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Original Citation

Chatzidakis, Andreas, McEachern, Morven G. and Warnaby, Gary (2017) Consumption in and of Space and Place: Introduction to the Special Issue. *Marketing Theory*. ISSN 1470-5931

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Consumption *in* and *of* Space and Place: Introduction to the Special Issue

By

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This special issue, themed 'Consumption *in* and *of* Space and Place', seeks to contribute to the development of a more nuanced understanding of these two concepts in the context of marketing research. 'Place' is, arguably, one of the axiomatic principles of marketing as one of the four Ps, relating to 'the element of the marketing mix that focuses on getting the optimum amount of goods and/or services before the maximum number of members of the target market, at times and locations that optimize the marketing outcome' (Baines et al, 2013, p. 397). It is usually the subject of an obligatory chapter in introductory marketing textbooks. However, we wish to move beyond such an overtly managerialist - and possibly reductionist – perspective, to incorporate a more rounded understanding of the concept, and one which - perhaps inevitably – is informed by, and rooted in, other disciplines, such as geography and sociology.

Taking a much more holistic perspective, in reviewing the history of the idea of place, Cresswell (2004) identifies three levels at which the concept is approached:

- A *descriptive* (or *ideographic*) approach, which 'most closely resembles the common-sense idea of the world being a set of places each of which can be studied as a unique and particular entity' (ibid, p. 51). This approach is concerned with place distinctiveness/particularity;
- A *social constructionist* approach, which is still concerned with place particularity, but only in terms of illustrating more general underlying social processes: in other words, conceptualising place largely in terms of settings for the social interaction that occurs therein;
- A *phenomenological* approach, which 'is less concerned with 'places' and more interested in 'Place'', in that it 'seeks to define the essence of human existence as one that is necessarily and importantly 'in-place'' (ibid, p. 51). Linked to this is the notion of *genius loci*, often thought of in terms of a 'sense of place', which 'reinforces the social-spatial definition of place from the inside' (Agnew, 1987, p. 27), thereby potentially creating identification – and a perceived feeling of attachment - between an individual and the place they inhabit.

Linked to – but discrete from - the concept of place, is that of *space*. Perhaps because of its quality of being either too obvious or too implicit and taken-for-granted (Vice, 1997), management researchers have, arguably until recently (e.g. Visconti et al, 2010), ignored more nuanced and sophisticated understandings of the concept. In the main, space continues to be treated as something absolute, physical, or a ‘thing in itself’ (Harvey, 2005) that forms either the background setting, or the object, of consumption activity. *Place*, in contrast, can be regarded as denoting a unit of space that has discrete boundaries, usually distinguished by cultural and subjective meanings, through which it is constrained and differentiated (Henderson, 2009), resonating with Cresswell’s (2004) social constructionist and phenomenological perspectives outlined above.

Indeed, markets for - and consumption of - goods and services are often explicitly contextualised using spatial criteria and dimensions. Space and place in the context of consumption have been the focus of an increasing number of studies, often focusing on material contexts, such as, for example, the consumption of flagship stores (Kozinets et al., 2002), theme parks, (O’Guinn and Belk, 1989) and festival shopping malls (Maclaran and Brown, 2005). However, there is scope in marketing research for a more overtly phenomenological and social-relational perspective, inherent, for instance, in Agnew’s (2005) triadic understanding of place, which incorporates more dynamic and relativistic perspectives originating from disciplines such as geography and sociology (see for example, Chatzidakis et al, 2012; Visconti et al, 2010). Here, taking a more overt *temporal* perspective could also be informative. In his summarising review of space from a geographical standpoint, Gregory (2009) links time and space in a processual, co-productive and performative way. Similarly, a temporal dimension is implicit in notions of place, with places being described as being in an incessant state of becoming (Pred, 1984), as their meanings are continually emerging.

The very strong response to our call for papers for this special issue indicates that marketing researchers are increasingly engaging with such discussions, and it was with regret that we were unable to include several other very interesting *space* and *place* studies that have been conducted around the globe. Nonetheless, we hope that the following papers that comprise this special issue – introduced below - contribute to a more nuanced understanding of these concepts, and point toward new, interdisciplinary directions for future research.

Calls for marketing researchers to provide a more thorough understanding of the various spaces where consumers, marketers and stakeholders construct, negotiate and evolve are discussed in the first paper, by Rodrigo Castilhos and Pierre-Yann Dolbec, which provides a typology of spaces, which illuminates the dynamics involved in the structuring of space. In characterising these spaces as *public*, *market*, *emancipating* or *segregating*, the authors provide a better understanding of the roles

that different market actors play in the production of different types of space, as well as offering a useful heuristic device to help understand the inter-relationship between space, actors, markets and consumption. They conclude by giving examples of how these characteristics and dynamics have been influenced in existing research, along with suggesting avenues for future research.

Taking an actor-network perspective, the second paper, by Handan Vicdan and Soonkwan Hong, responds to the limited theorisation around the production and co-creational role of space in Marketing, and sheds light on how spatial design formations shape and transform sustainable living. In the context of the Ecovillage at Ithaca, the authors draw on Soja's spatial theory to reveal how different actors collectively create and transform space as well as illuminate how a transformed space influences the actions and practices of its actors. In addition to contributing to the enduring debate around the theoretical distinction between space and place, the authors contribute to spatial theory by articulating the performative role of space and its agencing capabilities which re-configure the dynamics in the network of sustainability. In conclusion, Vicdan and Hong outline the ideological transformations and the potential modes and challenges of practicing sustainability, as well as identifying potential areas of research for the ontology of space in networks.

The third paper, by Javier Lloveras, Lee Quinn and Cathy Parker, takes the concept of degrowth as its context. It considers how degrowth-minded activism becomes interwoven with the production and consumption of space and place. The study draws illustrative insights from an ethnographic study, with specific reference to El Pumarejo in Seville, Spain. The study reveals a configuration of practices through which degrowth-minded activism infuses urban life with non-capitalist processes and logics. These practices are: (1) *accessibility* (i.e. 'open access' resources that are shared); *self-organisation* (i.e. decision-making through consensus, via 'assemblies'); (3) *reproduction* (i.e. caring – or reproductive – labour is equally valued as productive labour); and (4) *conviviality* (i.e. relating to the intercourse between people and their environments through convivial spaces for cultivating a plurality of commonweals). While degrowth debates typically encompass abstract ecological and economic arguments against growth, Lloveras et al.'s research promotes a more humane consideration of the spatial dimensions through which more equitable ways of living are constituted.

Our fourth paper, by Tonya Williams Bradford and John F Sherry Jr, explores the dynamics of space-place transformations within the context of tailgating. "Tailgating" refers to social gatherings comprising individuals grilling, eating, drinking and socializing in advance of, for example, some kind of sporting or other event. Focusing on this form of temporary consumer encampment, the authors identify three key architectonic pillars, namely *chorography*, *conviviality* and *community* and

illustrate how these constitute emplacement mechanisms by which fans transform public space into private place, and then into public place. This process is encapsulated in the authors' development of the metaphor of "encompassment", capturing not only the encircling and enveloping of brand communities but also their consolidation through ideological and material means.

Returning to public space, the fifth paper, by Dominique Roux, Valérie Guillard, and Vivien Blanchet, explores the sidewalk as a liminal space, or what they describe more precisely as a "parasite heterotopia". Drawing on observations and 19 in-depth interviews with disposers and/or collectors of bulky items that are left in sidewalks during specific collection days, the authors identify four properties of the sidewalk: 1) as a *liminal space* for items that are torn between disposal and re-usage, 2) as a *habitual space* whose meaning is constantly negotiated between disposers and gleaners, 3) a *place of illusion* vis-à-vis the linear economy and 4) a *place of compensation* for the failings of consumer society. Here, the authors contribute to current understandings of consumer heterotopias by emphasising some of the distinctive attributes of "parasite heterotopias", underpinned by both spatial and temporal dimensions, functioning from within rather than outwith the spaces of dominant ordering, and embracing what de Certeau describes as 'the chance offerings of the moment' (de Certeau, 1984, p. 37).

Drawing on previous theorisations from the social sciences, the sixth paper, by Robin Canniford, Kathy Riach and Tim Hill, denounces marketers' preoccupation with visual and narrative modes of knowledge creation, thus, leading to limited analyses of consumption spaces. Inspired by non-representational theory, the authors focus on the complex and pervasive role of smell and propose a framework that helps bridge such limitations. This framework (i.e. nosenography) provides a vocabulary that encapsulates the sensory aspects of space to illustrate how smell: 1) constructs the embodied experiences of space (i.e. encoding spaces); 2) connects the identity of consumers and space (i.e. identifying spaces); and 3) characterises a 'rhythmic choreography of dynamic spatial assemblages' (i.e. moving spaces). In conclusion, Canniford et al. appeal to academics to create superior methodological innovations to help develop methods to further explain 'smell' in consumption spaces.

The final paper in this special issue, by Alexandros Skandalis, Emma Banister and John Byrom, is concerned with consuming taste *in* space and place. It is a multi-sited ethnographic study, which explores how consumers enact, perform, and further develop their musical tastes via their aesthetic experiences in popular (indie) and classical music places. It suggests that consumers create place-dependent identity investments, which unfold via a tripartite experiential process of: 1) manifesting habitus; 2) undertaking habitation (i.e. the continuous re-enactment of habitus within a

diversity of places); and 3), expressing idiolocality (i.e. the unique meanings of place which are first internalised, and then established as embodied experiences and memories). Skandalis et al. suggest that more attention should be paid to the diversity of ways that specific places are associated with consumers' tastes, and identify potential avenues for further research.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the authors of the papers outlined above (and also all those who submitted papers that we were not able to include) – and, importantly, the numerous reviewers who provided informed critique and comment on submissions - for their contributions to this special issue. As all consumption is *in* space and place, we hope that these papers will contribute to the development of a multifaceted and more nuanced insight to the structural, temporal, transformational, and often taken-for-granted impact of space and place, thereby opening the door for much greater theorisation of space and place within the Marketing discipline in the future.

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