sup>.

### 2.3. 'Erosion' of marketing identity

A critical reflection towards the marketing as a practical discipline of knowledge and research, yet a constructive and positive one, is represented in the Polish literature by F. Misiąg. He makes an assumption, in my opinion a correct one, that [...] *strength and maturity of a discipline are proved by its constructive achievements but also by occurrence and condition of that part of its achievements which make up its critical current. The essence of this current is permanent giving one's attention to the discipline and assessing the ability to*

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<sup>29</sup> J. Szumilak: *Marketing a rynkowy mechanizm...*, op. cit., p. 70.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-71.

*solve the problems that are the main subject of its interest. After ten years of a 'joyful' practicing of marketing, there is an objective need for a certain shift of focus*<sup>31</sup>. It seems that at the same time a significant, although detailed and rigorous criterion of the institutionalisation of a scientific discipline was formulated, i.e. the occurrence of a constructive critical current within the discipline. For that author, the greatest problem is relation of marketing with other disciplines, as well as with other pragmatic concepts of management in as much as they cause erosion (but also, in my opinion, strengthening) of marketing identity in both interpretations. According to F. Misiąg, the well known definition of marketing by P. F. Drucker is of the basic importance for establishing that identity. He derives the following characteristics of marketing from the definition: [...] 1) *particular sensitiveness to environment*, 2) *the company's having 'their own', possibly regular customers*, 3) *the value category reflecting customers realities*, 4) *integrated utilisation of a set of known instruments in the manner taking into consideration customers' point of view*<sup>32</sup>.

Prof. F. Misiąg specifies the reasons for marketing identity erosion as presented in short below; the erosion seemingly based on a solid and lasting base resulting from the original concept of business as seen from the customer's point of view, which the author rates among the greatest innovations of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Firstly, marketing, as each innovation, even the greatest one, can be easily copied after some time, which has happened to other disciplines from the field of management that stresses both the key role of the environment and the company's customers, without excessive emphasising the marketing inspiration of such orientation. Secondly, although the differences between the model presentations of the marketing concepts and the three other basic concepts of business management, i.e. the concept of production, the concept of product and that of sales are clear, in practice, the separateness of marketing does not have to appear clearly, if only for the reason that in spite of marketing expansion, both in developed countries and in those that are still transforming their economies, marketing is not a dominant concept, yet. The identification of the marketing distinctive nature and its market orientation is in Misiąg's opinion even more difficult due to external similarity of market activities (irrespective of the business concept they are based on). Paradoxically enough, in case of three non-marketing concepts, the more spectacular nature of those activities due to focusing within their limits on maximisation of strength of selected instruments

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<sup>31</sup> F. Misiąg: *Marketing w transformowanej gospodarce*. In: *Marketing. Przełom wieków*. Ed. K. Mazurek-Lopacińska, A. Styś. T. I. AE, Wrocław 2000, p. 70. See also: F. Misiąg, *Marginalizacja marketingu*, In: *Kontrowersje wokół marketingu w Polsce: Tożsamość, etyka, przyszłość*. Academic editing L. Garbarski, WSPiZ im. L. Koźmińskiego, Warsaw 2004

<sup>32</sup> F. Misiąg: Op. cit., p. 72.

exposed by them (in turn: low price/product availability, the highest possible technological quality of the product or a strongly persuasive promotion and aggressive selling methods). It may be a reason, with application of the criterion of the identification of the intensity degree of market activities, for an incorrect classifying of those activities to marketing concept<sup>33</sup>. Another reason for an incorrect classifying may also be the application within marketing concepts by some companies that conduct a systematic dialog with customers of such marketing management solutions where some components of the marketing-mix are not overexploited<sup>34</sup>.

In F. Misiąg's opinion, marketing theoreticians and researchers themselves contribute to erosion of marketing identity on account of:

1. Not exactly extending the marketing research field with the new spheres of interest or instruments but throwing into confusion the system of notions by providing those fields or detailed solutions 'inside' marketing with marketing nomenclature (e.g. external/internal marketing, Neanderthal, reactive, partisan, global marketing, etc.), and moreover – contriving every now and again new definitions of marketing.
2. Reducing marketing to its selected fragments, e.g. through singling out the transactions marketing and partnership marketing, whereas in Misiąg's opinion, the first concept simply is not marketing since it fails to respect any of the distinguishing features of marketing identity (which in my judgement is hardly acceptable) and partnership marketing means precisely the essence of marketing as presented in both old and new manuals.
3. Scarcity of any significant theoretical achievements in the discipline since the formulation of the original marketing concept of business (which in my opinion is disputable).
4. Too rapid adopting by marketing the achievements of other disciplines, moreover in the imitative manner, e.g. labelling with marketing names the strategies which actually are not strategies<sup>35</sup>, and as a result, on the one

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<sup>33</sup> Let us add that selling concept is most often confused, as well as the concept of product/quality maximization with marketing.

<sup>34</sup> For instance promotion, since the dialog with the customer (marketing communication) already fulfils its tasks in the scope of improvement of the offer for the target market. However such solutions are strictly marketing solutions.

<sup>35</sup> F. Misiąg perceives also a reverse phenomenon as regards other, young disciplines, e.g. logistics, when he writes: *Not long ago, too little space was devoted to it in marketing manuals, where it usually made a separate paragraph of the chapter on distribution, presented as 'physical distribution'. However, in a short time [...]it annexed a significant part of marketing problems and it does not intend to confine itself to that. Stating the following question in the professional literature such as 'logistic marketing or marketing logistics?' seems to indicate that in this area, there are already some impassable limits* (see: J. Witkowski: *O związkach logistyki z finansami, marketingiem i produkcją w przedsiębiorstwie*. „Gospodarka Materialowa & Logistyka” 1999, no. 10). F. Misiąg: Op. cit., p. 67.



- hand, we are having ‘a bumper crop of marketing strategies’, and, on the other hand, ‘washing away’ of the term ‘strategy’ as a determinant of a particular decision class and setting most inhomogeneous contents to the name.
5. Neglecting by marketing of many of its own important research areas (or a lack of any sensible proposals in that respect), e.g. research on marketing distribution, marketing problems of prices, at the cost of the excessive emphasis put on the product problems, and in particular promotion. Regarding the first issue, Misiąg accuses the authors of writing on marketing excessive focusing on shaping the prices from the point of view of the company (on price fixing and price strategies), and if not neglecting, then exposing the only, in his opinion, marketing price concept, i.e. the price related to the value as perceived by the customer, although, as he admits himself, much more difficult to put into practice.
  6. Too late noticing and insufficient attention paid by the marketing literature to a very important factor, namely the market power shifting from the manufacturers towards the commercial intermediaries, and in particularly retailers, which has brought about (in practice, and not in theory) quite significant changes as regards the marketing concept (strategy) of all the entities mentioned above, including a decrease in significance of product advertising, which is being replaced by promotion at the selling place, restitution of the key role of price in the competition struggle as previously lost in favour of the non-pricing competition (i.e. quality or information competition), etc.<sup>36</sup>.

The above accusations of the current state of the marketing discipline, which in my opinion are just only a part, have been supplemented by the quoted author with critical remarks on the development and practising of marketing in Poland, i.e. in the realities of the transformed economy:

1. When the research on dissemination, or strictly speaking – implementation of marketing was undertaken in Poland, already in the initial phase of marketing implementation, i.e. otherwise than in the developed western countries, the opportunities created by the transformed for such implementation has been overestimated<sup>37</sup>. On the other hand, the researchers underestimated the difficulties lowering the quality of marketing activities that resulted from the weak market position of large, usually Polish manufacturers and the shifting of the market power towards the commercial intermediaries, who according to Misiąg are dispersed, whereas in my opinion, they are rather

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 67-68.

<sup>37</sup> The problems included the still large range of protection against foreign competition, the initial high demand barrier which domestic companies were not able to cope with, insufficient support for marketing from banking sector companies, etc.

concentrated (large foreign trading chains, and even some Polish trading organisations, though the latter are still not numerous).

2. The research on the development of market orientation in Poland as conducted in the nineties of the last century, in spite of its unquestionable cognitive values, were charged with a number of shortcomings; in Misiąg's opinion, there were applied [...] *too mild criteria for qualifying certain behaviours as manifestations of marketing orientation [...] and in consequence, unduly optimistic image was obtained, which is denied by poor results obtained by our companies in the international exchange as well as the competitive weakness as evident in confrontation with foreign companies on the domestic market. The factors contributing to those results included an 'evident' disproportion between the method applied (these are usually questionnaire examinations) and the complexity of the phenomenon examined*, let us add the disproportion forced by the examined companies' keeping in secrete source/documentary information, difficulties with verification of strategic orientations as declared by the companies, dispersion of the research between different research centres, etc.<sup>38</sup>.

This list of critical opinions on the 'domestic' marketing can be supplemented by many other charges, as for example that of rivalling tendencies in the scientific circle of marketing in Poland: the tendency of disintegration on the one hand and attempts to check it on the other – in our country, a few sub circles that have already functioned can hardly ever communicate with each other (even within a single research centre, not to mention the all-Polish scale)<sup>39</sup>; the 'fascination' of the Americans, chiefly Kotler's version of marketing that occurred in Poland, particularly in the first half of the nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (which had not always a beneficial impact on the development of marketing, not only in Poland), problems related to the marketing education at each level (undergraduate, master's and doctoral ones) resulting from rapid development of that education, etc. However, the point is not in multiplying the critical remarks but in considering at least the most important of them, which may enrich the assessment of the marketing condition in the context of identifying marketing as a discipline of the economic sciences.

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<sup>38</sup> F. Misiąg: Op. cit., p. 69-70.

<sup>39</sup> These include the circles originating from 'former' (?) sciences on domestic trade, consumption and market, from foreign trade sciences (mainly from the Warsaw School of Economics, but also, to some extent, from the schools that used to run that field of studies), from psychology and sociology, and even from political science, not to mention the part of the circle of management sciences that began to 'practice' marketing.

### 3. Polemics with arguments on the criticism of marketing as a discipline of science

#### 3.1. Relations between the basic discipline and an applied discipline of the economic sciences

We believe that many objections and critical estimations of marketing as a discipline of science result from its relation, as adopted by critics, as an applied discipline to the basic discipline, i.e. economy, or more precisely, theoretical economy/the theory of economy. **In our opinion, it is not possible to compare directly on a single level the research achievements, rather more theoretical ones or the methodological instruments used, of a theoretical discipline with an applied one**, in our case – the theoretical economy and marketing, but also the theoretical economy and other applied disciplines of economy, e.g. economic policy<sup>40</sup>, detailed economics, finances, while using the criteria of the originality of those achievements or the methodology. **Disciplines of the applied science, which is practical by nature, make us use to a greater or less extent from the theory, models, theorems of the basic, theoretical discipline.** They can verify those achievements in comparison to the practice, specify them, and even enrich – as they themselves build their own generalisation, most often on the empirical base, and sometimes also on the base of deduction, speculative inquiries. As a rule, the generalisations are not so universal, timeless and long-standing, as in case of the theoretical discipline, whereas in return for it, they are more precise, ‘rich’ in the fragment of the reality covered by the compared theorems of the theoretical, basic discipline and the applied one – in respect of the latter<sup>41</sup>.

Can such generalisations made within the framework of the applied discipline ‘supply’ the theory of the basic discipline? J. Dietl seems to be dubious about it when he writes about the danger of fascination with the success of ‘stating the obvious’<sup>42</sup>. However, not all researchers share that opinion, although it is

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<sup>40</sup> According to B. Winiarski, the science/theory of economic policy belongs to the group of economic sciences and is strictly related to political economy (*which may entail some difficulties in precise delimiting its areas*). While referring to opinions of E. Taylor, O. Lange and T. Kotarbiński (who divides all scientific disciplines from the point of view of their tasks into theoretical disciplines, serving cognitive purposes, and applied ones that deal with designing changes in the reality), he includes economic policy, after J. Tinbergen, to normative (applied) sciences. See: *Polityka gospodarcza*. Ed. B. Winiarski. PWN, Warsaw 2000, pp. 19-21.

<sup>41</sup> In Ch. Grönroos’s opinion, the concept of transaction marketing, also defined by him as the functional school of marketing, was developed probably (underlining – L.Ż.) under the influence of the microeconomic theory, and in particular the theory of monopolistic competition of the 30’s, in order to add some more realism to the latter theory. See: Ch. Grönroos: *Od marketingu-mix do marketingu relacji z klientem – w kierunku zmiany paradygmatu w zakresie marketingu*. The Swedish School of Economy and Company Management, Helsinki 1991, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> See: J. Dietl: *Dylematy badań...*, op. cit., p. 3, as well as previously cited extensive quotations from that work.

the task of the historian of the economic and managerial thought (and maybe marketing as well) to examine to what extent the early knowledge on marketing was supplied by e.g. the theory of perfect and imperfect competition<sup>43</sup>. For instance, M. Sloan, who implemented in the thirties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the concept of market segmentation, was inspired by them – and to what extent? What would happen, if any, interactions between G. S. Becker’s theory of the economic behaviours of people and the development of the social marketing concept? etc.

### 3.2. Theoretical economy as an impediment to the development of marketing knowledge?

T. Ambler says that although political economy, called in English by a colloquial term ‘dismal science’, interests in the market and demand and supply laws, it is an impediment rather than inspiration for the reflections on marketing, and particularly for the practice of marketing. He derives the dispute between marketing and (classical) economy from the ‘duel’ won by D. Ricardo against Th. R. Maltus somewhere round 1800 (to put it simply: supply creates demand and not the other way round). *Sometimes however economists wake up (as, for instance, Keynes) and direct their attention to demand, yet traditional schools, especially Cambridge, are still oriented to production. By way of example: if costs were sufficiently cut down, demand would follow suit*<sup>44</sup>. To summarise the quoted author’s line of reasoning, the most important – in his opinion – issues can be set forth that diametrically differentiate marketing from neoclassical economy (let us add: the so called main current economy). These are the views on:

1. The nature of consumers’ behaviour. According to economists, they are rational, but according to marketing, motivated with emotions and desires.

<sup>43</sup> J. Dietl writes, after Ph. Kotler, which as far back as in 1905. W. Kreusi delivered a lecture called *Marketing of products* at the University of Pennsylvania and R.S. Butler, the first author of the book entitled *Marketing* (1911) lectured on methods of marketing at the University of Wisconsin in 1910. K. Białecki also gives examples of other American universities (Michigan, Ohio, California, and Illinois), where lectures on marketing, identified then with distribution, were delivered, and quotes names of American scientists and titles of their manuals. (See: J. Dietl: *Marketing*. PWE, Warsaw 1985, p. 13; K. Białecki: *Elementy marketingu eksportowego*. PWE, Warsaw 1968, p. 7 and following). The famous article of P. Sraffa entitled *Prawa przychodów w warunkach konkurencji*, which inspired a new look at competition, bringing it closer to practice through indicating that practically each businessman creates their own market through accustoming customers to the ‘brand’ and the place of purchase, paying less and less attention to costs and focusing on stimulating demand, was published in 1925, whereas well-known works of J.V. Robinson *Economics of Imperfect Competition* and E.H. Chamberlin *Theory of Monopolistic Competition* were published almost at the same time in 1933. Their contribution to the modern microeconomy (‘Chamberlin’s revolution comparable with Keynes’s revolution in macroeconomy’) has been profoundly analyzed, among others, by M. Blaug: *Teoria ekonomii. Ujęcie retrospektywne*. PWN, Warsaw 1994, p. 400 and following.

<sup>44</sup> T. Ambler: *Marketing od A do Z. The Financial Times przedstawia*. Wydawnictwo Profesjonalnej Szkoły Biznesu, Cracow 1999, p.133-135. In the conclusion, he advises: *specialists on marketing, instead of trying to justify in more and more sophisticated way what cannot be justified, should burn economy manuals* (op. cit., s. 136).

2. The dominant form or model of competition and its appraisal. Although economists have admitted at last that it is an imperfect/monopolistic competition (information asymmetry, incomplete substitution of products, ‘trade marks’ creating their own markets etc.), while they still believe in perfect competition as a condition of the optimum economic development, [...] *they seize each opportunity to induce governments to adopt laws leading to that direction [...] Marketing specialists do not like outright monopoly, either, but they try to strengthen trade marks, the loyalty for them and permanent relations with customers*<sup>45</sup>.

For a long time, economists could not accept any other method of coordinating the economic behaviours than the free-competition market mechanism; only after some time, the transactional costs economy emerged. A similar situation was in case of the knowledge economy opposing to the classical thesis of the economy on depletion of resources (*instead of admitting the defeat, a new field of economy was created*).

Nevertheless, T. Ambler warns marketing specialist not to be lured by the engineering simplicity of the consumer analyses as preferred by the economists, based on the principle of maximisation of appraisals of the product/trade mark attributes set since this method is justified only in cases when the quality can be acknowledged by the consumer. It fails in two aspects: it assumes the consumer’s rationality and believes that the whole is a sum of elements<sup>46</sup>.

### 3.3. The role and place of theory in the basic discipline and the applied discipline of economic sciences

The problem of ‘interactions’ between economy and marketing in the context of similarities and differences of the two disciplines was already stated nearly 30 years ago by A. K. Koźmiński, who treated the latter as an ‘intermediate level’ between economy and the practice of management in the market economy<sup>47</sup>. And

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Basic similarities and differences between the theory of economy (the main current) and the theory of marketing as an ‘intermediary level’ between economy and the practice of management pertain to, as A.K. Koźmiński then wrote: the division of marketing problems into the micro- and macro scales (as in economy), inclusion into marketing of functioning of the mechanism that shapes and changes the consumer’s needs (as distinct from economy, which assumes that demand functions are given), inclusion into marketing of creation and development of new products (as opposed to economy, which assumes the set of goods and services as given), focusing of marketing interest on oligopoly markets (which were then inadequately examined in economy), as well as on markets considered in spatial perspective (in economy, the factor of space was as a rule ignored then), finally, a different assumption on the role of information in running business and the cost of obtaining the same (in economy, the assumption then prevailed on full information obtained at the zero cost, in marketing, on functioning in conditions of incomplete information with definite cost of obtaining). See: A.K. Koźmiński: *Analiza systemowa organizacji*. PWE, Warsaw 1976, pp. 260-261.

although many of the differences then formulated have declined since that time, not only as a result of the fact that the main current of economy became more realistic (and new economy schools outside that current emerged, for instance neo-institutionalism), but also the development of marketing itself and its theoretical grounds – some of them still seem difficult, or even impossible to overcome. The occurrence of those permanent differences results in our opinion from different genesis and role of theory in the basic discipline and the applied discipline, from a different dominant method of theorem verification in both types of disciplines, from a different rule of constructing the bases for theoretical models generated within the discipline, and from what those bases are believed to be, from differentiated requirements as regards the homogeneity and cohesion of theories, from a different meaning of paradigms.

Without expanding this subject, let us confine ourselves to the seemingly obvious statements that the main ‘products’ of the basic discipline, i.e. economy, are theories created mainly with the conceptual method, most often on the **basis of conviction of importance of a certain phenomenon or process** (e.g. conflict, integration, exchange, allocation of resources etc.). The selected type of the phenomenon seems significant enough to predict the possibility of formulating many diverse hypotheses that are suitable for explaining the different areas of social reality since it grasps exactly the hidden ‘essence’ of those phenomena. This theory-making rule is often assisted by the **rule defined as the basic substantial assumptions of the particular theory**. *These are usually rules specific for a certain discipline only and for a certain approach to it – as a rule, they cannot be transferred to other phenomena*<sup>48</sup>. The verification of so generated theories is chiefly the logical one (within that discipline); the empirical verification, if it ever comes off, is dealt with by respective applied discipline. Theoretical economy searches for theoretical grounds in even more general disciplines, theories (e.g. in praxiology, in theories of the society). The theory-making rules are generated, derived from those theories (e.g. conviction on the significance of exchange or conflict) or can be created by the theoretical economy itself (e.g. the homo oeconomicus rule). The theory or theories in the basic discipline fulfil a descriptive function, an explanatory (analytic) function, and seldom, if ever, they are used for the prediction unless they are empirically verified. Discussing the basic discipline, one can also venture a statement that the task of the theory in such a discipline is not a creative synthesis since the theories themselves are already a result of the synthesis, however they can be creatively developed. It is also obvious that from a ‘single theory’ or a theoretical approach of the basic

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<sup>48</sup> Quotations on the theory-making rules and their types come from S. Nowak: *Metodologia badań społecznych*. PWN, Warsaw 1985, p. 397-399.

discipline, uniformity and inner cohesion are required. Such requirements, in our opinion, cannot be set in case of the theories, if there are any, in the applied disciplines of the economic sciences (e.g. in economic policy science, finances science or marketing). The theoretical, or generally, scientific grounds of those disciplines are not limited only to the theory of the basic discipline, i.e. theoretical economy, which, for instance, B. Winiarski points out with regard to the economic policy science<sup>49</sup>. The theoretical grounds of marketing as an applied discipline are, for instance, the theory of the imperfect competition, but also conceptual models of the organization as derived from the theory of organisation and management, the basic discipline of the management science. And finally at this stage, a problem of external cohesion of both theories can occur, although one can try to solve it by searching for a general paradigm of the social studies which the both theories would be in agreement with.

Theories in the applied disciplines, also in marketing, are generated in a different way than in the basic discipline, if they are generated at all. Usually it's done only after many observations of the solution functioning in practice that demonstrates its functional efficiency and/or effectiveness; one should also add that in particular conditions and not necessary straight off in scientists' heads<sup>50</sup>. Although Prof. H. Greniewski used to call such theories 'naive', they cease to be so once they are successfully verified in practice. So, we believe that when any 'own' theories occur in applied disciplines that are not derived from the basic disciplines then the basis for the theories, more often than in case of those disciplines, is the **theory-making rule in the form of a more or less vague 'vision' of the examined phenomena that consists in viewing those phenomena in a new way**. As S. Nowak writes, such a vision, and then the hypotheses arising from it, *most often require new notions, although sometimes they can be formulated in the existing language*. The marketing terminology, and first of all, its vision included in the previously quoted marketing 'identity' elements, which perceives the consumer and its behaviours in a different manner than the classical/neoclassical economy and which orientates on that consumer internally coordinated components of the company's potential with the intention of releasing a synergy effect, are the best proof of the dissimilarity of the above mentioned current of economy and marketing. Besides, theories in applied disciplines usually do not have the form of the strictly systematised theorems with a rigorous

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<sup>49</sup> See: *Polityka gospodarcza*. Ed. B. Winiarski. Op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>50</sup> According to Ph. Kotler, the first department store that was a marketing oriented institution was established by Mitsui in Tokio, in 1650, whereas the first known businessman on the American continent that was oriented on customers was C. H. Mc Cormick (1809-1884), who used to sell his mechanical reaping machine, while motivating customers through credits, after-sale services, promotions and distribution channels. Ph. Kotler: *Marketing Management*. Prentice Hall Inc, Englewood Cliffs 1980, p. 7.

requirement of a uniform, single theoretical basis and with an absolute requirement of inner and outer cohesion of theorems. These are usually theoretical concepts of the examined phenomena, with a certain area of ‘non-descriptiveness’ (lack of closure), and even a certain internal incohesion, assuming, certainly, that this area within the concept is only some margin that does not undermine the concept essence. Such concepts, if known to the representatives of the basic discipline (economy), may be an inspiration for establishing or developing a theory within that discipline<sup>51</sup>. Yet the concepts do not have to include a ‘central element’, or a ‘core of the research program’ in Lakatos’ terminology, that the concepts are built around. Such an element is, according to Kuhn, the local paradigm of the particular discipline (if the discipline is mature) or only a central (global) one, or even an outline of such a paradigm. Besides, the concepts do not have to meet the requirements of empirical verification, which in this case is made very rigorously.

### **3.4. Are the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and the diffusion of marketing orientation in the economic practice a chance or an obstacle in identification of marketing as a scientific discipline?**

It is not easy to confront oneself in details with those attitudes (in the Polish literature, they are represented in the most complete and consistent manner by Prof. J. Dietl) which are opposed to identifying marketing as a separate scientific discipline on the basis of the rigorously formulated criteria of such identification. We have taken up a rather detailed discussion with J. Dietl’s arguments in another paper, when we were determining the disciplinary relations between marketing and management science.<sup>52</sup> Here, we shall only indicate some of our general opinions on Prof. Dietl’s standpoint.

The interdisciplinary nature of a given area of knowledge, as well as the resulting absence of the own methodological base of the area do not have, in our opinion, to negate the possibility of identifying it as a scientific discipline. There are already disciplines, and sometimes the whole fields of science with such attributes, for instance: management sciences, have been admitted by, among other researchers, L. J. Krzyżanowski and A. K. Koźmiński. The first one, and

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<sup>51</sup> The applied discipline can have a number of such ‘rivalling’ concepts, similarly to the basic discipline, which has a few – or more than ten, as in case of economy – theories (schools), some of which can rival with each other.

<sup>52</sup> See: L. Żabiński.; *Marketing a zarządzanie. O niektórych relacjach dyscyplinarnych*. “Marketing i Rynek” 2002, no. 9



also other authors (e.g. J. Lichtarski), notice the significance of the so called permeating disciplines in generating scientific progress (e.g. biochemistry, physical chemistry), and in the complex of economic sciences: economic statistics, business finances, international management, etc. Although those disciplines have a common subject of the studies with neighbouring, permitted disciplines, they analyse it from a different point of view, i.e. they represent a **research consideration different** from those disciplines. The interdisciplinary nature helps to perceive the features of the analysed subject of studies not covered by the discipline's own research, yet the research consideration allows to view them from the perspective of the particular discipline or, hitherto, scientific speciality. Marketing has at its disposal a research consideration which is different from neoclassical micro economy and more detailed than the institutional economy which marketing is derived from. The consideration is composed of the following: **the absence of anonymity of economic entities** whose market, consumption and development behaviours are examined, **desegregation of the structure of examined objects** (companies, or even households, are not 'atoms'), **the concept of business as perceived and run from the point of view of the target customer**.

In our opinion, the absence or weakness of the own basis of marketing does not disqualify the attempts to separate it in the group of scientific disciplines. Until recently, the researchers have believed that theoretical economy has no methodological basis of its own and makes use in that respect from the achievements of logics, mathematics and statistics and only then from econometric methods. L. J. Krzyżanowski writes in detail about the weakness of the original methodological basis of management sciences. He says that, paradoxically, it may be one of the planes of integration of many disciplines, not only from the particular field of science. Maybe it is also a challenge for representatives of disciplines burdened with such a deficiency to develop the methods of the discipline.

The unsettled border lines of marketing as an area of economic activity, as reflected, among other things, in disappearance of the functional areas of business, which rises the question *whether it is still marketing or strategic management of finances or psychology*, are related to dissemination of marketing culture (orientation) in numerous companies, mainly western ones, however the decline (subjectively) of the institutionalised business functions as classically conceived, on the principle of their permeation, does not mean laying aside of the market activity in the objective respect. On the other hand, P. F. Drucker's vision is materialising, namely marketing is becoming the problem of the whole organization and even that of the market contracting parties cooperating with it or of the net-

work organization rather. A similar situation is in case of other business, company or management functions, irrespective of how their objective scope and terminology are defined, e.g. innovations, strategic function or controlling. It does not prevent the possibility to identify the disciplines that deal with those functions (at present in connection with other functions integrating with them) and developing them within one's own research. It does not restrict the possibility of making use of the research results of 'permeating' disciplines on account of permeation of the examined problem and functional areas of business, while observing the rule that the researcher has a full competence only in his/her own discipline, and limited competence in the most of the related disciplines whose achievements are used.

### **3.5. Polemics on the dilemma of heterogeneity of the theoretical attitudes and the lack of cognitive originality of marketing**

A very important fragment of the discussion on the relations of marketing to other scientific disciplines, in particular theoretical economy, in the context of attempts to identify marketing as a separate scientific discipline, concerns the charge formulated by Prof. J. Szumilak, and also constantly raised by Prof. J. Dietl, that marketing does not contribute basically anything new to the knowledge on relations of the spheres of exchange and consumption which has not already been known in the micro economy theories that inspire marketing. At the same time, another charge is formulated on non-uniformity and the absence of cohesive theoretical grounds of the theory of micro economy which marketing, as a field of study, makes use of. The latter charge has already been analysed before and, we believe, even if it not has been completely refuted, since marketing, as a discipline, has been using to its advantage theoretical achievements of different schools of economy, although in the first place institutionalism and neo-institutionalism, still marketing, as a practical activity based on the pragmatic concepts, has considerably outdistanced theoretical establishments of those schools<sup>53</sup>. Theoretical generalisations concerning the same subject of studies in both the disciplines (certainly, on different levels aggregation) also have occurred with some time distance, and rather to the advantage of marketing. On

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<sup>53</sup> C. H. Mc Cormick applied limited competition rules more than 100 years before this theory was developed by V. Robinson and E.H. Chamberlin. M. Sloan segmented the market of the GM concern in the 30's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and scientific concepts of the market segmentation occurred not before the 50's. The idea of social marketing occurred earlier than G. S. Becker formulated his theory of people's economic behaviours, etc.

the other hand, the argument explaining the diversity of the theoretical grounds of marketing (and possibly their in cohesion) resulting from the essence of the basic discipline and the applied one, as previously defined, as well as the argument on diversified competitive situation in different phases of the product life cycle, requiring references to different competition models, as raised directly at the presentation of J. Szumilak's standpoint, must be supplemented by two further arguments. Marketing as an applied discipline of science, similarly to theoretical economy, 'is not at a standstill'. At different stages of development of marketing and its concept, both pragmatic and theoretical one, various theoretical grounds proved to be more suitable. They were derived respectively from the principle of the importance of exchange and price competition (with the growing significance in the practice of non-price competing), as it was in the concept of transaction marketing, from the principle of importance of conflict and non-price competition in the concept competitive marketing and strategic marketing, or finally from the principle of importance of cooperation and partnership as well as competition in the plane of network organisations – as it is the case at present in the concept of relation marketing. These grounds were supplemented respectively to the above mentioned concepts of marketing by various psychology theories related to the consumer's behaviours – the behavioural theory, the theory of the consumer's behaviour as a cognitive process, the post-modern theory. In our opinion, one cannot blame marketing for in cohesion of its theoretical grounds in respect to the whole period of the marketing development as a discipline without taking into consideration the fact of occurrence and development of the subsequent schools and theories in micro economy that differ much one from another. However, it is worth underscoring that theoretical grounds of marketing as derived from economy, psychology, management sciences are relatively cohesive within each of the marketing theoretical concepts individually<sup>54</sup>.

To voice out opinion on the question whether the marketing process (marketing) in Ph. Kotler's presentation expresses anything more than participation in the market based exchange (in the meaning given by economy) or whether it only provides details to conditions and factors of market exchange realization, we should start with the statement that even if marketing as an applied discipline fulfilled only the second task, it would anyway performed the function by way of the 'social division of labour' between scientific disciplines of the various types. However, first of all one should remember that the concept of marketing (marketing business process) differs from the exchange concept, even that closest which is proposed by the micro economy, since it also includes the sphere of

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<sup>54</sup> See also L. Żabiński: *Paradygmaty współczesnego marketingu. O niektórych aspektach identyfikacyjnych*. In: *Marketing u progu XXI wieku...*, op. cit.

shaping product/value for the target customer on the basis of a previous identification of the customer (marketing research) or creating such a customer (its needs, wishes, expectations), which means covering also the sphere of production and not only the exchange, as well as, to a large extent, the sphere of consumption. Marketing generates added value for the customer also in other elements (spheres) of its activity and it treats them not only as instruments for regulation of the customer's behaviours (as economy does), but as intrinsic for the customer components of the 'global', comprehensive marketing value (e.g. the comfort of purchase, information on existence of a specific product as presented in advertising, etc.)<sup>55</sup>. Marketing also proposes, although, one must admit, still infrequently applied in practice, other methods of fixing a prices taking into consideration the customer's expectations then in the economic theory of prices, certainly, while maintaining the convergence of the company's interest with at least medium-term objectives (interests) of customers, which has been perceived by J. Szumilak (the so called algorithm of shaping the marketing price that absorbs the market, relational/competitive and cost price formula in a specific sequence). It can be qualified as realisation of the exchange terms, but it is probably something more.

We acknowledge the charge as put forward not exactly by J. Szumilak but by other authors, including those from management sciences, that Kotler's marketing category of the market 'disrupts' connections between the demand and supply sides of the market mechanism as justified to a significant extent<sup>56</sup>. On the other hand, one can say that in the limited competition model and the imperfect market mechanism model, in subjective terms, the supply side is represented by oligopolies or quasi-monopolies, whereas marketing, again in Kotler's presentation, maintains that cohesion of the demand and supply sides in a different category, namely that of a simple marketing system; in that category, the binding medium of both sides (the sector and the market) is exchange relations. Kotler's marketing category of the market, as it has been repeatedly mentioned, by introducing the so called horizontal, market dimension of competition, enables an analysis of companies from different sectors competing for the same customer

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<sup>55</sup> These values are conveyed by commercial, information (communication), transport services, etc.

<sup>56</sup> *[...] in the literature on marketing, the easiest solution has been chosen that provided tautological sense to the market concept and eliminated the aspect of supply and competition between companies: „Market is a set of entities and organizations that are real and potential buyers of goods and services” (Kotler, 1972) [...] In the more advanced literature, under the influence of cognitive psychology [...] market became very soon „an arrangement in a proper multidimensional position of competitive brands in consumers' consciousness”. In spite of the fact that marketing does not propose a strategic notion of market, nevertheless, it in exchange developed models of demand and dynamic behaviour of customers. These are the aspects that for some inexplicable reasons do not occur in the strategic schemes borrowed from economists. Therefore, it is justified to use the expertise of marketing in order to arrive to the market definition that takes into account the demand dynamics. Y. Allaire, M.E. Firsirton: *Myslenie strategiczne*. PWN, Warsaw 2000, p. 127.*

on the basis of the value which is same or similar, yet expected by the customer, although contained in different products. The economic category of the market (of a segmental, single product) does not create such possibilities. However, J. Szumilak says later that marketing, in spite of the fact that it has adopted a different interpretation of the main category of economy (i.e. market) and differently defines customers' preferences than economy (which takes into consideration in its analyses, after Hicks, only the preferences revealed on the bases of demand research and not, as in case of marketing, also on the basis of examination of demand factors, including non-economic ones, e.g. psychological), it applies at the same time the principle of customers' (consumers') utility maximisation as derived from micro economy. At the same time, marketing, for instance, shuns the concept of satisfying behaviours, as originated on the basis of the so called procedural rationality of H. Simon, but then again the principle of utility maximisation pertains to a single product (and, for instance, different brands), and thereby the unity of the sector and the market (in Kotler's meaning) is restored and marketing does not contribute much new to the description known from neoclassical economy.

The view of the quoted author seems to be correct, but only when referred, as it is in case of J. Szumilak, to that current of micro economy. On the other hand, theories of limited competition or monopolistic competition perceive customers' behaviours as differentiated also by non-economic motives. Then dependence of the customers' behaviours on those motives may lead in certain groups of consumers to utility maximisation not exactly in accordance with the principle of economic rationality but the so called psychological rationality, and this is within a step of satisfying behaviours. The latter can be, and are, an expression of, for instance, compromises made in the course of the so called collective purchase decisions (in a household, in the so called purchase centres of industrial companies), the research of which, in respect of selectable consumer goods or investment goods, is the task of marketing. In case of the selectable goods, in households, at a given level of the free decision fund, it may possibly lead to alternative purchases of products from different sectors. Thus Kotler's distinction of the sectors and markets in such situations seems justified.

The assumption on stability of the customer's preferences, as made by G. S. Becker in the theory of people's economic behaviours and accepted by J. Szumilak, seems false. We believe that marketing is right here since these preferences can change under the influence of objective factors (incomes), situational factors (purchase terms), let alone subjective (e.g. psychological) factors. J. Szumilak's charge that the application of marketing competition strategies leads to imperfect competition only confirms the fact that marketing refers to

a different theoretical pattern in economy, whereas the statement that imperfect competition means a suboptimal allocation of the company's marketing resources seems right, but only when the allocation is referred to the perfect competition pattern and its allocation result. Is imperfect competition an introduction to the monopolistic practices? Certainly yes, but it is already a problem of economic policy (pro-competition policy of the state) and marketing.

Another serious group of J. Szumilak's charges concerns the problem of setting the company's marketing goals, in spite of the fact that it is in the first place a problem related to management and not economy, although it may be the object of research from both the descriptive perspective and the normative one. Actually, marketing inadequately exploits dynamic models of negotiation of goals (the behavioural approach in the meaning of behaviours) and confines itself, as yet, to the static (managerial) perspective. neither has he taken up the original, in our opinion, concept of company (business) goals of P. F. Drucker, where profit performs a different role than the company's goal, i.e. a criterion of the condition for the company's survival and development, i.e. precisely the explicit specification of restrictions as regards the access to the means necessary to achieve the goals. However, considering the nowadays feasibilities of the company' obtaining means for development not only from the profit but also from the environment (banks, security market), the limitation has been formulated too rigorously. On the other hand, the criticised considerable diversity of the proposed goals, as notified in the managerial current, is a consequence of the fact that marketing (and managerial economy) deals with non-anonymous business entities that differ in respect of both their potential and the target markets they service. In such a situation, it is difficult to obtain a homogenous concept of goals for all types of those companies. One can at the outmost think of a general methodological approach to analysing the goal emerging process and one of significant methods of the analysis, must be the case study.

To summarise, marketing has at its disposal a considerable theoretical background for a relatively young, non-separated branch of science, although the nature of the background is differentiated (theoretical grounds derived from basic disciplines, including selected microeconomic theories). The background is confronted with own pragmatic concepts of the business process conducted in realities of the market economy, usually highly developed one. And although some theoretical solutions, sometimes fundamental ones, may be quite disputable, they are supported by the arguments that should be discussed with and not ignored. It seems that one cannot expect from marketing the same cohesion of the theory as in case of basic discipline (economy) theories since theories of both types of disciplines perform different functions in the cognitive process.

### 3.6. Remarks on the ‘erosion’ of marketing identity

The raising by F. Misiąg of the problem of marketing identity as a concept of conducting business, and in this context – of the discipline of science dealing with it from the cognitive perspective, as well as the reasons for ‘erosion’ of that identity is certainly one of significant events in the discussion that is going on in Poland and in the West<sup>57</sup> on the scientific condition of marketing and the scope of its dissemination in practice. Prof. Misiąg’s reflections, although critical on marketing, have some constructive values. One can agree with most of them, nevertheless they deserve sometimes a few words of a polemical comment.

In our opinion, the very interesting and inspiring proposal of F. Misiąg to define marketing (and its basic concept) attributively through the distinguished features can be accepted in principle without reservations. With only one remark: the identity of the discipline and its concept presented now has been shaped historically and has not been given ‘straight away’. One can venture the thesis that it emerged in the shape proposed now by the quoted author in the USA, in the sixties of the last century, and with a respective delay in Western Europe and Japan. The qualification on the basis of this proposal of the marketing concepts emerged in practice, which were later described in literature and named respectively: transaction marketing, strategic (competitive) marketing and partnership (relational) marketing requires, in our opinion, taking into consideration of both the historical context in which these concepts occurred as well as the present realities of their functioning (since all of them are present, although in different sectors and on different markets).

In connection with the above, we cannot share F. Misiąg’s view and his qualification of the concept of transaction marketing as a non-marketing concept, the one that in his opinion does not fulfil any of distinguishing criteria of the marketing identity. The statement of the features of both basic concepts of marketing, i.e. transaction marketing and partnership marketing – as quoted by Misiąg after A. Payn – which served as the basis for such assessment contains, in our opinion, a not quite pertinent assessment of those features which suggests, for instance, that customer servicing in marketing activities within the concept of transaction marketing is ‘not very important’. A question arises in this connection whether, for instance, prompt deliveries to the stated address of courier shipments in the sector of those services as functioning according to this very

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<sup>57</sup> It is proved also by titles of some articles published for instance in “European Journal of Marketing” 2002, Vol. 36, Nō 3; S.J. Levy: *Revisiting the marketing domain*; S. Brown: *Vote, vote, vote for Philip Kotler*; E. Gummesson: *Practical value of adequate marketing management theory*; K. Gronhaug: *Is marketing knowledge useful?*; M. B. Holbrook, J. M. Hulbert: *Elegy on the death of marketing*.

concept is ‘not very important’? Is quick, exact, yet polite service in the chain of Mc Donald's restaurants ‘not very important’ either? Transaction marketing is considered to be a marketing concept by the authors of the Nordic school of marketing and in principle all American authors. We distinguish, after some western authors (e.g. T. Ambler) one more, in our opinion, basic marketing concept, beside the two above mentioned, namely the concept of competitive (strategic) marketing. Although we are against multiplying needlessly the ‘marketing entities’, we believe that the three concepts of marketing have all the distinguishing features of marketing identity, as specified by F. Misiąg, at least at a satisfactory level, and thereby they are actually marketing concepts. On the other hand, as we have attempted to prove, they differ deeply enough within the above distinguishing features that their separation is justified<sup>58</sup>. Prof. Misiąg is undoubtedly right when he writes that also the eminent personages of marketing (as for instance Ph. Kotler) contribute to ‘washing away’ of the marketing identity through abusing marketing terminology, according to W. Wrzosek’s well known saying *that everything becomes marketing*. F. Misiąg gives some examples, which can hardly be questioned, of too prompt, unreflective identifying of many strategies as ‘marketing’ strategies.

Too quick expansion of marketing (in the field of science rather than in practice) into new research areas, carried out without previous setting in order its relations with applied disciplines of economy or management sciences for which those new marketing research fields are already traditional domains of research is even more dangerous for the erosion of marketing identity than the ‘notional chaos’ prevailing in marketing, as described by F. Misiąg. Maybe this remark does not apply to such sub disciplines of marketing as service marketing or territorial marketing, where such activities either have already been carried out or are much advanced. It does apply however to such research fields, where marketing without such activities, proposes and develops its own, alternative or only complementary to the existing one, objective approaches, while incorporating’ at the same time some of theories or concepts (doctrines) occurring in ‘adjacent’ disciplines<sup>59</sup>. The most notorious example here is the book *Marketing of Nations* by Ph. Kotler and his collaborators<sup>60</sup>. In our opinion, the work is basically a lecture on economic policies, including the social and economic development of countries belonging to different groups of states as classified in respect of their social

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<sup>58</sup> See: L. Żabiński: *Obrazy marketingu w jego paradygmatach*. In: *Marketing. Przełom wieków*. Op. cit., p. 13 and following.

<sup>59</sup> One should admit, however, that always with the source of inspiration stated, including the names of authors of adopted theories, objective approaches etc.

<sup>60</sup> See: Ph. Kotler, S. Jatusripitak, S. Maesincee: *Marketing narodów. Strategiczne podejście do budowania bogactwa narodowego*. Publishing House of the Professional School of Business, Cracow 1999.



and economic development level and degree of market economy maturity – while taking into consideration the mega marketing instruments that can be, or should be applied in those policies.

Applied disciplines, especially mature ones (which F. Misiąg exposes in case of marketing, though in our opinion, only with reference to the one practised in the West), do not have, according to that author, to explode every now and then with significant theoretical achievements, which is anyway difficult in the basic disciplines, hence also in the theory of economy. In our opinion, some of the marketing achievements have a significant cognitive value, or even a theoretical one. Even if they are not as lasting as J. Dietl stipulates, they are important for companies changing their strategic orientation. They include the theory (model) of a change of the market forces layout between the industry/manufactures and the trade (large retail intermediaries) which Ph. Kotler wrote about way back in 1994 in the Polish issue of his manual, and which in our opinion, F. Misiąg unjustly qualifies as ‘delayed’ from the point of view of marketing.