

4. — Abbiamo dunque da chiederci, *a*) da quale finalità si lasciano guidare le imprese nella loro pianificazione, *b*) se esse si servono oppure no della nozione marginalistica nell'elaborare i loro piani. Hall e Hitch credono di poter sostenere, sulla base del loro materiale empirico (utilizzo di questionari), che le imprese di regola non tendono ad una massimizzazione del guadagno (ad ogni modo non nel breve andare) e anche nella loro pianificazione prezzo-smercio pensano in maniera assolutamente diversa dalla considerazione marginalistica <sup>(8)</sup>. Machlup respinge queste affermazioni con importanti argomenti e perviene al risultato <sup>(9)</sup>, che «there is not a single proposition in the tabulated results of the inquiry that can not be fully harmonized with marginal analysis. The *Analysis of Replies to Questionnaire on Costs and Prices*, which the researchers presented as an appendix to their report, contains a wealth of illustrative material - illustrative, as I see it, of the application of the marginal principle to business decisions of the single firm ». Del resto egli, all'unisono con Katona, considera il metodo del questionario inadatto alla chiarificazione dei problemi rilevanti a questo fine. « Only detailed interviews can probe into the motives behind business decisions » <sup>(10)</sup>. La stessa concezione è rappresentata dallo studioso danese Bjarke Fog <sup>(11)</sup>. Sulla base di accu-

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(8) « The most striking feature of the answers was the number of firms which apparently do not aim, in their pricing policy, at what appeared to us to be the maximization of profits by the equation of marginal revenue and marginal cost. In a few cases this can be explained by the fact that the entrepreneurs are thinking of long-run profits, and in terms of long-run demand and cost curves, even in the short run, rather than of immediate profits. This is expressed to some extent by the phrase commonly used in describing their policy - 'taking goodwill into account'. But the larger part of the explanation, we think, is that they are thinking in altogether different terms; that in pricing they try to apply a rule of thumb which we shall call 'full cost', and that maximum profits, if they result at all from the application of this rule, do so as an accidental (or possibly evolutionary) by-product », HALL AND HITCH, *Op. cit.*, p. 112 s. (Corsivo mio).

(9) MACHLUP, *Op. cit.*, p. 547.

(10) G. KATONA, *Price Control and Business*. Field Studies Among Producers and Distributors of Consumer Goods in the Chicago Area, 1942-44. (Cowles Commission for Research in Economics, Monograph N. 9), Bloomington, Ind., 1945, p. 210.

(11) B. FOG, *Price Theory and Reality*, « Nordisk Tidsskrift for Teknisk Økonomi », København, Oslo, Stockholm, Vol. 12 (1948), p. 89 ss.; *Priskalkulation og Prispolitik i den Danske Industri*, « Nationaløkonomisk Tidsskrift », København, Vol. 92 (1954), p. 51 ss.