Extension in the Subjectifying Power of Marketing Ideology in Organizations: A Foucauldian Analysis of Academic Marketing

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Abstract
In this article, we analyze the managerialistic ideology of marketing theory by focusing on “customerism”—the customer-oriented managerialism that characterizes marketing. As an ideology, customerism has made it possible for marketing to discursively compete with different management fields in directing the management of organizational members. We base our notion of managerialism in Foucauldian works on power and make a distinction between three forms of power/managerialism: sovereign, disciplinary, and pastoral. Our analysis displays how the forms of power underpinning the customeristic ideology inherent to marketing theory have changed over time, thereby contributing to the reproduction and extension of that ideology. In particular, we show how different articulations of marketing discourse have developed the managerialism of marketing in such a way that today (1) organizational members around the world are meant to be affected by it and (2) it is meant to affect these organizational members in a deeper way.

Keywords
customerism, Foucault, globalization, ideology, managerialism, marketing theory, power, subjectification, macromarketing

Introduction
A central concern of management theory has been to support management in its ambition of promoting efficiency (doing things right) and effectiveness (doing the right things; Alvesson and Willmott 1996; Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips 2006). This also holds true for other managerial theories, such as marketing theory (e.g., Vorhies and Morgan 2003). For example, the issue of efficiency has been dealt with in research on service profit chains (e.g., Kamakura et al. 2002) and sales management (e.g., Boles, DONTU, and Lohtia 1995), and the issue of effectiveness has been addressed within the research on customer, market, and service orientation (e.g., Webster 1995). In management theory, efficiency and effectiveness have been conceptualized in opposition to power (Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips 2006). Power has been a comparatively neglected concept in mainstream management studies (Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips 2006), and this is also true for mainstream marketing (Merlo, Whitwell, and Lukas 2004; Tadajewski 2006, 2010). However, power is interrelated with efficiency and effectiveness in management practice and should be a fundamental concern for all managerial theories, including marketing theory (Arvidsson 2006; Apfitbaum 2000; Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips 2006). The inherent managerialism developed in marketing theory—typically understood as based on “neutral science” and aiming for efficiency and effectiveness—needs to be counterbalanced and problematized by a power-based notion of managerialism, conceptualizing the managerialism of marketing as “an ideology” (see Deetz 1992, p. 222). In the present article, we address this need by analyzing the managerialism of academic marketing discourse, drawing mainly on Foucault’s work on power (e.g., Foucault 1977, 1981).

Core to the managerialistic ideology that is produced and reproduced by academic marketing discourse is the mission of serving the customer and the market (du Gay and Salaman 1992). This central mission of marketing is discussed by Skålén, Fougère, and Fellesson (2008, pp. 152-153) through the notion of “customerism,” which they define thus:

Customerism is a form of governmental rationality that, through prescribing certain practices and technologies, aims to establish customer needs and demands as the point of reference for management, organizational behavior, the design and development of organizational forms and the products and
In line with Skålén, Fouge, and Fellesson (2008), customerism can be considered a “rationality” from the perspective of the contribution that marketing makes to society (by serving customers/consumers) and it can be considered an “ethic” from the perspective of the organizational member (for whom serving customers/consumers is the right thing to do). In this article, we look upon customerism as characterizing managerial marketing ideology. By drawing on this notion of customerism, we differentiate our analysis from mainstream marketing—which sees marketing as a neutral science—and put the emphasis on the power effects of marketing ideology in terms of subjectification of organizational members. Using the term customerism rather than notions from mainstream marketing such as customer orientation or market orientation allows us to mark this difference in perspective.¹

Following Marion (2006, p. 247), we are interested in marketing ideology understood as “the enduring beliefs and collective representations (perspectives, frame of reference, viewpoints) shared by marketers” (our emphasis). However, unlike previous writers on marketing ideology we do not focus on (1) the functions of marketing ideology (Marion 2004, 2006); (2) the ordering of marketing ideology by “the social, economic and political environment” (Tadajewski 2006, p. 171) and, related, the way marketing concepts and their consumer-oriented ideology serve “the goals of those who have power in [the economic] system” (Benton 1987, p. 415; emphasis in the original); or (3) how marketing advocates such as scholars or consultants use marketing ideology to legitimize marketing in society (Hackley 2003; Marion 2006). Rather than looking into the power of certain actors or interest groups in shaping and using marketing ideology, we investigate the power effects of marketing ideology on marketers—how marketing ideology subjectifies marketers.

Our aim in relation to this special issue is to discuss how the extension of marketing ideology in terms of its power to subjectify marketers contributes to the globalization of marketing ideology. But while we agree with Applbaum (2000, p. 260) on the notion that “marketers operate within a consumption-led universalizing paradigm”—and with Marion’s (2006, p. 250) understanding of marketing ideology as affirming “marketing’s universality”—our main focus is on how this consumption-led paradigm extends within organizations rather than directly how it globalizes. Hence, the present research differs significantly from those previous accounts of the globalization of marketing ideology that discuss those who are subjects to this ideology.²

In Marxian studies, there has been much focus on how globalization as a broad capitalist phenomenon has been supported by what Sklair (e.g., 1999) refers to as “the culture-ideology of consumerism.” The critical argument in these Marxian analyses is that contemporary globalized capitalism would not have developed to such an extent without the parallel development of a hegemonic ideology of “consumerism and cut-throat individualism” which works to “depoliticise social behaviour and preempt collective action aimed at social change” (Robinson 1996, p. 17). Within macromarketing literature, a problematization of this ideology of consumption has also been made, notably in relation to the notion of a dominant social paradigm and environmental sustainability challenges (e.g., Kilbourne, McDonagh, and Prothero 1997; Kilbourne and Carlson 2008). Macromarketers and consumer researchers have made explicit the link between globalization, ideology, and what they typically refer to as consumer culture (see Arnould and Thompson 2005), but they have also shown that globalization of consumption ideology is not all homogenization and also involves a great deal of local appropriation and resistance (Eckhardt and Mahi 2012; Kjeldgaard and Askergaard 2002; Varman and Belk 2009). Beyond their differences, these studies that make explicit connections between globalization and marketing ideology all focus mostly on consumers as the subjects affected by marketing ideology. Here, we are more interested in marketers as the subjects affected by marketing ideology—we are not studying consumerism but customerism.

Thus, we will not discuss at length here how “the cumulative effects of [the adoption of global marketing ideology] among a critical mass of competing firms sustains the worldwide profession of marketing and guarantees the continuation, if not the expansion, of the system itself” (Applbaum 2000, p. 259) on the global plane but complement this understanding by an analysis of the way in which this global expansion of marketing ideology is also made possible by the development of academic marketing and its associated managerial practices. More specifically, we argue that the development of managerial marketing theory has helped extend the subjectification of organizational members within all those competing firms (Applbaum 2000, p. 259). It is our contention that the most powerful intraorganizational form that marketing ideology takes lies in the coupling of customerism (which establishes the centrality of customer needs and demands) with managerialism (which establishes the primacy of efficiency and effectiveness). Following Althusser’s (2001[1971], p. 112) understanding of ideology as “always [existing] in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices,” we emphasize the notion that consumerism can be a powerful ideology for organizational members only if it is complemented and supported by managerial practices.

In this article, we draw on Foucault’s understanding of power, which we believe is largely compatible with Althusser’s (2001[1971]) understanding of ideology,³ to provide a power-based notion of managerialism. More specifically, we analyze those schools of academic marketing thought that have been most pivotal in shaping managerial marketing theory and more particularly in developing the subjectifying power of marketing ideology in organizations. Hence, we do not focus on all the most important articulations of marketing theory (as identified in e.g., Bartels 1962; Hollander et al. 2005; Jones and Monieison 1990; Jones and Shaw 2002; Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett 1988; Wilkie and Moore 2003, 2006), but on those articulations that have redirected marketing discourse toward managing...
organizational members in line with managerial marketing ideology—that is, managerialism and customerism. We more specifically study articulations from (1) the scientific sales management school of thought, (2) the marketing management school of thought, and (3) the service marketing school of thought. This enables us to contribute to the study of marketing ideology by showing how some of the dominant articulations of marketing discourse have developed over time the managerialism of marketing in such a way that (1) all organizational members in organizations around the world are meant to be affected by it and (2) it is meant to affect these organizational members in a deeper way. The implication is that the customeristic ideology has fully colonized marketing theory. This uniformity and consistency of marketing ideology may explain “why the idea and ideology of marketing have globalized in such sweeping ways” (Eckhardt, Dholakia, and Varman 2011).

The remaining discussion is structured as follows. In the next section, we outline the Foucauldian power framework which informs our understanding of ideology, managerialism, and subjectification. We then move on to describe our methodological approach in this study. The third section analyses the power/managerialism of marketing theory inherent to the schools of thought we focus on. In the final section, we outline our conclusions and contributions.

**Power and Managerialism**

In this section, we review theories of power that inform our understanding of managerialism, which we in turn outline here. Following Foucault (1977, 1981), we make a distinction between sovereign power/managerialism, disciplinary power/managerialism, and pastoral power/managerialism.

**Managerialism Relying on Sovereign Power**

Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips (2006) argue that those conceptualizations of power that were most influential prior to Foucault’s period of influence draw on the Hobbesian sovereign—and agency orientated—conceptualizations of power. Central to management and marketing theories informed by this notion of power is that managers have power over those who lack power and that managers are the figures that possess power. A managerialism based on such a conceptualization of power grants managers the privileged position to order workers to behave and act in ways that can be against their will. The sovereign power practices that managers and other power holders enact to enforce their power involve coercion and sometimes even violence. A managerialism that is grounded in sovereign power may be possible to implement in different parts of the world—and indeed may characterize today’s working conditions in many assembly plants in the developing world—but this is not due to the seduction of its associated ideology. Sovereign power is overt and clearly visible and is likely to be met with resistance by individuals and groups who have interests that conflict with those of the power holders. Hence, managerial practices that rely on sovereign power are likely to (1) be highly contested by actors who have interests that are incommensurable with those enforced by such a “visible” managerialism and (2) as a result, face serious challenges in their diffusion and globalisation process aimed at “marketers” all around the world. An ideology can be globalized only if it is perceived (however misleadingly) to empower all those organizational members who are targeted by it—ostensibly dividing organizations between power holders and those who are subjected to their power makes it difficult to diffuse ideology among all organizational members.

Lukes (1974) distinguishes between three types of (what Foucault would refer to as) sovereign power. Lukes’s (1974, pp. 11-12, 15, emphasis taken away) first dimension of power “involves a focus on behaviour in the making of decisions on issues over which there is an observable conflict of (subjective) interests” formalized as “A has power over B to the extent that A can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do.” Lukes’s (1974) second dimension of power focuses on nondecision making and particularly on how limiting the scope of the decision-making process through “reinforcing [certain] social and political values and institutional practices” (Bachrach and Baratz 1962; quoted in Lukes 1974, p. 16) enables to control the agenda in situations of overt conflict. The third dimension of power that Lukes discusses includes covert use of power and the role that social structures and socialization have for action. Lukes (1974) argues that through controlling the socialization process power holders wield power over the formation of identities in societies. Accordingly, Lukes’s framework of power emphasizes agency: through different means, individual or collective actors have power over other individuals or collectives.

**Power/Knowledge**

Foucault (1977, 1981), on the other hand, does not principally treat power as a commodity or as clearly coupled to agency. Even though he does not completely reject the notion of sovereign power (Foucault 2007), he argues that, at least from the enlightenment onward, that is, during modernity, the most important forms of power have taken discursive shape. The discourses that power is embedded in are forms of knowledge. Foucault argues that scientific knowledge (in the present case, marketing knowledge) is the example par excellence of discourses invested with power and stipulates a close coupling between power and knowledge/truth. Therefore, he prefers to speak not about power and knowledge but rather about power/knowledge in order to emphasize the interrelatedness between the two. According to this view, the ability to manage is thus always dependent on, embedded in, and legitimated by certain types of knowledge—it does not reside within a sovereign manager. Discursive and knowledge-based power is not seen as a form of power by most people—power appears to be absent when it is present—but imposes a principle of compulsory visibility to those who are objectified by and subjected to it, which is quite different from how sovereign
power operates. Foucault (1977) makes this point very clearly when discussing disciplinary power—one of the two types of power/knowledge suggested by him (see following)—and its key practice—the examination: “It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection. And the examination is the technique by which power . . . instead of imposing its mark on its subjects [as sovereign power does], holds them in a mechanism of objectification” (p. 187).

Since forms of managerialism underpinned by power/knowledge do not appear for most people as a form of power attempting to make them act in power holders’ interests but as neutral knowledge (Dean 1999; Hackley 2003; Rose 1999), we argue that the diffusion and globalization process of this type of managerialism and ideology is likely to be met with less resistance and contradiction than types of managerialism based on sovereign power.

Foucault (1977, 1981, 1985) argues that a strong relationship exists between discourse and subjectivity. According to Foucault, subjectivity is not associated with a stable constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experience that resides in the individual and makes up the person. Rather, subjectivity is always formed in relation to and dependent upon discourse. Central to his argument is that regimes of power/knowledge subjectify actors, in the sense that these regimes always provide subject positions—ways of being and acting in the social world—which actors draw on to constitute themselves as well as technologies and practices—more or less detailed prescriptions regarding how things should be done or descriptions regarding how things should be acted upon, thought, and felt about. In the present article, we analyze marketing thought and focus on texts rather than action; we thus focus on what subject positions marketing elicits to the working subjects, rather than what the workers’ identities end up being. In our Foucauldian understanding, managerialism and ideology are not merely enduring beliefs and representations which power holders may be able to manipulate but are forms of power/knowledge produced and reproduced by institutional actors such as universities and consultants and which promote rationalities (ways of knowing and seeing the world) which individuals enact to constitute themselves. In his work, Foucault (2007) differentiates between two types of power/knowledge which subjectify in different ways: disciplinary power and pastoral power. Each of these types can be seen as corresponding to a different type of managerialism.

**Managerialism Relying on Disciplinary Power**

The way disciplinary power subjectifies is through defining subjectivity from the outside in (Covaleski et al. 1998). Technologies of disciplinary power function as *examinations*, which make people visible, detectable, and known objectively. By turning people into objects of knowledge, examinations make people manageable (Foucault 1977, 2000a; Townley 1993, 1994). Examinations embody the norms promoted by the regimes of power/knowledge they are embedded in and reveal gaps between the person’s present state and the norm—between actuality and possibility. This enables management of people through fostering a movement toward the norm: the person is subjectified when she or he attempts to close gaps between the actual self and the ideal self, thus becoming a subject of knowledge and subjected to knowledge. Through series of examinations, management can check whether employees are moving toward the norm or not. Disciplinary power thus makes possible a managerialism that fosters normalization, making clear the boundaries that people should strive to transcend.

Examinations manifest disciplinary power/managerialism through their ability to compare. “Generally there are two systems of comparison: the creation of an order through a taxonomy, a sequence of descriptive language (taxinomia); or the establishment of an order through measurement (mathesis)” (Townley 1994, p. 30 drawing on Foucault 1972, 1977). Taxonomies and technologies of measurement are disciplinary technologies that establish boundaries between subject positions. Informed by “true” knowledge they order people in categories and groups which provide them with a potential subjectivity. Thus, taxonomies and measurement practices are not only technologies associated with a certain type of power but they also facilitate production of knowledge—they provide knowledge about who the person really is. As Townley (1994, p. 32) argues, “both taxinomia and mathesis facilitate management. They provide for the arrangement of subjectivities and differences into ordered tables and create a grid, a configuration of knowledge, which may be placed over a domain.”

**Managerialism Relying on Pastoral Power**

The word pastoral is usually related to Christian practices, but its function—confession and avowal—and its associated power relations have influenced how management is exercised in many societal domains (Foucault 1977; Townley 1994). The role of the pastor is to guide, lead, and manage a flock of people in accordance with a specific ethic. Through their superior inner qualities, pastors are appointed to interpret the ethic and the boundaries it delineates between right and wrong and good and bad. In line with the religious metaphor, the objective of pastoral management is to secure individual salvation, which in a nonecclesiastical context takes on worldly meanings such as wealth, healthiness, and self-fulfillment. Accordingly, Foucault (2000b, 2007) argues that the pastor manages his or her subjects by being kind—not through coercion.

In order to deliver salvation, pastoral power takes as its starting point the innermost thoughts of the governed person and is thus a form of management that defines subjectivity from the inside out (Covaleski et al. 1998). In order to manage in a pastoral fashion, the manager becomes dependent upon technologies for making individuals talk about themselves: it requires *confessional* technologies. Through the avowals that confessional technologies generate, it is possible for the pastor to manage the confessor in ways that the pastor believes are appropriate (Foucault 1985, 2000a, 2000b). But the confessing
and avowing persons will also manage themselves without the direct influence from an outside force. When speaking about themselves they will reveal to themselves what types of persons they are within the boundaries of the terminology and space of conceivability provided by discourse. If they are not satisfied with who they are, a satisfaction that is contingent upon the external ethic, they will try to change themselves. Accordingly, pastoral power promotes and makes possible reflexive management (Clegg et al. 2002).

Even though one type of power/managerialism might dominate over the others in a particular time and space, Foucault (2007) argues that the sovereign, disciplinary, and pastoral types are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Our analysis of marketing theory thus focuses on explicating the shifts of emphasis from one type of power and managerialism to another rather than complete breaks or “paradigm shifts.”

### Methodological Approach

Our research focuses on three schools of thought in marketing theory, namely (1) the scientific sales management school; (2) the marketing management school; and (3) the service marketing school. We analyze these schools by drawing on our framework of power/managerialism outlined above. Our ambition is not to write the complete power analysis of the history of marketing thought. Rather, we focus on managerial articulations implying that we leave much of consumer research outside.

In addition, we see the three schools we are focusing on as those that have been most decisive in articulating and rearticulating the managerialism of marketing, and more specifically in redirecting marketing discourse toward managing organizational members in line with managerialism in general and managerial marketing ideology—or customerism—in particular.

Due to our specific aim, our categorization of marketing theory does not exactly coincide with the categorization of the most influential schools of thought as identified by prominent marketing scholars and historians (see Hollander et al. 2005; Jones and Monieson 1990; Jones and Shaw 2002; Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett 1988; Vargo and Morgan 2005; Wilkie and Moore 2003, 2006). However, our categorization corresponds fairly well with the four eras suggested by Wilkie and Moore (2003) which establish a distinction between (1) founding the field; (2) formalizing the field; (3) a paradigm shift—marketing, management, and the sciences; and (4) the shift intensifies—A fragmentation of the mainstream. Their second era includes scientific selling, their third era corresponds well with the marketing management school, and their fourth era includes the service marketing school. Furthermore, Sheth, Gardner, and Garret’s (1988) categorization covers all the schools of thought that we focus on, but it is more comprehensive since it aims to give a complete picture of schools of thought in marketing including consumer research. In addition, streams of research such as relationship marketing, market orientation, and social marketing could have been included in our analysis. However, we argue that the basic managerial ideology promoted by the former two corresponds well with that promoted by service marketing. Social marketing, at least its mainstream, does not fundamentally alter the managerialism of marketing but extends it and its practices and techniques to noncommercial domains with the aim of promoting social rather than financial issues. Some strands of social marketing can be seen, in line with other streams of research in marketing such as critical marketing and consumer culture theory, as a problematization of the dominant managerialism of marketing. Marketing discourse certainly is a contested terrain, but in this article we focus on the mainstream of marketing and the managerialism it promotes.

Thus, this is a partial history of marketing tracing the evolution of and changes in its managerialism/managerial ideology. Our work is also a critical history of marketing discourse. In Foucauldian terms, we combine genealogy and archaeology (Foucault 1972, 1977). Combining genealogy with archaeology here means that we analyze marketing solely based on its representation in academic discourse (similarly to what Foucault referred to as archaeology) and that we examine the power/knowledge inherent in marketing discourse as well as the subject positions promoted by it (similarly to what Foucault referred to as genealogy). Drawing on Laclau and Mouffe’s (1985) discourse theory, which elaborates on Foucauldian approaches to discourse, we see the social world as always mediated by and only conceivable through discourse. We argue that the managerialism/managerial ideology of marketing is constituted to an important extent by academic discourse. However, we acknowledge that in order to get to better understand the managerialism of marketing it is also important to examine (1) other discursive sources with alternative articulations of the managerialism of marketing, (2) studies on the ordering of marketing discourse, and (3) how marketing is practiced in organizations. While the present article adds one piece to the understanding of the managerialism of marketing by focusing on academic discourse, it also makes connections to some studies of marketing and management practice which can be seen to support our claims (see e.g., Arvidsson 2006; du Gay and Salaman 1992; Garsten and Grey 1997; Hancock and Tyler 2004; Haslam 2004; Salaman and Storey, 2008; Skålén 2009, 2010; Varman, Skålén, and Belk 2012; Varman, Saha, and Skålén 2011).

The main sources we have been focusing on in our analysis of academic marketing discourse have been those that have contributed to problematize and redirect marketing discourse from one school of thought to another: interestingly, many of these central texts (both journal articles and monographs) were written by professionals (e.g., Alderson 1957; Hoyt 1929[1912]; Keith 1960; Shostack 1977), which sets marketing apart from most other academic disciplines. Other sources we have extensively used have been works by marketing historians (e.g. Bartels 1962; Cochoy 1999; Fullerton 1988; Skålén, Fellesson, and Fougeré 2006; Skålén, Fougeré, and Fellesson 2008), and we have also occasionally relied on texts issued by organizations such as the American Marketing Association and textbooks, whose multiple editions are often useful for following changes and continuities within the discipline (e.g., the 12th edition of the market leader, Kotler and Keller 2006).
Articulations of Power/Managerialism in Marketing Theory

We examine in turn those three schools of thought that we have identified as advancing the managerial ideology of marketing: (1) scientific sales management; (2) marketing management; and (3) service marketing.

The Scientific Sales Management School of Thought

Scientific sales management has typically been presented as a rather marginal early school of thought, at least based on mainstream accounts of marketing history (e.g., Bartels 1962; Hollander et al. 2005; Jones and Monieson 1990; Jones and Shaw 2002; Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett 1988). The two main reasons why we give it a great deal of attention here are that (1) compared with the three traditional schools—the commodity school, the functional school, and the institutional school (e.g., Bartels 1962; Cochoy 1999; Jones and Shaw 2002; Sheth, Gardner, and Garrett 1988)—scientific sales management marked a significant managerial turn in marketing scholarship; and (2) as opposed with the few broader articulations of scientific management marketing (mainly White 1927), which despite being in many ways prescient of later marketing articulations (Tadajewski and Jones 2012, p. 39) had little immediate impact on practice, scientific sales management seemingly had a real influence on selling and sales management actual practices (Friedman 2004).

The introduction of scientific management into marketing scholarship in the 1910s and 1920s can be seen as marking a clear shift to a managerialism relying on disciplinary power. That is, the more descriptive findings of the three traditional schools introduced taxonomies and in that sense can be argued to have had some disciplinary power implications (see Skålen, Fougère, and Fellesson 2008), but these were not conducive to a strong subjectification of organizational members. According to Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips (2006), scientific management is clearly a form of disciplinary power: “after Taylor, the individual workman need not exist merely as a creature of habit, tradition or craft but could become an object of scientific knowledge and a subject produced by the application of that knowledge” (p. 46). In our view, Taylor’s four principles of management illustrate this disciplinary power dimension very well: they are meant to turn human beings into objects of systematic scientific study, and for that purpose they propose to use time and motion studies (Taylor 1911) which clearly are, in Foucault’s (1977) terminology, examinations. Examinations in general, and Taylorist examinations in particular, are not only about documenting how things work but also about determining how they ought to work in order for tasks to be achieved more efficiently. By setting the boundaries between the current way and the ideal way of carrying out a particular work task, Taylorist disciplinary power reveals gaps that need to be closed, which implies changing the subjectivities of workers. This is how disciplinary power is exerted, for example through training and education, as prescribed by Taylorism.

Scientific management was merged with marketing in the teaching at Harvard business school from the 1910s. In academic texts on marketing, scientific management surfaced in the work of Art Shaw (1951[1915]) the founder of the institutional approach in marketing and a Harvard faculty member at the time. Besides the ambitious—but seemingly not immediately influential—works of Percival White (1927; see Tadajewski and Jones 2012), the most elaborated use of scientific management in marketing discourse was its diffusion into and influence on sales management from the beginning of the 1910s (see Friedman 2004; Hoyt 1929[1912]). Selling, which traditionally had been seen as an art, and thus an ability that some people were born with while others were not, turned into an ability that could be scientifically studied, controlled, developed, and managed. This latter perspective on selling, and more broadly sales management, dominated both the academic discourse and the practice of selling and sales management from the 1930s—when it was claimed that the economic crisis made it necessary for corporations to act in a more rational way—to the 1950s (Cochoy 1999; Fligstein 1990; Friedman 2004).

The types of technologies that were recommended for studying and controlling salesmen5 can be seen as examinations. The control practices that were recommended included setting sales quotas, training, compensations, stimulating practices, supervisions, and evaluations that were technified through using concealed microphones and mystery shoppers, the recording of salesmen’s traveling times, and the measurement of their foot travels with pedometers. These technologies were aimed to establish norms and set up boundaries for how the salesman should go about his work and who he should be, compare the practices and performances of actual working salesmen with these norms, and change them and their identities in accordance with the desired norms. The scientific management project in marketing was explicitly aimed to direct a mental revolution for salespeople and sales managers (Hoyt 1929[1912], p. 21). A great deal of evidence from historical accounts of the evolution of selling practice in the United States shows that this shift also happened in the field. For example, Friedman (2004) argues that in the early twentieth century, selling practice was transformed “in ways equivalent to Frederick W. Taylor’s scientific management movement, which had revolutionized production” (p. 91).

Hoyt (1929[1912], pp. 10-11) articulated a distinction between two sales manager subject positions: the old fashioned who believed in securing results through his own sheer force and brute strength and the new type who believed in method, that is, in the scientific management method. The former, outdated type of sales manager clearly relies on sovereign power, while the latter type can be considered to rely on disciplinary power. It is possible to make this argument since the two types of power are related to the two types of subject positions along a few central dimensions that differentiate sovereign power from disciplinary power. We see this scientific management articulation as accounting for changes in the general structure of power in managerial marketing discourse at that time.
As discussed above, central to the sovereign theory of power is that power is in the hands of someone while disciplinary power is embedded in discourse. The statement about the old-fashioned type of sales manager can be interpreted as though it is the sales manager who has power (of the sovereign type) over the salesman. It can also be argued that the subject position of the new sales manager was articulated as relying on the power/knowledge embedded in scientific management in order to control the salesman. Furthermore, the new sales manager can be seen as normalized by the power/knowledge of scientific management, since she or he values the rationality of these kinds of control technologies.

A second distinction between sovereign power and disciplinary power is that the former is advocated for issues of overt conflict and is accordingly dependent on its visibility to have an effect but allows those over whom it is exercised to remain in the shades. Disciplinary power imposes a principle of compulsory visibility to those who are objectified by and subjected to it but is in itself invisible (Foucault 1977). An important aspect in the articulation of the subject position of the old-fashioned sales manager is that when the manager uses his brute strength and sheer force his power is visible to each and everyone, and this visibility is in fact the raison d'être for his use of power since force and strength must be visible in order to exist and have effect. Through imposing his mark, the sales manager will be able to lead. The new sales manager on the other hand uses the power/knowledge embedded in technologies imported from scientific management. These technologies are seldom made visible in themselves. In fact, the technologies associated with scientific management are defined by their invisibility, for example, concealed microphones and mystery shoppers. The power of the disciplinary practices themselves, such as training, compensating, and setting sales quotas are also invisible: they are never framed as forms of power.

The third and last distinction between sovereign and disciplinary power that we use to position the two subject positions in relation to each other has to do with the means and effects of power. Sovereign power operates through coercion and makes people do things against their will. It is coercive and repressive (Lukes 1974). Disciplinary power operates through examinations embedded in discourse and subjectifies. It can repress and empower (Foucault 1977). The defining feature of Hoyt’s old sales manager is that he relies on force in order to get the salesman to do what he wants. It is thus possible to see him as an expression of sovereign power. But why does he have to rely on force? We find the answer to this question in the view that Hoyt believes this type of manager to have of salesmen—and perhaps employees in general—as obstructing, opposing, and battling the will of the manager. Therefore, the sales manager has to use coercion in order to control them. The new sales manager on the other hand relies on the disciplinary power of scientific management. The technologies of this power do not only repress but also empower. Attaining sales quotas for the salesman might imply coercion if he has to work harder than he originally planned. But it may also empower the salesman with prestige and bonuses. Furthermore, working hard may mean developing a selling attitude, which empowers the salesman in his professional role. But why does the new sales manager rely on the examinations embedded in scientific management discourse rather than coercion? Again, we must deduct the answer from the implicit view of the salesman that informs the subject position of the new sales manager. This subject position posits salesmen not as explicitly obstructive but rather as idle, unenterprising, and passive. By gathering information about the very details of the salesman’s physical and mental expressions, it will be possible to control and direct him through detailed instructions (see the classic section about Schmidt in Taylor 1911). This objectification of the salesman that these technologies of control are designed to produce may eventually result in a salesman who is framed by, and takes for granted, the scientific discourse on selling, thus behaving in accordance with it without noticing it.

It thus makes sense to interpret Hoyt’s old sales manager as an expression of a managerialism relying on sovereign power (characterizing old managerial practices in sales management and more broadly marketing) and his new sales manager as an expression of a managerialism relying on disciplinary power (signifying a shift in managerial practices related to sales management and more broadly marketing). The subject positions that have been the object of our analysis thus have implications for managerial marketing discourse in general. It is our view that there was a turning point in the foundation of the managerialism of marketing when scientific management was imported into it (largely through sales management, as an important part of marketing) in the 1910s and 1920s. Accordingly, we can argue that the managerialism of marketing during the 1930s through 1950s was increasingly founded on a disciplinary conceptualization of power even though it would be exaggerated to argue that sovereign power ceased to exist. In fact, scientific sales management discourse and some of its practices can be interpreted as relying on sovereign power and not only on disciplinary power. In scientific sales management discourse as well as in scientific management, the manager subject position can and should force people to do what management orders them to do even if this is against their will. A particular example would be the practice of using sales quotas. By threatening with negative economic consequences in case of failure, the sales manager can force the salesman to work longer hours in order to fulfill his sales quotas. But the sovereign power in scientific sales management is framed by and legitimated through truth and thus power/knowledge. We thus contend not only that marketing discourse was managerialistic at a time when mainstream versions of its history claim it was antimanagerial (see Keith 1960; Kotler 1967; Levitt 1960; Vargo and Lusch 2004; Webster 1992)—and on this we agree with recent studies on the influence of scientific management on marketing from the 1910s to the 1920s (e.g., Tadajewski and Jones 2012; Usui 2008)—but also that marketing experienced a turning point in its managerialism at that time.

This turning point was largely brought about by the scientific approach to sales management. Here, the customer
became more central than in previous articulations, paving the way for customerism. Indeed, Hoyt (1929[1912]) explicitly claimed that “the method should insure maximum advantage for all concerned,” (p. 32) with consumer interests as much in mind as the interests of salesmen, manufacturers, and distributors. This maximum advantage was meant to be reached largely through efficiency gains, but it also entailed more interest in the customer/consumer. White’s (1927) view that “the beginning and the end of all marketing problems is the consumer” (p. 19), which has recently been considered “the earliest explicit formulation of the marketing concept” (Tadajewski and Jones 2012, p. 38), made it part of the mission of sales management to take consumer and customer needs into account and to train salespeople to be customer interested. That is, they should not rely chiefly on selling skills in order to persuade—in line with the popular early twentieth-century notion that salesmanship was an art (e.g., Maxwell 1913)—but rather try to find out what customers need by using results of market research before going about the sale itself. This is how a customer-driven ethos explicitly appeared in some parts of marketing scholarship and sales management practice, initially subjectifying mainly salespeople and sales managers through strong, largely efficiency-driven managerial practices and a relatively mild version of customerism.

**The Marketing Management School of Thought**

The explicit articulation of the marketing concept around 1960 (see e.g., Alderson 1957; Bartels 1962; Keith 1960; Levitt 1960; McKitterick 1957) was essential to establishing the marketing management school of thought. We argue in this section that marketing management and the marketing concept made marketing more and less managerial at the same time. More managerial because it elaborated on the managerial ideology of customerism extensively compared with the scientific selling school; less managerial because the practices it advanced were not foremost aimed at organizational members.

The marketing concept holds that managers should focus neither on the needs of the production department nor on the needs of the selling department, but rather on the needs of the customers. The emergence of the signifier ‘marketing concept’ did not bring a wholly new form of managerialism into marketing theory, but rather an explicit and extensive elaboration on the customerism that was present but relatively marginally so in previous articulations. The invention of a central signifier such as the marketing concept for the formation of theory should not be underestimated. Even though traces of customerism were present in marketing theory previously, the marketing concept turned this form of managerialism into the central ordering principle (Foucault 1972) or nodal point (Laclau and Mouffe 1985) for the articulation and formation of managerial marketing theory. It demarcated the boundaries of marketing discourse in a much clearer way. As such it “tended to divert scholarly attention away from some of the social and macroscopic implications of marketing activity” (Hollander 1986, p. 23). The marketing concept also diverted scholarly attention toward developing practices for implementing the customerism of the marketing concept. The main practices for turning the marketing concept into a practical management device were market segmentation, targeting, and the marketing mix aiming to divide the market into demarcated parts (segmentation), give recommendations on what segments to choose (targeting), and to guide managers about what marketing operations should be used for a particular targeted segment (marketing mix; cf. Appblau 2000).

Marketing management and the introduction of the marketing concept managed to make the managerial ethic of customerism the central reference point for marketing research. This institutionalization of marketing’s power/knowledge happened in tandem with and was furthered by the emergence and subsequent domination of the scientific/positivistic method turning marketing during the 1960s into a more legitimate academic discipline. Tadajewski (2006) convincingly shows that this shift to positivism in marketing was not only or even primarily driven by internal scientific considerations but was furthered by the changing funding practices of the main philanthropic foundations in the United States. In the 1960s, these foundations were accused of furthering socialist thought by right wing voices due to their funding of social sciences. In response, the foundations claimed to fund behavior not social sciences and demanded that the marketing research they funded should be carried out in scientific, objective, and verifiable ways and be supportive of American free market liberal values. This fostered a type of research that produced, reproduced, and legitimated the power/knowledge of customerism in marketing.

Thus, the ethic of customerism became a key nodal point of marketing with the marketing concept. Since pastoral power is dependent on a distinct ethic in order to operate (Foucault 2007), it would seem reasonable to argue that the pastoral type of managerialism was more emphasized in marketing management than in previous schools of thought. On the other hand, the central practices of marketing management were not designed with the aim to gain knowledge about the innermost thoughts of the employees. They were not confessional technologies, a prerequisite for shaping identity from the inside out and for exercising pastoral management. Rather, the practices associated with the marketing concept can be analyzed as forms of disciplinary power. Segmentation, targeting, and the marketing mix can be seen as taxonomies “which may be placed over a domain” (Townley 1994, p. 32). In the case of the best known marketing mix, the four Ps’ framework (McCarthy 1960), the marketing managers’ thoughts and actions are made the object of disciplinary power. The four Ps set boundaries for decisions concerning products: (1) what products should be produced and offered to the market; (2) how products should be priced; (3) where products should be sold (place); and (4) how products should be promoted. The discourse on the marketing mix provides marketing managers with the subject position of mixers of ingredients and defines the boundaries between marketing work and other managerial work more clearly (Borden 1964).
From our perspective, it is striking, considering the label marketing management, that the disciplinary power of the practices associated with the marketing concept predominantly targets the environment of organizations rather than organizations and their members per se and focuses upon products rather than people. This differentiates it significantly from the disciplinary power associated with scientific selling practices. For example, segmentation concerns dividing the market into demarcated parts and targeting concerns decisions about what markets to focus on. Segmentation and targeting aim to influence and manage the market and offer certain subject positions to consumers (see Knights and Sturdy 1997; Rose 1999) but are not primarily designed to manage employees. In addition, the four Ps illustrate that the marketing mix is not primarily about managing human beings but rather about making decisions regarding products. Marketing managers are definitely given a new model for thinking about the marketing of products, but it is hard to see how the four Ps could be used as a human resource management device for every department in a typical organization. The practices associated with the marketing concept facilitate setting boundaries in the environment and provide consumers and customers with subject positions but do not contribute with practices for structuring organizations internally to any large extent.

To conclude our analysis of marketing management, we both agree and disagree with the notion that marketing theory took a managerial turn with the advent of the marketing concept, which is a commonly held standpoint among marketing scholars and textbook authors (see e.g., Bartels 1962; Brassington and Pettitt 2000; Jobber 2004; Jones and Shaw 2002; Keith 1960; Kotler and Keller 2006; Levitt 1960; Vargo and Lusch 2004; Webster 1992). The customeristic ethic got a firm hold on the development of marketing theory with marketing management, which refined the scope of marketing research. However, managerial practices for managing organizations and their members equivalent to those offered by some previous articulations of marketing theory—scientific sales management in particular—were not offered by marketing management. The most substantial managerial practices offered by marketing management were instead geared toward managing the market and consumers. Therefore, it is hard to understand why marketing is usually considered to have turned into a managerial discipline only with the marketing concept. In our view, marketing management has contributed less to the development of the managerialism of marketing theory than is usually claimed. Our analysis is thus supportive of the works of Fullerton (1988), Hollander (1986), and Skålen, Fougeré, and Fellesson (2008), who all contest the official history of marketing—as found in Keith’s (1960) allegedly seminal paper—by showing how it is at odds with historical facts. When it comes to the project of subjectifying organizational members through systematic managerial practices, marketing management may even be argued to have gone a step backward compared to scientific sales management, which was meant to strongly subjectify salespeople through disciplinary technologies and sales managers through “new,” scientifically rooted subject positions. But the consolidation of customeristic ideology articulated by marketing management was to prove useful later in subjectifying organizational members further in line with the rearticulations of service marketing, to which we now turn.

The Service Marketing School of Thought

The pioneers of service marketing theory (see e.g., Grönroos 1978; Shostack 1977) started from the position that the rules governing a service economy are quite different from those referring to an economy dominated by the production of goods, which made them rearticulate the boundary between the focal organization and the customer. While production and consumption of goods are two separate activities, services are produced and consumed simultaneously. This means that the customer becomes directly involved in the production of services and consequently that the direct interaction between employees and customers increases dramatically. This in turn means that customers evaluate not only what they get but also how they get it (Grönroos 1982, 1984). In service production, as opposed to manufacturing of products the behavior and actions of the employees emerge as a central, if not the central resource for market success, and thus an important object of management.

As we have seen, marketing management theory was not based on this fundamental insight, which has led some to argue that service marketing constitutes a paradigm shift for managerial marketing theory (see e.g., Grönroos 1994; Vargo and Lusch 2004). This overstates the differences between service marketing and marketing management. Even though important differences exist between the two research traditions, they both start from the fundamental normative idea that organizations should be customer orientated. Grönroos (1997), for example, argues that “any marketing paradigm should be well set to fulfil the marketing concept, i.e. the notion that the firm is best off by designing and directing its activities according to the needs and desires of customers in chosen target markets” (p. 324). Despite contesting the marketing management school in the strongest terms and arguing for the need of a new paradigm, Grönroos maintains that marketing research should fulfill the central managerial orientation of this school as represented by the marketing concept. This shows very clearly that service marketing is based on the same kind of managerialism as other managerial marketing perspectives discussed above. Rather than replacing the marketing concept, service marketing theory made the customeristic ideology and the pastoral power/managerialism that could emerge from it relevant to the management of organizational members through the development of specific managerial practices.

The point of departure for this development of managerial marketing theory was the analytical distinction between the what and how of services, which led service marketing scholars to argue that marketing management theory offered no management practices that were clearly relevant to managing the employees in service firms (Grönroos 1982, 1984; Parasuraman,
Zeithaml, and Berry 1985; Shostack 1977). Accordingly, developing such practices became one of the main tasks of service marketing research. In retrospect, it must be concluded that service marketing theory has been very successful in this regard. Customer satisfaction models were imported from consumer research and integrated with marketing theory (Oliver 1977, 1996); culture and climate practices were imported from organizational behavior theory (Schneider and Bowen 1995); models for measuring service quality were developed (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985); and the subject position of the part-time marketer, the idea that all organizational members should always consider themselves partly as marketers of the firm, was created (Gummesson 1991). This new subject position illustrates how service marketing theory is meant to subjectify all employees, an important turn in the managerialism of marketing theory. More generally, all these service marketing models and their associated subject positions are founded on a power/knowledge type of managerialism. They foster pastoral and disciplinary power and set boundaries for the employees’ identity construction. Let us illustrate this by analyzing the research on service quality, which incorporates the general managerialism of service marketing (Skålén and Fougère 2007).

Grönroos (1978, 1982, 1984) made an early and important contribution to the service quality literature when he set a new discursive boundary by introducing the cardinal distinction between technical and functional quality. Technical quality concerns the result of consuming the service, that is, what the customer gets, while functional quality refers to how the service is rendered. In seeking to understand the role of the human factor in service organizations more fully, Grönroos turned to the literature on consumer behavior. From Oliver (1977), he imported into service marketing theory the distinction between expected and perceived service. According to this view, service quality is a function of what the customers expect and what they perceive—something that is generally referred to as the disconfirmation paradigm for conceptualizing service quality. Here, we clearly see that Grönroos’s work is founded on a customeristic ethic/ideology: it is the customers who expect and perceive a certain service from the employees.

Grönroos’s groundbreaking theoretical work provided foundation for the next important innovation in service quality theory, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry’s gap model. On the basis of twelve focus-group interviews with customers of four service firms, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985, p. 46) found that ten, and later five (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988) service quality determinants could account for variances in customer-perceived service quality:

1. **Reliability:** the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;
2. **Responsiveness:** a willingness to help the customers and to provide prompt service;
3. **Empathy:** the provision of caring, individualized attention to customers;
4. **Assurance:** the knowledge and courtesy of employees, and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; and
5. **Tangibles:** the physical facilities equipment associated with the service and the appearance of personnel.

On the basis of these five quality determinants, the gap model can be positioned as a pastoral managerial technology. These determinants are a specification of the customeristic ethic that permeates the gap model. It is the customer who evaluates service operations by answering the SERVQUAL questionnaire (see below). Since all five determinants directly address human characteristics, the customers particularly evaluate the behavior and actions of personnel. The customers’ evaluation of personnel in relation to the five determinants intends to spur a management from the inside out, which is central to the pastoral type of managerialism. The customers’ evaluation of the personnel in relation to the quality determinants guide the managers’ attention to relevant service characteristics of employees and set the boundaries for the service worker’s appropriate subjectivity. By adopting management practices that emphasize two-way personal communications such as coaching, sermonizing, cajoling, praising, and correcting (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1990), managers encourage employees to confess and avow who they really are as service workers. Thus, managers take on a pastor’s position. By interpreting the confessions, managers can lead and direct particular employees so that they become truly customeristic.

Inspired by Foucauldian research in management (Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips 2006; Clegg et al. 2002; Covaleski et al. 1998; Townley 1994), Skålén (2009, 2010) has studied this pastoral management fostered by service quality practices through empirical research. He shows how managers adopt coaching, one of the management practices recommended by the service management literature (Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman 1990) to manage customer contact employees in relation to the results of service quality measurement. Coaching was mainly conducted by managers sitting and listening to the customer interaction of employees, which mainly took place over the phone giving them direct feedback after calls were completed. Skålén (2009, 2010) sees the way employees interact with customers and how they comment upon these interactions to managers as a form of avowal and confession regarding how they behave toward customers and the feedback from managers as a form of pastoral care guided by the customeristic ethic as detailed by the gap model inspired service quality measurement that the organization had adopted. If the employees reach a customeristic subjectivity, then they will be blessed because an employee who fits the particular customeristic ethic that the gap model prescribes will be rewarded monetarily, socially (e.g., worker of the month), and/or emotionally (e.g., positive feedback from peers). The confessions that the quality determinants help produce will also enable employees to lead themselves reflexively—by confessing to themselves that they behave in a not so empathetic or responsive way, they will be able to change themselves so that they cross holy service quality boundaries and reach salvation. That service quality measurement tools drive such self-reflexive pastoral management is corroborated by Skålén’s study (2009, p. 803; see also Skålén 2010):
When speaking about themselves during coaching sessions, they [front-line employees—FLEs] reveal to themselves what types of FLEs they are and, if they are dissatisfied with who they are (a satisfaction contingent upon the customer-oriented proactive ethic), they will try to change themselves. Accordingly, the coaching stimulates and enables self-management, which is another key feature of pastoral power.

But the gap model can also be analyzed as a form of disciplinary power/managerialism (Skålen and Fougére 2007). The main way that disciplinary power functions (Foucault 1977) is through closing gaps between the present state and the norm, between actuality and possibility. Named as it is, the gap model invites being treated as a disciplinary technology. Closing the gap between customer expected (the norm, possibility) and perceived (the present state, actuality) quality is also the central aim of the gap model. Based on the five service quality determinants, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) developed a twenty-two-item measurement scale, known as SERVQUAL, for measuring service quality. SERVQUAL measures expectations and perceptions of customer-perceived service quality with the same twenty-two questions. If the customer’s expectations and perceptions scores diverge, management needs to take action, and Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1990) list such actions that accomplish changes in the quality determinants, that is, in the expressed reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, or tangibility (i.e., the appearance) of the personnel. Accordingly, managers need to change the identity of workers if there is a gap between expectations and perceptions. The gap model thus functions as an examination that subjectifies employees from the outside in, a central trait of disciplinary power. By comparing the behavior and actions of the employees (or more precisely the customers’ perceptions of the employees’ behavior and actions) with the norm (the expectations), the gap between the norm and the present state can be reduced or closed, which accomplishes management through normalization. If all employees adapt themselves to the demands of the customers, then their subjectivities will be more similar. But the gap model also makes possible the production of objective knowledge about employees and makes them visible, which is another central feature of disciplinary power and a prerequisite for disciplinary management. Based on the information that SERVQUAL generates, managers can know who their employees really are. Informed by this knowledge they can divide the personnel in categories and groups which provide the employees with a potential subjectivity (e.g., as low/high performers).

Skålen’s (2009, 2010) empirical study of service quality measurement and management supports, at least partly, that the gap model and the associated SERVQUAL questionnaire function as a form of disciplinary power in practice. In particular, Skålen’s study suggests that as a result of the service quality measurement that the studied organization conducted, managers found that the frontline employees were reactive while they needed to be proactive: “Consistent with Foucault’s understanding of disciplinary power, the FI [the studied organization] service quality surveys thus revealed a gap between the FLEs [front-line employees] present reactive subjectivity and their ideal proactive subjectivity” (Skålen 2009, p. 802).

Thus, Skålen’s study supports the interpretation that the gap model functions as a disciplinary technology with respect to it being able to generate objective knowledge about employees and detailing the gap in employee subjectivity that needs to be acted upon by managers and the employees themselves. However, the study did not support that the gap model in itself contributed to close this gap. The study suggests that this was done by managers enacting pastoral power practices (see above).

Thus, informed by our framework of power/managerialism, we argue that service marketing fosters pastoral and disciplinary power/management. Service marketing elaborates on the managerialism of marketing theory through (1) an intensification of the subjectification of the personnel in line with a customeristic ideology and (27) an envisioned extension of that subjectification to all organizational members (cf. du Gay and Salaman 1992; and, about all organizational members becoming ‘part-time marketers’, Gummesson 1991).

**Conclusions and Contributions**

Marketing theory often has been developed with reference to the idea that marketing is in crisis (Brownlie and Saren 1997). Old theory has been accused of not being relevant to practitioners because it has not been able to help managers in their endeavor to make organizations more effective and efficient. Research has been geared toward bridging the gap between theory and the needs of the (marketing) managers. We believe that the real crisis of marketing research is precisely this narrow focus on managerial problems and the understanding of managerialism that has followed in its footsteps. Mainstream marketing research starts from the normative assumptions built into marketing theory. The result, as this article has shown, is a discipline and a theory that lacks reflexivity and seemingly can never really see the world outside of its customeristic ideology.

Herein, we have grappled with this ideology by adopting a critical reflexive stance. We have analyzed the development of marketing theory through the lens of a notion of managerialism grounded in Foucault’s work on power. This has led us to reevaluate the managerialism that is inherent in marketing theory. Contrary to mainstream accounts of marketing theory whose understanding of managerialism is founded only on notions of efficiency and effectiveness, we have argued that marketing theory has had managerial articulations—targeting the subjectification of organizational members—from very early on. Coming to this conclusion represents a contribution to critical and macromarketing research. More specifically, our main contribution lies in our analysis of the types of power mobilized by marketing theory at different points in time. We have thus shown that:

(1) in the scientific sales management school of thought, a shift in emphasis to a managerialism relying on disciplinary power and informed by mild customerism took place,
which contributed to the subjectification of sales managers and salespeople;

(2) in the marketing management school of thought, the focus on employee behavior and managerialism was generally de-emphasized. As a result of the spread of the customeristic ethic in marketing theory, pastoral power grew somewhat stronger, but on the other hand marketing theory became less characterized by a disciplinary power aimed at certain organizational members; and

(3) in the service marketing school of thought, a managerialism firmly based on pastoral and disciplinary power, subjectifying the employees through a stronger customeristic ideology and its associated practices, became very central to managerial marketing theory.

More specifically, we have shown how the service marketing school of thought has developed the customeristic managerialism of marketing by both intensifying and extending its subjectifying power. It is meant to subjectify organizational members in a deeper way, and all organizational members are meant to be subjectified by it. In addition, when articulating how this subjectification functions, we have emphasized that it relies on customerism, which serves as an ethic for employees (in line with Skålén, Fougère, and Fellesson 2008) and can be seen, in our analysis, as what characterizes marketing ideology. Thus, we argue that the globalization of marketing ideology, which can be traced to everyday discourses in all corners of the world (Eckhardt, Dholakia, and Varman 2011), is fueled by marketing theory and its envisioned spreading of marketing ideology within organizations, through the subjectification of all organizational members.

We argue that this globalization process of marketing ideology has been facilitated by the shift in the power base of managerialism in marketing from sovereign power to power/knowledge. Manifestations of sovereign power, which rely on coercion, are clearly visible to people and imply a clear division between power holders and those who are subjected to that power. Managerial practices relying on sovereign power are likely to be met with resistance. They cannot diffuse globally through an ideology that all organizational members would subscribe to because they very visibly provide empowered subject positions to only a minority of organizational members, and no less visibly condemn others to obedience. On the other hand, manifestations of power/knowledge such as service quality examinations are usually not clearly seen as a form of power by organizational members and are far less likely to be met with overt resistance. And resistance is even less likely when those manifestations of power/knowledge do not work only through discipline but also through providing an ideology like customerism, which all organizational members are invited to subscribe to and to some extent feel empowered by. Thus, the different power/knowledge implications of managerial technologies associated with service marketing, such as the gap model (or practices similar to it) that can support both disciplinary and pastoral power as shown by Skålén (2009, 2010), make it possible for different types of managerial cultures in different parts of the world to adopt them. Those that wish to rely more on control-oriented disciplinary approaches can benefit from the invisibility of that disciplinary power from the employees’ perspective, while those that wish to activate and empower organizational members by promoting self-management can rely on pastoral management practices such as coaching.

Thus, our study explains how managerial discourses based on the power/knowledge associated with customerism, as the contemporary articulations of normative marketing are, have diffused to many organizations around the world, and, in this sense, have clearly contributed to the globalization of managerial marketing ideology. They complement and support the trend of an increasing number of firms and marketers “acting on a universal rationality concerning how consumers, markets and competitors will behave” (Applbaum 2000, p. 259). We can consider this universal rationality to have been developed by the marketing management school of thought, its technologies aimed at understanding consumer and market behavior, and its absence of technologies specifically aimed at managing the customer orientation of organizational members. This relative absence of a managerial mission in the marketing management school of thought may thus be seen as having enabled the adoption of marketing beliefs about consumer and market behavior into all kinds of organizations and contexts in different parts of the world. We thus propose that the global spread of managerial customerism—that is, the increasing prominence of managerial marketing discourse and practices that are aimed to make all organizational members ‘customer-oriented’ or ‘market-oriented’—enabled by contemporary managerial marketing schools of thought such as service marketing complements and supports this globalization of marketers’ beliefs in universal patterns of consumerism enabled by the marketing management school of thought.

This article focuses on scientific sales management, marketing management, and service marketing. We encourage future studies analyzing managerialism and ideology inherent in other areas, such as relationship marketing and market orientation. Furthermore, we hope to inspire future empirical research examining whether and how marketing technologies such as service quality measurement models shape management and employee subjectivity as well as resistance to the subject positions produced by discursive marketing practices. As invisible and sometimes empowering as these disciplinary and pastoral discursive practices may be or seem, their power effects on organizational members also need to be problematized, for instance, how they prevent reflexivity or even cause suffering. It is important to encourage empirical research on marketing that can break free from the powerful grip of marketing’s customeristic normativity and ideology (see e.g., Skålén and Hackley 2011).

Declaration of Conflicting Interests
The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding
The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.
Notes

1. Another reason for using the notion of customerism is that academic marketing discourse has promoted different types of customerism (i.e., different ways of establishing customer needs and demands as the point of reference for management), not always commensurable with each other. For instance, the works by Grönroos (1994) and Vargo and Lusch (2004) have quite different perspectives on customer orientation and associated concepts than those of Kotler (1967), which again are different from Kohli and Jaworski (1990), and so on. Thus, by using the broad notion of customerism, we position our analysis beyond the technical discussions regarding notions such as customer orientation, service orientation, market orientation, and so on.

2. It can be argued that globalization literature deals foremost with the globalization of broad issues such as trade, finance, sustainable development challenges, and so on; that is, not consumers per se. But our contention here is that where an explicit link is made to marketing ideology and to those who are subjects to this ideology, the emphasis tends to be on consumers and consumption.

3. Foucault preferred not to use the notion of ideology because of its Marxist connotations, but he was strongly influenced by his experience as a student of Althusser and his articulation of power/knowledge certainly owes a great deal to Althusser’s (e.g., 2001[1971]) works on ideology—although compared with these works, Foucault’s notion of power does away with the centrality of state institutions (see e.g., Clegg, Courpasson, and Phillips 2006, p. 146).

4. On the basis of Foucault’s downplaying of sovereign power, scholars positioned within Labour Process Theory have criticized Foucauldian management studies for not accounting for the power that owners of capital have over workers nor for the resistance that workers express against these owners (see e.g., Callaghan and Thompson 2001; Thompson and Ackroyd 1995). A similar critique of Foucault’s work has been articulated within macro-orientated Foucauldian sociology (e.g., Dean 2007) and philosophy (e.g., Agamben 1998). Despite this critique, it has to be maintained that a Foucauldian framework is suitable for studying the subjectification that discourse implies, which we focus on here.

5. To Hoyt and his contemporaries, there were only salesmen.

6. This is the reason why we deliberately devote comparatively little space to the analysis of marketing management in the present article.

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