

The Invention of “Choice”

Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on Markets, Democracy and Power



**Centre for Business History,
Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy,
and CBS Business-in-Society Public-Private Platform**

Copenhagen Business School, Denmark

12 – 13 January, 2012

The concept of “choice” is at the heart of much theorizing in marketing, micro-economics and consumer psychology today. The aim of the workshop is to problematize the notion of “choice” from various historical and theoretical perspectives. Rather than asking whether or not more (or less) choice *per se* is either good or bad for citizens and consumers – a perspective that dominates much of the discussion in marketing, consumer psychology, behavioural economics etc. – we want to use this workshop to exchange ideas about the historical, cultural and political circumstances that led to the reification of choice as a social policy aim in its own right. The workshop will bring together scholars from as wide a background as business and economic history, psychology, marketing, theology, and sociology to analyse when, why and how the mundane idea of “choice” became a political-economic concept with such an enormous power to mobilize people.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED via email to Stefan Schwarzkopf (ssc.lpf@cbs.dk) by January 6th

Thursday, 12 January 2012: Historical Perspectives

Kilen Building, Room 146

9.30 – 10 am: Welcome with Coffee & Tea

10 – 10.30am

Stefan Schwarzkopf (CBS): “Introducing the Workshop: Why do we need a ‘History of Choice’?”

10.30 – 12.30pm

Panel 1: From Adam Smith to the Interwar Years

Chair: Alfred Reckendrees (CBS)

Amos Witztum (London Metropolitan University/London School of Economics)

“Choice, Liberalism and Markets: between Smith and Keynes”

Nicola Giocoli (University of Pisa)

“Consistent Choices: *Homo Economicus* becomes a Bayesian Statistician”

12.30 – 2pm: Lunch and Coffee

2 – 4pm

Panel 2: From the Interwar Years to *Reagonomics*

Chair: Per Hansen (CBS)

Will Davies (Saïd Business School, University of Oxford)

“Choice, Hayek and the Chicago Tradition”

Stefan Schwarzkopf (CBS)

“The Market Research Industry and the Invention of Consumer Choice, 1920-1980”

4 – 4.30pm: Coffee Break

4.30 – 5.30pm

Roundtable Discussion with Claes-Fredrik Helgesson (Linköping University)

“Researching the Socio-material Set-up behind Choice Architectures Past and Present”

5.30 – 6.30pm

Wine Reception sponsored by CBS Business-in-Society Public-Private Platform (Kilen, 4th floor)

6.30pm: Conference Dinner at Restaurant “Frederiks Have”, Smallegade 41

Friday, 13 January 2012: Theoretical Perspectives

Kilen Building, Ground Floor, Room Ks 54

9.30 - 10am: Welcome with Coffee & Tea

10am – 12noon

Panel 3: “Choice” and Choices in Contemporary Branding and Consumer Research

Chair: *TBC*

Søren Askegaard (University of Southern Denmark, Odense)

“From Lifestyle-based Choices to Choice-based Lifestyles... and Back?”

Mads Mordhorst (CBS)

“Brands as Parasites – the Marketization of Choice in Contemporary Branding Regimes”

12 – 1pm: Lunch and Coffee

1 – 3pm

Panel 4: “Choice” in the Perspective of Game Theory, Theology and Psychoanalysis

Chair: Camilla Sløk (CBS)

S. M. Amadae (Ohio State University)

“Game Theory’s Philosophy of Value: can Choice be free when Money is used to measure all Value?”

Bent Meier Sørensen (CBS)

“The Right to Choose: ‘Wo Ich war soll Es werden’”

3 – 3.30pm: Coffee Break

3.30 – 4.30pm

Roundtable Discussion with Paul du Gay (CBS)

“‘Choice’ and Public Governance: Introducing CBS’ Business-in-Society Public-Private Platform”

4.30pm: End of Conference. Discussions to be continued at Cafe Sokkelund, Smallegade 36.

Conference Venue: Kilen Building, Kilenvej 14, DK-2000 Frederiksberg.

Nearest Metro: Fasanvej Station

Map: <http://www.cbs.dk/en/About-CBS-Campus/Find-CBS/Map/Menu/Kilevej-14-A-B>

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