

D'ANDREA, Fernando. LAZARIN, Lucas Roecker. **How are marketing knowledge being implemented in economics?**. Revista Interdisciplinar Científica Aplicada, Blumenau, V.16, nº 2, p.01-27. TRI II 2022. ISSN 1980-7031.

## HOW IS MARKETING KNOWLEDGE BEING IMPLEMENTED IN ECONOMICS?

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### **Resumo:**

As ciências da Economia e do Marketing têm muitos pontos em comum. Ressaltamos a importância da interdisciplinaridade nas ciências sociais para analisar como a Economia se baseia no Marketing para a geração de conhecimento especializado. Multimétodos - entrevistas, análise documental e de conteúdo - são utilizados para avaliar 892 teses de doutorado em Economia e verificar se/como o conhecimento de Marketing é abordado. Cerca de um décimo dos trabalhos está relacionado ao escopo do marketing, mas as referências bibliográficas são escassas. Concluímos que isso se deve a mal-entendidos sobre o escopo da ciência do Marketing e a barreiras aos intercâmbios científicos e à implementação da interdisciplinaridade. Contribuímos com a literatura sugerindo que a interdisciplinaridade trazida pelas exportações de Marketing para a Economia aumentaria a compreensão dos fenômenos sociais e de mercado.

**Palavras-chave:** Ciência do Marketing. Ciências Econômicas. Interdisciplinaridade. Conhecimentos em Marketing. Intercâmbios de conhecimentos.

### **Abstract:**

Economics and Marketing have many commonalities. We rely on the importance of interdisciplinarity for social sciences to analyze how the first relies on the second for specialized knowledge. Multimethod – interviews, documental and content analysis – are used to assess 892 Brazilian Economics PhD dissertations and check if/how Marketing knowledge is approached. About a tenth of the works is Marketing-related, but literature references are scarce. We conclude that this is due to misunderstandings of Marketing's scope and interdisciplinary scientific exchanges. We contribute to the literature suggesting that the interdisciplinarity brought by Marketing exports to Economics would increase the understanding of social and market phenomena.

**Keywords:** Marketing Science. Economics Science. Interdisciplinarity. Marketing Knowledge. Knowledge Exchanges.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing emerged as a spinoff of Economics, the science that first started to study markets. However, marketing academia has little or no direct influence over other social sciences, not even over Economics (Barcelos & Rossi, 2015; Day & Montgomery, 1999; Silveira, Esteves, & Rossi, 2013). Why is it so? Marketing and Business have a sister-like relationship, in a way that Marketing is not, as people usually imply, a spinoff of the Business discipline itself (Bartels, 1976; Shaw, Jones, & McLean, 2011, p. 28).

Modernly, even before the emergence of the first courses labeled "marketing" in early 1900's (Bartels, 1976), the topics covered by this discipline were taught as part of Economics. The foundations of economics thinking provided the basis for the emergence of Marketing discipline (Shaw et al., 2011). Marketing was first supported by Classical and Neoclassical Schools (Bartels, 1976) and the German Historical and American Institutional Schools of Economics (Jones & Monieson, 1990), to the point that some early definitions of Marketing theories were described as "modifications of applications of older economic theories" (Converse, 1945, 1951, p. 2).

In addition, the early Marketing courses – the first was taught in 1902 (Weld, 1941) -, were reunions of previously taught business disciplines (advertising, retailing, wholesaling, pricing, sales, etc.) that - when joined together in a comprehensive curriculum dealing with market phenomena from the firms' perspective - formed what became known as Marketing (Ferrell, Hair, Marshall, & Tamilya, 2015). The discipline started to push away from Economics in mid-1910's when the National Association of Teachers of Marketing and Advertising was established, but until 1950's Marketing teachers and authors were commonly called "market economists" (Ferrell et al., 2015).

Further illustrating this relationship, Shaw, Jones & McLean (2011) present the early schools Marketing thought as modifications and adaptations of then known Economic Theories while more recent developments relate Marketing to the Austrian School of Economics (D'Andrea, 2019; Hastings, D'Andrea, & Bylund, 2019; Hunt, 2002b; Hunt & Morgan, 2008).

Marketing evolution was fundamentally linked to its continuous importation of ideas and insights from other fields (Alderson, 1952). Apart from Economics, it constantly dialogues with Psychology (especially in its subfield of consumer behavior); sociology (Cherrier & Murray, 2004; Dujarier, 2016), Anthropology (Lannon, 1994; Sherry, 1995), including Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) (Levy, 2015); and various works deal with critical marketing and the different macro dimensions and impacts that Marketing might have in society (Firat & Tadajewsky, 2011; Stoeckl &

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Luedicke, 2015). The collaborations also intersects with more quantitative approaches, as exemplified by the creation of INFORMS (Bass, 1995); by the common use of advanced econometrics (Chintagunta, Hanssens, & Hauser, 2016; Mizik & Hanssens, 2018; Wedel & Kannan, 2016), and state-of-the-art statistical methods.

However, partially because of its specialization, it seems that Marketing is no longer dialoguing and collaborating with economics. How is this relationship nowadays, is the knowledge generated by Marketing recognized by Economics as relevant to the study of their shared subjects? How is Marketing perceived, used, referred by its parent science?

This paper aims to collaborate in the comprehension of that phenomena. Our objective is to understand if, how, and why Marketing knowledge influences and collaborates with studies in Economics. We do that using as a proxy the Economics PhD graduates, looking at how they are trained and if/how marketing knowledge is used in their research. To do that, we create and study a comprehensive database of about 900 PhD dissertations produced in Brazilian Economics PhD Programs from 2011 to 2016, almost 10% of which have topics directly related to marketing; we conducted in-depth interviews with some authors.

The paper develops as follows: we first discuss the scope of Marketing and how it could benefit other areas of research. We then present and explain the methods used to: construct and analyze the database, choose the interviewees, and analyze their answers. After that we present the results that show that the influence of Marketing is almost absent in Economics. Limitations, conclusion and suggestions for future research follow.

## **1. Questioning the Scope of Marketing**

Developments in Marketing theory from 1950's to 1970's enlarged its scope to include social and macro-level issues (Kotler & Levy, 1969; Luck, 1969). The current discipline preoccupations are broad, Marketing covers topics ranging from comprehending consumers, to understanding the role of companies and their societal impacts, and the importance of culture for the evolution of markets, and the boundaries continue to be challenged (Achrol & Kotler, 2012; Kumar, 2015; Moorman, van Heerde, Moreau, & Palmatier, 2019). Additionally, a number of methodological approaches are in use, from highly quantitative to the ones exclusively qualitative.

Bartels (1974) states that in the late 1960's and early 1970's Marketing underwent an identity crisis in which its own definition was questioned. Should it be seen as a technology (Kotler & Levy, 1969) which would allow a broader scope of application and study, or as a class (as Luck, 1969,

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advocated), which would restrict Marketing to the context of for-profit operations, opposing the scope's expansion? Should Marketing be exclusively interested in management and firm's economics/financial issues or should it also deal with social problems, NGO Marketing management and societal analysis at macro-levels among them?

In this scenario, long scholarly discussions about the definition and scope of Marketing came to shape the discipline as a technology (Kotler & Levy, 1969), and as a social process (Hunt, 1976). This scope expansion added topics beyond simple commercial transactions. This understanding, in turn, lead marketing academics to be broadly responsible for marketing actions and impacts and to a preoccupation about Marketing's role as a social institution. Marketing should, in this view, assume responsibilities to positively influence people's daily lives, in order to meet broad needs and desires of societies (Layton, 2010; Lazer, 1969). It should stimulate conscious consumption and be worried about potentially harmful products and practices (Peterson & Lunde, 2016; Pittz, Steiner, & Pennington, 2019). Its scope should be broader than a simple short-time utilitarian/transaction-based perspective.

Despite divergences, it is undeniable that Marketing is deeply related to Economics, in addition to the fact that the earlier emerged from the latter, they share topics such as markets and exchanges as core to their discussions (D'Andrea, 2018; Hunt, 2000). Thus, it looks natural that a part of the knowledge produced by one area would be convergent and even complementary to the other, in an interdisciplinary dialogue.

### **1.1 Interdisciplinarity as a prerequisite for advancing the comprehension of markets**

Scientific thinking and the development of science itself imposes a particular form of production of knowledge. Since the world cannot be studied in its full complexity all at once, modern science, including the social sciences, slices reality. This leads to a somewhat reductionist perspective that uses specific methods to look at the same phenomena from different perspectives, and it is done within well-positioned disciplinary boundaries (Alvarenga, 2011; Calhoun, 2017).

However, the better understanding of and possible solution to increasingly complex societal problems necessarily involves the diversification of initiatives and ways of thinking and acting, this is no different with regards to the production of scientific knowledge (Alvarenga, 2011). This approach is especially relevant in the topics covered by Marketing (Kumar, 2015) because the comprehension of those phenomena needs to rely on insights from different perspectives. This suggests that the possible convergence of disciplines in overlapping areas must be considered. Such

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a convergence may lead to the development of more robust theories and knowledge derived from the expansion of scholarship borders or the convergence of diverse scientific approaches, lenses, and methods (Alvarenga, 2011; CAPES, 2014; MacLeod, 2018). By adopting different points of view, researchers become more capable of understanding market phenomena, covering blind spots from one science with knowledge produced by other fields.

This multiple lenses approach is known as interdisciplinarity and presupposes new ways of knowledge production that imply theoretical and methodological exchanges to generate new concepts and research methods and, of course, broader and sounder conclusions; it also presupposes growing degrees of intersubjectivity to deal with the multiple nature of complex phenomena (Calhoun, 2017; CAPES, 2014; MacLeod, 2018).

All things concerning markets fall into this multifaced approach, consequently, to study market phenomena, different lenses must be used to try to better understand the phenomenon under study. More specifically, market phenomena are increasingly recognized by their complexities, a fact that challenges not only academics but the whole society in the most diverse instances. The importance of markets and consumption in people's (and society's) daily lives and their impacts in their well-being, health, and environment for current and future generations requires discussions that are away of the scope of this work, but that are very relevant to current marketing and applied economics discussions. As previously stated, because of the inherent complexity, contrarily to what happens to the hard sciences, no social science problem, no market problem more specifically, can be fully understood from a singular academic perspective.

It is hard, if not impossible, to isolate variables and infer single and direct causalities in any science, let alone doing that in social sciences as is the case of the subjects that Marketing deals with. Market and consumption phenomena constitute the core of the marketing domain of study, and are recurrent in Economics. The deep-rooted intersections among those two academic fields calls for interdisciplinarity and increasing exchanges, this knowledge exchange and mutual-feedback should be welcomed by everyone interested in understanding those kinds of problems.

Paraphrasing Hayek (1967, p. 123): "The physicist who is only a physicist can still be a first class physicist and a most valuable member of society. But nobody can be a great economist who is only an economist—and I am even tempted to add that the economist who is only an economist is likely to become a nuisance if not a positive danger" (see also Hayek, 1999, pp. 140–141; Mises,

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1962, pp. 140–141), substitute the word ‘economist’ by marketing student/researcher/practitioner’ and the sentence continues to hold.

## **2. METHODS**

In what follows the steps taken to achieve a measurable representation of the marketing influence on its parent discipline are explained.

### **2.1 Universe, Sample Selection, Data Collection and Organization**

The research universe is composed by all the Economics PhD dissertations published in Brazil from 2011 to 2016, a total of six years of scientific production. The timeframe was chosen based on two facts: research started in 2017, so the year right before that was chosen as the endpoint; six years were counted backwards to account for the usual maximum duration of an economics PhD program in Brazil. To get the data, we relied on the information provided by the Brazilian Association for Graduate Studies in Economics (Associação Nacional dos Centros de Pós-Graduação em Economia – ANPEC, 2017). The decision to focus on the dissertations and do not collect information from other scientific production, for example published papers or papers presented in conferences, because the PhD dissertations are a reflex of the training being given to the future academics in Brazil. Any works outside of that scope would most probably bring different influences and would insert bias into the results.

ANPEC provides a list of all the recognized Graduate courses in Economics offered in the Brazilian territory. This list was used to find which education centers offered PhD courses. The first step was to visit each and every website looking for specific information on their respective programs, complementary, we also got in touch via email with the school’ secretaries asking for missing information. The database has been created using documental information and content analysis as explained below.

The programs were classified by: University’s and Program’s name, location, financing method (Public / Private), type of Graduate courses offered (Masters Degrees, PhD’s or both), initial offering of the PhD program, and number of dissertations presented in each of the years in the range.

The third step of the data collection consisted of making a list of all the dissertations presented in each university divided by year for each of the six years under consideration. After that, the University’s websites and their repositories were used to further analyze the dissertations. Building on the AMA’s definition of marketing (American Marketing Association, 2013) and on Hunt’s

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(2002a) discussion about the scope of the field, we defined a list of words that would be commonly associated with both Marketing and Economics. We looked for, in Portuguese and English, this set of words and radicals that could indicate a relation between the dissertation and Marketing knowledge. The following words have been chosen: Company (Business/*Empresa*), Management (*Administração*), Market (*Mercado*), Consum (for consumer, *consumidor*, consumption, *consumo*), Product (*Produto*), Price (*Preço*), Distrib (for distribution and *distribuição*), Communic & *comunic* (for communication and related words), *comunic*), Place (*Praça*), Promotion (*Promoção*), Advertising (*Propaganda*) and Exchange (*Troca*), all of them validated by at least five experts (among a group of three professors and four Marketing PhD students). Dissertations' titles, keywords and abstracts were analyzed individually, spreadsheets were used to classify the works that contained one or more of the selected words/radicals.

The fifth step was performed using the previously organized list of dissertations that had marketing-related words in the aforementioned parts. The relevant parts of the dissertations were read, the dissertations that were actually connected to Marketing were qualitatively selected. This step was performed to eliminate the works in which the words matched, but that had no relation to Marketing *per se*, this was necessary to eliminate the possibility of the existence of the same word meaning completely different things in different contexts. This was done independently by two researchers and, in the cases of disagreement, a discussion settled the dispute.

The sixth step was to classify each of the Marketing related PhD dissertations according in a marketing related area. Hunt's (2002a) classification of marketing is based in three binary criterion: Profit/Non-Profit, Micro/Macro, Positive/Normative and was used to classify the marketing related dissertations. Hunt was chosen based he explicit references to the knowledge from economics in his Marketing studies (D'Andrea, 2019; Hunt, 2001, 2002b), providing a stepping stone in which the present work develops.

The Profit/Non-Profit dichotomy is related to the sector and context where exchanges take place: for-profit refers to transactions in which usually monetary exchanges occur. The non-profit part is related to the application of marketing technologies and knowledges to non-profit organizations, including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the governmental sector and social initiatives intending to transform habits, as proposed by social marketing.

The Micro/Macro dichotomy is related to the scale of analysis, with micro studies being near to marketing technologies studies or individual consumer behavior; while macro studies analyze the

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social process, market (trans)formations, critical marketing and other macro-level questions and issues.

The Positive/Normative dichotomy provides categories based on whether the focus of the analysis is primarily descriptive or prescriptive. Positive marketing takes the perspective of trying to describe, explain, predict, and understand the marketing activities, processes, and phenomena that already exist and as they are. The normative part focuses on trying to prescribe what marketing should do or what kinds of marketing systems a society should have. In this dichotomy, one side examines what Marketing is, and another what it should be (Hunt, 1976).

Figure 1: The different domains of Marketing studies.

		Positive	Normative
Profit	Micro	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
	Macro	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Non Profit	Micro	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
	Macro	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>

Source: The authors based on Hunt (1976).

Every marketing-related dissertation was positioned using Hunt's (1976, 1991, 2002a) framework, as can be seen in Figure 1. At least two researchers have checked each dissertation for its classification, when divergences emerged, a dialogue settled the dispute. Some works were ambiguous in their classification and contained elements of more than one of the eight areas. However, each work was classified in a single of the possible cases, the most relevant one and disputes were settled in conversations among the researchers. The quantitative results that talk about the PhD courses in Economics in Brazil will be discussed below.

Taking a point of view from the Economics and aiming to provide a clearer assessment of the type of studies assessed, we used Hunt's (1991, 2002a) framework to develop a simpler classification. The eight areas were reduced to three, and the positions in Figure 1 were included into one of the following categories, in which all dissertations were classified:



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1. Market Dynamics and Marketing Mix (for profit and non-profit): including areas 1 (for profit, micro, positive), 2 (for profit, micro, normative), 5 (non-profit, micro, positive) and 6 (non-profit, micro, normative) of Hunt's original;
2. Consumption Studies: areas 3 (for profit, macro, positive) and 7 (non-profit, macro, positive);
3. Societal Concerns/Macromarketing: areas 4 (for profit, macro, normative) and 8 (non-profit, macro, normative);

## **2.2 Qualitative research: interviews with PhDs in Economics**

We apply a multi/mixed-method (Creswell, 2009; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007), the reason to that is that the use of this approach in Marketing research is capable to produce more robust and compelling results, consequently generating more robust knowledge (Davis, Golicic, & Boerstler, 2011). To do so, we rely upon different empirical collection strategies, implying in a series of stages of search, categorization, analysis, interviews and interpretation. In particular, we started by putting in place the data collection and quantitative analysis, explained in the last sub-session, with that in hand, we proceeded to the qualitative part of the research.

After the prior categorization of selected dissertations, we randomly chose one quarter of the marketing-related dissertations to try to interview their authors. We contacted twenty doctors via the email they provided in their Lattes<sup>1</sup> platform in an attempt to schedule an interview/conversation. The interviews followed an ad-hoc script, previously discussed in a graduate seminar. The interviews were supported by a semi-structured script that allowed conversations using the subjects of the author's dissertations that overlapped with marketing as the guiding line, there were no closed questions and the interviews were conducted as conversations among the researcher and the subjects.

The scope of the interview was to understand the authors' biographies and their previous contact (or lack thereof) with Marketing academic developments, to understand the objectives of their works and the perceived correlation(s) with marketing. We focused on exploring the references used to deal with marketing questions; inquiring the motives of use/non-use of marketing studies. As the final objective, we wanted to understand the barriers that exist to the usage of Marketing knowledge in Economics research and education. The conversations were done via videoconferences, in Portuguese, and were audio recorded for further analysis with the consent of the interviewee.

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<sup>1</sup> The Lattes is a public platform maintained by the Brazilian Federal government, it serves, among others things, to manage information related to researches that work in Brazil, all researchers are required to maintain its own records up to date.

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To prepare for the interview we analyzed in more detail each dissertation, looking especially for direct or indirect marketing references. And after the qualitative data collection in the interview, the responses were analyzed and inferences were established about: the use and non-use of marketing knowledge in Economics in Brazilian academia, especially at the level of doctoral research; the role played by the faculty; and the academic structure that influences those results. The goal was to understand if, how and why the Marketing knowledge is (not) being used by Economics.

### **3. RESULTS**

We first explore the quantitative information and results of the field research, and then we present and discuss the qualitative results coming from the set of four interviews.

#### **3.1 Quantitative Results and Analysis**

A brief historical overview and some characteristics of the Economics Graduate Programs in Brazil serve to provide the grounds to better understand the discussion that will follow. The first PhD program in Economics in Brazil dates from 1972, it was established at the Federal University of Viçosa, in the South-Eastern state of Minas Gerais. Three other programs were also established in the 1970's in the same region: the first of them in the state of Rio de Janeiro in 1974 at Getúlio Vargas Foundation (an NGO), while the first program in the state of São Paulo was at Unicamp, a public school in the city of Campinas, established in 1977. Figure 2 shows the number of PhD programs started per decade since 1970's by private and public schools. Four of the public programs would not disclose the information on when they were first operating so they appear in the chart as "unknown".

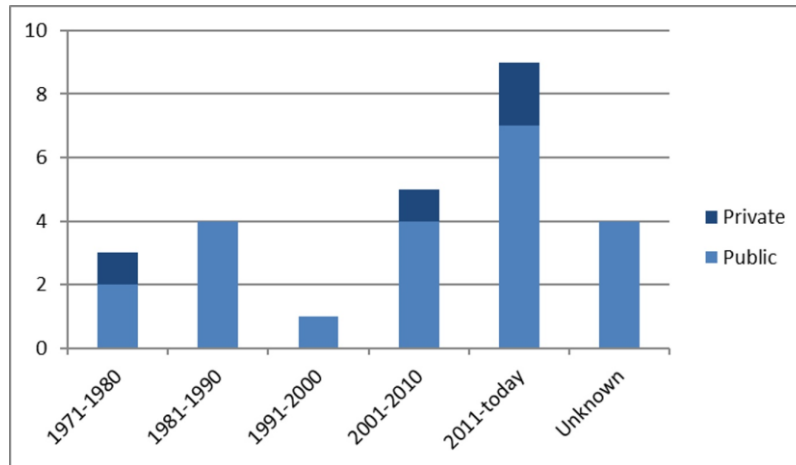
As of mid-2018, there were 45 active Graduate programs in Economics in the country, almost all started by offering only Master degrees, and a big part still has only that offer. Master's programs are unique in 19 out of the 45 Brazilian programs. The remaining 26 programs offer both Masters and PhD's. There is no case of an institution that offers only a PhD in Economics.

The 45 graduate programs are spread around the country. The two most economic-developed regions, South-East and South, concentrate circa three-quarters of these schools while housing around 70% of the total population. The northern region, home of 9% of the population (approximately 16 million individuals) (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística - IBGE, 2012), is the location for a single program, the North-East (18%) and the Center-West (9%) complete the picture.

A clear tendency emerges in what concerns funding, the vast majority of the programs is public founded, a strong Brazilian characteristic in higher education. More specifically, 37 out of the

45 courses (or circa 82%) are held in public institutions, while the remaining 8 (18%) is offered by private schools.

Figure 2: Opening of PhD Programs in Economics in Brazil per decade.

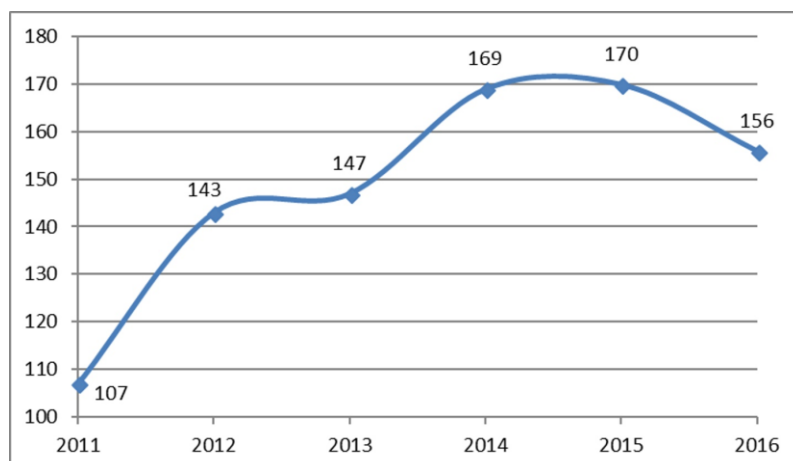


Source: The authors.

Most programs started in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, nine in total (close to 20%). The most recent PhD program started in 2015, it is held at a public institution in Ribeirão Preto, state of São Paulo, the first students were to present their dissertations by late 2018/early 2019.

The number of dissertations presented in the period under study is quite homogeneous, in total 892 works, spread in 22 different programs - four programs had no graduates in the studied period. Apart from 2011, all the other years ranged between 143 (one hundred and forty-three) (in 2012) to 170 (one hundred and seventy) (in 2015) dissertations published, averaging 148 new Doctors in Economics per year in Brazil, Figure 3 presents the trend and the numbers.

Figure 3: Number of graduated PhD in Economics in Brazil per year.

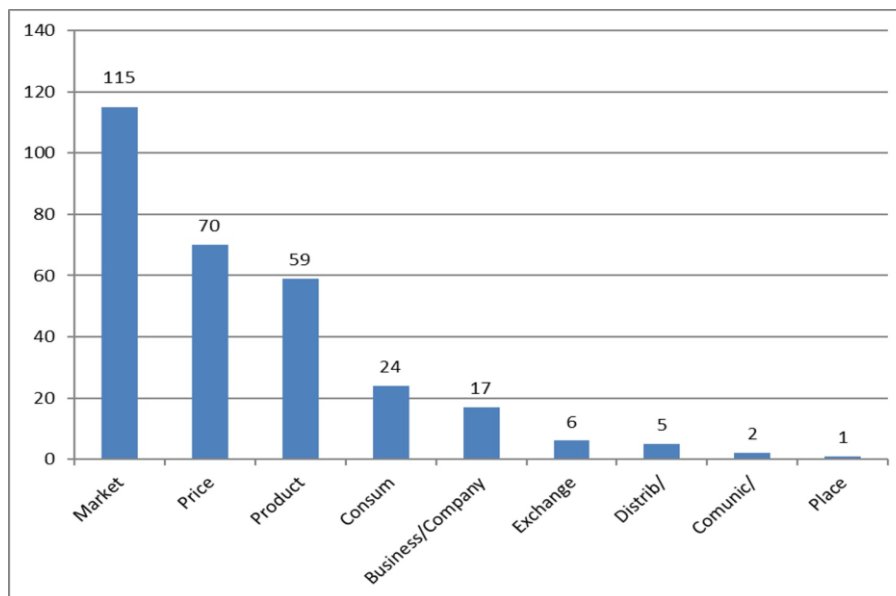


Source: The authors.

### 3.2 Marketing Related Dissertations

Out of the 892 works, 210 (two hundred and ten), or 23,5% of the total, were classified as possibly related to marketing due to the presence of commonly associated words (as explained in the methods session). Three of the terms: “Management”, “Promotion” and “Advertising” were not mentioned at all, while all the others were present. The most common were: “Market” with 38,5% of the mentions, “Price” with 23,4%, and “Product” with 19,7%. Figure 4 shows the mentions for each word/radical.

Figure 4: Recurrence of Marketing related-terms in selected PhD dissertations.



Source: The authors.

This data is a first indication of how Marketing should be capable of exporting knowledge to Economics, after all many dissertations have topics that overlap with marketing. It is now necessary to further understand if and how that actually happens.

To proceed in that direction, at least two researchers independently analyzed those 210 documents in more depth. Following the steps detailed in the Methods section, those works were further classified. Scrutiny found that 130 (one hundred and thirty) works were considered, in spite of the first analysis, not directly related to Marketing due to their method, their scope or any other of their specific characteristics. On the other hand, *eighty* (80) dissertations were classified as having

direct relation with Marketing themes – corresponding to somewhere close to 9% of the universe. At the same time, in spite of dealing with areas and specificities that are naturally dealt with by Marketing, we cannot affirm that they should have used marketing knowledge, the idea is that they could have done so in order to assess the problems that they are dealing with from a broader perspective.

Using Hunt's (1976; 1991; 2002) and our aforementioned development, those 80 dissertations were classified. The vast majority of them dealt with for-profit areas of the marketplace, more than 80%. The remaining talk about non-profit (including government) subjects. Furthermore, something close to three quarters of the works mainly dealt with the positive instance, i.e. they analyzed how things were happening in that specific reality, the remaining quarter took a normative approach. Figure 5 positions the percentages of each kind of work on Hunt's Marketing framework.

Figure 5: Categorizing selected PhD dissertations in the different domains of Marketing studies.

		Positive	Normative
Profit	Micro	6%	8%
	Macro	53%	15%
Non Profit	Micro	-	1%
	Macro	14%	4%

Source: The authors based on Hunt (1976).

As can be seen in Table 1, our classification presents the results from a different perspective. Most dissertations deal with Consumption Studies (about two-thirds of the total); things involving Societal Concern / Macromarketing, together with Market Dynamics & Marketing Mix (especially studies related to prices), share the remaining works almost equally. The table also presents data on which authors were contacted and which ones were actually interviewed.

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In spite of the significant number of dissertations that have, in one way or another, strong thematic convergence with Marketing, the capacity of Marketing to export its knowledge into Economics has not yet been assessed. The analysis up to this point shows that around 9% of the recent PhD's dissertations are related to marketing topics, but are the researchers using marketing literature to give stronger conceptual basis to their work? If so, why? If not, why not?

As Table 1 shows, a quarter of the authors were contacted by email. They received information about the nature and objectives of the study. Six interviews were scheduled and four were carried out. The information collected in those interviews made us capable of shedding light to the questions proposed by this study, as will be seen in the following.

Table 1: Topics of study covered by the Marketing-related Economics PhD dissertations.

Type of Study	Hunt's Classification Types	Quantity	%	Contacted	Interviewed
Market Dynamics & Marketing Mix (for profit and non-profit)	1, 2, 5, 6	12	15,0%	7	0
Consumption Studies	3, 7	53	66,3%	5	1
Societal Concern / Macromarketing	4,8	14	17,5%	8	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>80</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: The authors.

### 3.2 Qualitative results

In this sub-session we dive in the presentation of interviews' results. The interviewees conducted doctoral researches in the following subjects: fuel retail (E1), youth nutritional consumption (E2), livestock market (E3) and sugary drinks consumption (E4). All interviews were conducted in Portuguese, direct citations presented in this paper are translations made by the authors.

A first insight is that none of the authors interviewed accepts that her/his research could be directly related to Marketing. "It has nothing to do with marketing" were the first words of E3. The interviewees were also unanimous in not thinking that their work and themselves as researchers could be significantly benefited from marketing knowledge in their dissertations. In their opinion, the connections were absent because their work was not focused on advertising: "[Marketing] could be related if you analyze the effects of advertising on consumer decisions but that was not my focus (...)

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I studied the socioeconomic variables and price elasticity on consumption" (E2). The fact of not studying advertising nor producing knowledge that "can help companies" is seen as a justification for not even considering the Marketing literature as a possible source of insights, ideas, and theoretical support.

In short, all interviewees asserted that their dissertations do not have a valid relationship with Marketing because their work does not deal with advertising or strategies for companies to succeed in the marketplace. Marketing is seen by those professionals as a tool for increasing company's revenues at the 'expense' of consumers. Those PhDs see Marketing as having a very narrow scope connected to product communication/advertising and, at best, some marketing management. They are unaware of Marketing theoretical and empirical developments in areas such as: consumption patterns, public policies for healthy consumption, market transformation, analyzes of purchasing power, taxation impact on price and consumption, and many others. In short, as the quotes previously presented summarize, recent Doctors in Economics mostly see Marketing as 'advertising' and not related to markets as understood from a broader perspective.

### **Disciplinary boundaries: barrier to the use of Marketing and interdisciplinarity**

The role of the dissertation supervisor was pointed by E1 as a strong barrier to adopt broader references that could include marketing: "I could not do anything in the marketing area because I have no marketing orientation (...) it is very hard. The only overlapping area between Economics and Management is Finance, for the other areas you do not have a supervisor (...) that [lack of knowledge from the part of supervisor] would require a co-supervisor".

In addition, the approval of a dissertation project imposes limits to the use of theories coming from outside economics: "I do not know any MSc or PhD course in Economics that has a research area related to Marketing, although in my school there is a research area in human resources (...) Marketing is more distant" stated E1.

Similar concerns have been expressed by the other interviewees. It is thereby possible to say that the disciplinary structure of a PhD program and its general organization imposes barriers to the gathering and development of interdisciplinary knowledge. Furthermore, as stated previously, there is a generalized assumption that Marketing is restricted to advertising strategies and the eventual (usually thought of as negative) impacts in consumer behavior, which also limits the amount of attention that Marketing receives.

The difficulty of obtaining data and different empirical strategies are pointed as yet another barrier: [...] "[I know of a] a study of market power of companies that make regular and dietary soft drinks to see if they have been able to gain more market power by inserting (...) the healthier appeal [that would have been interesting to my research] but I had no access to data" was one of E2 statements. This demonstrates an almost complete blindness to the Marketing literature, after all, one of the relevant contributions of marketing academia to science more broadly has been in the development of advanced empirical methods for data collection and treatment.

In what concerns the usage of Marketing literature, only one explicitly reference to a marketing journal was found in the dissertations of the interviewees. It is a reference to a paper published by Marketing Science: Ray et. al (2006), the dissertation author stressed that this work was used *solely* because of its methodological approach. Contrarily to what E2 seemed to suggest, E1 justifies the reference affirming that international journals of marketing are "very good" (E1) and many economists publish in them. This suggests that at least some of the methodological part of the marketing literature is known, and the publications in the area are considered relevant exclusively because of their methodological approach, the content, *per se*, is deemed as irrelevant. E1 also states that in Brazil, the Management areas (e.g. Finance, Human Resources and Marketing) are distant from Economics and that connections are very hardly found in academia. This corroborates E4's statement that says that her only contact with Marketing occurred during a part of her PhD studies in the United States, where she participated in a research group that studied advertising impacts on problems of obesity, in Brazil she claims to have never seen something similar.

Other references to "Marketing" appeared in the dissertations, however they were related to areas such as medical and health sciences (e.g.: Needlman, 2009) or were inserted as grey literature, such as UNICEF publications (e.g.: Ofcom, 2004).

### **Marketing understanding of Consumer matters, but its contribution to Economics is incipient**

When the interviewees were questioned about the highly specialized approach of the Economics programs and if it could constitute a barrier to the use of Marketing knowledge in their studies, they agreed unanimously. One exception that they pointed out to was the consumer choice theory<sup>2</sup>. The interviewees stressed that this theory is quite popular among economists, and that

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<sup>2</sup> In Portuguese the term used by the authors was: *Teoria do Consumidor*



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Economics could greatly benefit from a deeper integration studies on the same topic that come from Psychology, because "Marketing, advertising, affects the demand curve" (E3):

We state that the individual is rational and that he/she wants to acquire the maximum possible of welfare by consuming a certain amount of products that fit within her budget... but besides the prices and besides the welfare that the products provides for her, there are the Marketing [advertising] influences, a more psychological issue, marketing showing products to consumers, diverse information that maybe consumers would not have if it were not for the advertisements, which is a way to influence the consumer's decision, and which in this standard model of microeconomics is not addressed (E4)

Other areas of Economics, among which: microeconomics, firm strategy, health care economics (including obesity), were indicated as potential beneficiaries of an improvement in the consumer understanding through the assimilation of Marketing knowledge. At the same time, the interviewees agreed that this integration will hardly come by because of lack of: integrated supporting theories, common vocabulary, previous knowledge from the PhD candidates, course preparation and so on. In fact, the PhD candidates make clear that interdisciplinarity is perceived as very difficult in the PhD programs in Economics in Brazil, and the disciplinary boundaries are becoming even greater as time passes. Those facts align with the theoretical statements on the difficulties of interdisciplinarity (Calhoun, 2017; Krishnan, 2009).

### **The Perceived Narrow Scope of Marketing**

Marketing is perceived by the interviewees as a small part, or subarea, of management. In this perspective, Marketing's domain is seen as strictly related to communication/advertising technologies and strategies to communicate firms' products aiming at increasing demand of a particular product in a particular target market. Marketing studies are perceived as related to psychological and profitable (for the firm) impacts of advertising on consumer behavior, all marketing would be aimed at the improvement of sales at the individual firm level. The interviewees are not even aware of the existence of consumption studies, market externalities, business-to-business marketing, price elasticity, product offers and innovations, distribution, logistics and shop convenience, consumer culture, consumer well-being, or the marketing preoccupations with the "society at large" seen in macromarketing. The results indicate that those marketing subareas are ignored by the economists trained in Brazilian academia.

That view of marketing partially explains why economists that work with public policies and the problems with social wellbeing and its eventual improvement through consumption shifts did not show interest over marketing studies at all. Quite the contrary, they tended to downgrade marketing as mostly maleficent for society which is exemplified by their repeatedly declared interests in

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advertisements' (harmful) potential. To exemplify, E4 proposes that some issues on her particular subject could gain from studies from other areas; more specifically: to explore the food marketing to children, she used research from pediatrics (Needlman, 2009). She states that because marketing publications would be focused on strategies '*to increase the product sales for children*', they would not consider healthy impacts of the consumption, let alone the infants' wellbeing. That is, the critical perspective of Marketing is ignored by the Economics profession, at least from the point of view of the students being trained in that area in Brazil. Consequently, in spite of the potential number of insights to be gained from the exchange, marketing is still mostly unable to contribute in the development of knowledge in economics in Brazilian academia.

#### **4. CONSIDERATIONS**

Marketing and especially its knowledge about markets and consumption have notable convergence with many aspects of the Economic science. In this paper we show that somewhere close to 10% of recent Economics PhD dissertations in Brazil are deeply related to marketing subjects and their development could have benefited from the knowledge that the different strands of marketing produced over the years.

This paper took Brazilian academia as a representative sample of the universe, we focused on understanding how this area trains its future members (the PhD students, future scholars). We opted for focusing on the PhD dissertations to provide a narrower target that would still be able to give us a comprehensive understanding of the overall situation and would not be biased by developments coming after the PhD course. However, we do recognize that similar research remains to be made covering journals and conference papers in Economics, at the same time, the opinions of the professors in the economics departments not only in Brazil, but elsewhere, should add a necessary nuance to the insights that this paper was able to get.

In spite of the overlapping discussions, our results show that the influence of Marketing scholarship over Economics studies in PhD programs in Brazil seems to be, at best, very low, at worst completely null, as exemplified by the almost complete absence of explicit mentions to the Marketing literature in the dissertations. The few references to this kind of knowledge were indirect and came through studies from other areas or grey literature which properly referred to the original marketing studies. Thus, answering the first part of our objective, it is possible to say that marketing does not export its knowledge into economics in a noticeable manner in Brazilian academia. So why it is so?

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The reasons for these non-mentions were inferred from the interviews: the biased perception of the economics PhDs (candidates) and faculty towards Marketing is probably the major reason for the absence. In addition, the peculiar characteristics of the economics field, focused on its own ideas, also contributes. Moreover, marketing is misunderstood as being very distant from Economics and restricted to advertising and consumer psychology and his/her behavior derived from the advertising impacts. Recent Economics Doctors believe that research in Marketing deals exclusively with manners to increase company's sales and thus cannot help them in Economics studies more broadly.

Moreover, Brazilian academia tends to be very silos focused, being so, the lack of interaction between the fields was to be expected as our results have shown. This silos mentality is not an exclusive characteristic of the Brazil, but seems to be a worldwide phenomenon (Friedman, 2018; Friedman & Friedman, 2018). Trying to overcome that, some initiatives and structures inside and cross universities are emerging, they aim at incentivizing inter and crossdisciplinarity, including in the intersections between social sciences (Calhoun, 2017) have been started. Evidence of that is the aforementioned advanced use of econometrics in marketing research (Mizik & Hanssens, 2018, pts. II & III) which leads some scholars to publish in both areas.

This narrow perception of marketing's scope has been discussed elsewhere (Barcelos & Rossi, 2015; Kumar, 2015; Luck, 1969; Moorman et al., 2019; Rossi, Bortoli, & Castilhos, 2014), but the misunderstanding remains about what marketing really is and how its knowledge can contribute. In spite of that divide, interviewees showed interest on the possible integration of marketing knowledge to economics understanding of the consumer, especially using the theory of consumer choice. The barriers to this integration exist and are quite widespread, they are specially related to the lack of knowledge and willingness of professors in Economics, namely the PhDs advisors, to foster this kind of exchange, this can be partially explained by domain specificity (MacLeod, 2018) and the aforementioned silos mentality.

In spite of the somewhat easy access to ANPEC's information, the inexistence of an integrated database of Brazilian PhD's dissertations brought difficulties to the development of this research. Such inexistence makes it harder for researchers to acquire and work with data and different approaches, so it would be a good interdisciplinary initiative if ANPEC could develop and maintain such a database to facilitate the exchange of intra and inter-area knowledge. Such a resource would make easier to access, work with, and distribute information and would possibly create stronger ties amongst the research communities in Brazil while increasing the impact of new research by facilitating the access to information about the different research being performed all over the nation.

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Based on the information from the interviews, transformations in the academic apparatus should take place if an improvement in interdisciplinarity is the goal. These changes could include the creation of comprehensive databases containing data on the dissertations to facilitate access and use of the knowledge. It would also be advisable to have professors and students to navigate through graduate seminars from areas outside of their own while in Graduate School. Advisors should encourage their students to take courses in related areas as a way to increase their understanding of the phenomena that they intend to study and should receive graduate students from other fields in their seminars as well. The same advisors and the other Professors must be willing to augment their exposition to other sciences that deal with aligned topics as a way to increase the possibilities of exchange and the more thoughtful understanding of the phenomena. One possibility to augment the interdisciplinarity and increase the comprehension of the phenomena is adopting area studies and problem-oriented research, as suggested by Calhoun (2017).

Furthermore, and more important to Marketing professionals, it is necessary to take a closer look inside. The qualitative insights brought by the present paper suggest that Marketing remains misperceived, even by areas as close to its core as is Economics. It is, thus, necessary for marketing to use its own technical knowledge and communicate its 'product' to other academic areas that could be potential consumers. Marketing needs to position itself more clearly among other areas of science, others should know more what marketing is about. Without that knowledge, the discipline will remain confined to the its own walls, to a kind of limbo of social sciences the way it has mostly been up to the present, it will continue being misrepresented and its knowledge will continue to be underused.

Marketing has to create and communicate a good and well-rounded image among other academic disciplines, it has to use its techniques, advertising included, to spread the knowledge that it develops around academia in general, more specifically in areas that hold direct connections to its themes. On those lines, in addition to developing work to further understand the impact of marketing in economics, interested scholars should try to make similar efforts to understand those impacts in other closely related areas such as psychology, sociology and anthropology, among others. It would also be important to assess marketing's relevance in other business-related areas, such as Finance, Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Human Resources and Operations. This would make a stronger case for the findings of this paper and would, at the same time, increase awareness of the communication problems that Marketing faces within academia.

Probably, given the convergence in the methodological issues (the use of experiments in consumer behavior, for example), "Marketing Exports" would be easier for Psychology than for

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Economics. Consequently, Psychology has is probably our most promising knowledge importer. Trying to understand how that came to be can open pathways for marketing to become more relevant to Economics in areas such as "behavioral economics", a growing field somewhat based on Psychology, among many other related subjects. This is an area to be further explored.

Marketing academia needs to better understand its possible consumers and it needs to better promote its own products, this should be the among the roles of institutions such as the American Marketing Association (AMA), globally, and the Marketing chapter of the *Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Administração* (National Association for Post-Graduation and Research in Business Administration), ANPAD, in Brazil.

Bibliometric studies as done by Barcelos and Rossi (2015) are complementary to what we helped to expose qualitatively. This is not to say that other qualitative studies should not be carried out. As has been demonstrated, the insights from the qualitative research complement the quantitative information forming a broader and more nuanced picture that would otherwise be absent. Furthermore, the fact that the study was done only in one particular country and that the sample was composed by new economists are drawbacks that must be faced by future research, in addition, the inclusion of other academic sources both from the literature (journals and conference presentations) and from the personnel (advisors and other professors and professionals) would certainly provide an even solidier picture of the problem. Future work can also explore the impact of specific marketing theory in Economics, interesting starting points would be Hunt & Morgan's Resource-Advantage Theory (2008), and Vargo and Lusch, Service Dominant Logic (2004, 2008, 2016). Works such as D'Andrea (2019) and Hastings, D'Andrea & Bylund (2019), respectively, have started on those directions.

The number of interviews, the lack of discussion with professors, and the focus on PhD dissertations (instead of published papers, for example) are limitations that must be overcome by future developments. The paper was focused in understanding how the new Doctors see, consider and use marketing knowledge, and for that the chosen proxy was fruitful and informational. A similar research using PhD advisors in Economics as the proxy would be an advancement in the comprehension of the phenomena while trying to understand the problem from a complementary perspective. Besides, a deeper examination of the content of the dissertations (or any other works with possible relation, for example, papers published in Brazilian or even Latin American Economics journals) would bring to light other insights

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In spite of the limitations, it was only through the focus on a very specific public together with the direct contact proportionated by one-to-one interviews that we could further understand the barriers to the use of marketing knowledge by doctoral students in Economics. Something that would be very hard to do with quantitative data and statistical treatment. Our approach was successful in contributing to provide an explanation for the lack of marketing knowledge usage in economics based on the exploratory multi-method analysis.

Another promising idea would be to join forces with researchers from other areas, this would increase interdisciplinarity and help tackling problems from different perspectives. As an additional benefit, this has the potential to help to reduce the scholarship barriers that we partially presented on this research.

Much of the themes in economics are deeply related to a broader understanding of marketing. The path that we took leaves a much broader spectrum to be explored.

Marketing is full of insights. It has many different overlapping points with a series of other scientific disciplines. It is our job as marketing academics to better understand the discipline's (potential) consumers and to better communicate our products to this audience. By doing that, in the future, Marketing will be much more able to influence other sciences by exporting its knowledge and will also gain from the interchange and importing with related disciplines. This movement will contribute to the Social Sciences as a whole, as well as to society at large by improving our understanding of the complex social phenomenon that we all study.

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