Becoming a market: The social production of market spaces as products of power

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INTRODUCTION

In marketing related literature space emerges as dead, contextual matter. As a background without particular meanings or form it sits out of focus as a backcloth against which marketing and consumer stuff is enacted. Space is ubiquitous, yet marginal matter that rarely adopts an important role in the examination of the constitution of markets. When it does it emerges as neutral matter, deprived of a thorough inspection of its shape and form or its role in situating and ‘guiding’ the types of practices that subsist within a market space. The focus on processes and frameworks to achieving growth and generating profit from what marketing practitioners can ‘think of in order to improve their market position’, be this the development of a new business model or launching an innovation, all give credence to the notion that modern markets are abstractions managed by firms. Rarely are markets seen as operating in a tangible space and even rarer still is questioning the apparent neutrality of what marketing activity may create. Markets therefore, at least in a managerial and economic sense are created by entrepreneurial firms and are conceptualised as abstract structures that bring together competing firms (Soberman and Gatignon, 2005; Kornum and Mogen, 2007; Carroll, 1997; White, 1981; Bala and Goyal, 1993). Markets are generally described as free-floating plans and structures that never materialise in space, instead what the market creates is measured in terms of success and profitability. An exemplar of this is Agarwal and Bayus’ (2000) analysis of firms’ pioneering activities which used data sets of consumer and industrial product innovations introduced in the US to assess levels of profitability and survival rates amongst firms entering a market at various stages.

In light of emphasis placed on new market creation as an uncontested, ethereal product of marketing initiative, the broad research question underpinning this paper is: is it possible, and indeed desirable to study the creation of markets as spaces produced by power? My reasons for this are layered. To begin with, market action as any other social action requires some kind of location in place in order to happen, without it being situated in place, one is left with a progressively difficult to capture category of study (Sack, 1993; Pred, 1994; Merrifield, 1993; Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1989; Soja, 1996; Urry, 1995; Shields, 1993). In addition to this, critical and human geography may provide conceptual tools to uncover the often contested texture of space and the panoply of actors and objects that come together in creating and resisting market spaces, thereby questioning previous emphasis placed on firms. This may inject a more politicised account of market creation to what stands in recent empirical work, as a neutral enterprise involving firms and some governmental bodies. It may too reconcile the physical dimensions of the traditional marketplace with the abstract and private physiognomy of modern markets. In doing this, it is hoped that by marrying the ideational, physical and social aspects may help clarify how power creates such spaces in the first place.

By bringing space to the fore, power is reconstituted as a force of geographic character that produces spatial parameters that enable or obstruct an actor’s movement and practices. I argue, that markets are never a fixed template for market action, but in flux inasmuch as they produced by a series of conflicts generated between the lived, conceived and perceived spaces and by inherent cists activated by projects of resistance residing within all spaces product of power. As an analytical frame to understand power, a spatial register invites for the identification of markets as empirical repositories and conduits of relations amongst market actors. In that state, markets are volatile and in a constant state of production inasmuch as they are products of power. This paper will sketch the market, not as an abstract mechanism facilitating exchange between market actors but as a space, that is conceived, perceived and lived in. Power therefore is experienced in the spatial dimensions of the
market which in turn is also produced by power, consequently the market becomes a contentious in-between space. The aim therefore is to develop conceptual tools to understand how a market in its spatial capacity gets actively produced (Merrifield in Crang and Thrift, 2000; Crang and Thrift, 2000).

I begin with a review and critique of recent examinations of market creation processes within marketing related literature. Against that critique I suggest that a fruitful line of analysis may adopt a more localised and specific countenance in the shape of a market space. Key concepts such as place and space are provided and Henri Lefebvre’s understanding of space is drawn from to describe market spaces as tangible, conceptual, social and contested spaces of power. Drawing from Lefebvre’s (1991) trialectics of space it will be argued that the market, generally de-compartmentalised elsewhere into either geographic or abstract parcels can be re-conceptualised as a contested space, in production because of power. In other words, the market can be treated as an entanglement of mental, social and physical spaces, rather than a solely abstract or physical entity and observed as matter in production through power. In this way, markets are not taken as naturally given or abstract entities but as a product of an ensemble of forces leading to the definition of its space, its dynamics and actors. The apparent transparency and legitimacy of market spaces can be made prone to archaeological excavations of an effective history through which the embattlements, unsteady victories and defeats that underwrite the emergence of all spaces are exposed. Central to this project therefore is to reveal and scrutinise how power constructs and saturates markets and those practices that animate it by examining the production of truth and its material consequences. The work of Michel Foucault, particularly his ideas on knowledge and power are used as building blocks to seeing market spaces as products and conduits of power.

MARKETS AS CONTESTED SPACE

Markets are created and managed. They evolve or disappear. The way in which they do, however has nothing organic about it. They are products of strategic intervention and planning. They are ‘conjured up’ in the minds of adventurous entrepreneurs seeking growth. Ironically, what was originally conceptualised as a place that brought buyers and sellers together in specific and very material settings such as market squares and fairs has been supplanted by rhetoric of full abstraction (Zukin, 1991). In the marketing and economic literature, this has brought about a research agenda that is solely preoccupied in explaining how entrepreneurs come up with ideas to market new products on the basis of what is already being offered by competitors (Agarwal and Bayus, 2004; Agarwal and Bayus, 2000). Market creation generally involves firms and their competitors, as they try to find a new service or product that is not yet produced and marketed by a competing firm in order to increase their profitability. The rather voluminous literature of adoption and diffusion of innovation alone is testament of this emphasis (Dew and Sarasvathy cite for example at least 4,000 studies). The focus on market planning and the advent of technology that enables exchange of happening remotely (e.g. over the phone and the Internet) make of the marketplace something of an ill-equipped concept to deal with the exigencies of modern capitalism. The anchoring that a sense of place could provide market processes is unpalatable to some who see modern markets as more obscure processes involving the planning of marketable opportunities, stock exchange, global
markets and exchange regardless of place, as is the case of the Internet (Buzzell, 1999; Berthon, Holbrook and Hulbert, 2000; Rayport and Sviokla, 1994; Zinkhan, 2005). The sense of communal space which is attributed to the traditional marketplace as something of a membrane that stretches through a physical area bringing together buyers and sellers, is replaced by abstract competitive strategies seeking to develop profitable new products and services (Soberman and Gatignon, 2005; Kornum and Mogen, 2007; Carroll, 1997; White, 1981; Bala and Goyal, 1993; Sarasvathy and Dew, 2005; Geroski, 2003).

Modern markets are described as active processes involving the exchange and transactions of goods (Barnhill and Lawson, 1982); mechanisms that determine prices relative to supply and demand (Barnett, 1991; Buzzell, 1999) and as networks of relatively stable relationships which consists of actors, institutions and means to structure and legitimise how goods are exchanged (Hodgson, 1988; North, 1990, Fourie, 1991; Fligstein, 2001; Fligstein, 1996). White (1981) for example, states, “Markets are not defined by a set of buyers, as some of our habits of speech suggest, nor are the producers obsessed with speculations on an amorphous demand... [W]hat a firm does in a market is to watch the competition in terms of observables.” Similarly, Carroll (1997, p. 120) suggests organizational ecology, “views the market as much the consequence of organizational actions; in other words, as endogenous”. Recently, Slater and Tonkiss (2004, p. 9), make of modern markets free floating mental spaces that are ‘detached from particular places and people and take on ever more abstract senses such as ‘demand’; ‘opportunities for buying and selling’ and ‘the trade in a specified commodity’. They are to borrow again from Slater and Tonkiss (2004, p. 9) conceptual spaces “to the ways in which economists, entrepreneurs and consumers may “map out the world of exchange in terms of their own commercial aims”.

This emphasis on abstraction has fed into work researching how new markets are created. A rich plurality of approaches can be found in the literature, ranging from socio cognitive approaches (Carpenter and Nakamoto, 1989; Rosa and Spanjol, 2005; Rosa, Spanjol and Savon, 1999); historical and evolutionary accounts of market expansion (Carpenter and Nakamoto 1989, Rosa et al 1997), sociological readings of new markets as products of competitive behaviour between firms (White 1981, Fligstein 2002; Fligstein, 1996) and development of new markets in function of innovation and entrepreneurial behaviour (Soberman and Gatignon, 2005; Kornum and Mogen, 2007; Carroll, 1997; White, 1981; Bala and Goyal, 1993; Sarasvathy and Dew, 2005; Geroski, 2003). Abstraction unfolds at two levels; firstly the market is an incorporeal entity that takes up residence in an entrepreneur’s mind as an act of ‘innovation’ (Bala and Goyal, 1993). The market and the processes leading its production cannot be seen in a literal sense. For Bala and Goyal (1993) it is about an enterprising firm creating a market when technological, political or regulatory changes make it opportune to do so. Sarasvathy and Dew (2005; 1997) describe market creation as a process involving the consolidation of a new network of market actors which involve two very abstract cycles of expanding resources and constraints, all perceived to be in entrepreneurs’ mind as a set of procedures. When the market is seen as a product of competitive behaviour, again, the market appears as an abstraction, as an idea, that is to be produced by a firm in order to outflank a competing firm (e.g. work produced by Agarwal and Bayus, 2004; Agarwal and Bayus, 2000Soberman and Gatignon, 2005; Fligstein, 2000; Fligstein, 1996). Abstraction also unfolds in the fixing of mutual understanding as to what a new
product category means as a necessary foothold in creating a new market (Rosa and Spanjol, 2005; Rosa, Spanjol and Savon, 1999). For the cognitive tradition, the market exists in the minds of producers and consumers who have agreed upon the meanings of a product category. Likewise, Fligstein’s (2001; 1996) conceptualisation of market architecture is highly abstract as it equates markets to culture. In that work the creation of a market entails the making of a market culture based on cognitive elements or interpretative frameworks that help define social relationships and give market actors the ability to recognise their own position in a given set of relationships. All the components Fligstein (2001; 1996) puts forward in this conception of a market are of an abstract nature (property right, governance structures, conceptions of control and rules of exchange).

The polarisation between the physicality of a marketplace and the more elusive and abstract standing of modern markets is one that can be mapped onto broader discussions found in contemporary writings in cultural and human geography about place and space and how the making of space is related to power. There is a rather extensive discussion about place and space and what the focus of empirical analysis should be (Pred, 1984; Merrifield, 1993; Young, 2001; Soja, 2001; Soja, 1996; Soja, 1989). From the two, space is described as more expansive, conceptual and abstract (Young, 2001; Cresswell, 2004). In part, space has been conceptualised as existing between places and being the more expansive terrain that means nothing specific, whereas place, is what space becomes when it is named and lived in (Tuan, 1977; Cresswell, 2004). Place is defined as an empirical and measurable reality which includes buildings, arteries of communication, assemblages of ‘physical facts and human artefacts’ (Pred, 1984, p. 279) and use of land patterns. The marketplace, to illustrate, would be what is experienced when entering a site where transactions between buyers and sellers take place. In keeping with variations of place in the literature, a marketplace can be a specific locale, like a shop, or a broader ‘region’, for example a town market which covers a number of different stalls or a spatial structure like the mall. What unites these categories of place is their condition as places that can be entered and described in detail. Take Goss’ (1993, p. 32) description of a typical shopping mall, as an example of a marketplace:

“… the shopper proceeds across the bleak desert of the parking lot towards the beckoning entrance, usually the only break in the harsh, uniform exterior and typically announced with canopies, columns, and glass atria, surrounded by lush vegetation, all suggestive of an oasis or sanctuary inside… Shophouse-style storefronts are often reduced to 5/8 scale (as in Disney’s theme parks) to give shoppers an exaggerated sense of importance… Indoor lighting is soft to prevent glare on shopfronts to highlight the natural commodities on display… The floorplan exerts strong centripetal tendencies, and the shopper is drawn further into the fantasy by tantalising glimpses of attractive central features.”

Yet, despite this richness in detail, the emphasis on the materiality of marketplaces may lead to “interpretative pitfalls that arise from hinging spatial analysis on fixed material forms and morphologies” (Soja, 2001:4). Soja (2001), concerned with the predominance of place and the empiricism which permeates previous analyses built around the concrete landscapes of capitalism and consumption, presents a compelling argument to outgrow the dominance of concrete place in favour of analysing of space. On the subject he writes:
“What occurred early on was a realisation that an essentially physical conceptualisation of space overly narrowed the interpretative scope of spatial analysis and frequently suffered from what philosophers call misplaced concreteness. That is, the theoretical and analytical object that was envisioned as a causal or explanatory variable, or as the generative source of “social logic”, was actually not a cause but a consequence of other, often unseen and unexamined, social and spatial processes.” (Soja, 2001, p. 3)

Focusing on a definition of the market that is anchored to a specific place, be it a high street bank, a fish market or the shopping mall would focus on the formal properties of place and hide the social mechanisms and processes behind its facades. If space is to be adopted as a construct underwriting our understanding of the market, then how is the market space to be studied and assessed, if it is deprived from a concrete place to endure empirical observation? This turn towards space does not suggest an annihilation of place but rather a change in the examination of how space is socially produced in the first place (see Lefebvre, 1991) and how, to paraphrase Soja (2001) an analysis that can be found within physical spaces produced can also extend beyond built environments. Likewise the abstraction which dominates the analysis of market creation in economic and marketing literature may be tempered by drawing on a more unitary theory of space which sees mental, physical and social elements as constitutive of ‘space’. The need to abridge the gap between the physicality of a traditional marketplace with the more abstract attributes of modern markets can already be found in the literature. Take Callon’s (in Slater and Barry, 2005, p.101) comment on technological developments and markets as an example: “it is impossible to think of markets and their dynamics without taking into account the materiality of markets and the role of technological devices.” A sense of place and space is also salvaged in Venkatesh and Penaloza’s (2006, p.136) recent call for a paradigm shift from marketing to the market, where they define markets as “institutions and actors located in a physical or virtual space where marketing related transactions and activities take place”.

The limitations that arise by focusing solely on either the situated and concrete or the abstract space of ideas can be rectified, according to Merrifield (1993), Shields (1993) and Soja (2001; 1989; 1996) by integrating the lived experiences enacted in place and the broader political projects embedded in space. In doing so, he draws from Henri Lefebvre’s (1991) *The Production of Space* to define space as a unitary body which brings in together place, abstraction and social action. *The Production of Space* begins with a provocative examination of the neglect of space in Western thought and the polarisations advanced by empiricist and idealist camps and Lefebvre’s attempt to abridge the divide between the physical and mental. At the centre of his spatiology is a proposed and indissoluble dialectic relationship between the mental, physical and social. Of significance here are the type of dialectics that Lefebvre invokes when he writes very early in *The Production of Space* that “(Social) space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsume things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coextensive and simultaneity –their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder”. In this modality, the mental components, the ideational nature of markets as they are thought of and planned by entrepreneurs, the built environments through which exchange may take place as well as the social action within that domain, would be distinguishable, but not separable dimensions of market space. In Lefebvre’s lengthy explanation of what space is there is an enduring
and iterative relationship between space produced and the processes leading to its production. In order to account for the complex production of space he drew up a conceptual triad. His spatial project thereafter unfolds in the intertwining of the physical space (nature), mental space (abstraction) and social space (human action). These are identified as representations of space (conceived, mental), representational space (lived, social) and spatial practices (perceived, physical)(see figure 1).

**Figure 1 - Dimensions of market space**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spatial Practice</th>
<th>Perceived</th>
<th>Physical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The physical constitution of market(s). The tangible, material manifestation of the market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representations of space</th>
<th>Conceived</th>
<th>Mental</th>
</tr>
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</table>

The ideal construction of a market as planned by producers, corporations and marketers. It covers the production of business models and its manifestation in the physical constitution of a market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Representational Space</th>
<th>Lived</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
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How agents operate in the market. This includes the ways in which agents navigate within the tangible spaces, but also how they conduct their own conduct based on the discourse sustaining that particular market.

Agent’s ability to resist or subvert the law imposed by the architecture of the market.

Source: Adapted from Lefebvre, (1991) and Soja (1991)

Representations of space are the conceptualised spaces that are discursively created by professionals. It is an abstract space as it is imagined and planned by space professionals such as engineers, architects and geographers. The representations of market space refer to the ideational space of market planners; including for example, notions such as market share, market position, strategy and tactics, innovation, positioning, new business models as well as environmental and competitor analyses. At a structural level of rule fixing activity, the conceived spaces of a market would take into account rules to regulate the transaction and consumption of goods, property rights outlining the ownership of capitalist enterprise and surplus generated and
governance structures that regulate competitive behaviour) (taken from Fligstein’s 2001, 1996 work). Representational space (lived, social) is the lived of space everyday social life. This would be made up of market actors’ embodied experiences of being in space, like shopping in a shopping mall. As this is the site of social action, which according to Lefebvre is never fully managed, despite a planner’s intentions to do so, it is the site of resistance. Finally, spatial practice (perceived, physical) is the space of the tangible built environment where one can move in and around. It covers the distribution of space and architectural forms and, in the case of market spaces it encompasses all those spatial structures and use of space which have been designed to generate desire for commodities as well as act as a milieu for its transaction. This dimension could be mapped onto what is understood as place, as it describes the concrete elements that make up a market as a place. For consistency, when referring to the more physical manifestation of space, I will be using Lefebvre’s terminology rather than place as it is provides more of a frame for understanding the production of ‘place’ in the first instance.

These three components of space are in dialectical relationships and propel the process through which spaces are produced and reproduced. Therefore there is not only movement towards actualising what resides in a market planner’s imagination in terms of a profitable idea to market within a tangible space, but also friction in how social agents respond to market space created. For Shields (1993, p. 155) the construction of space is made out of social action which makes concrete abstract structures, thus space is not “not just but also geometry and spacing… it is not just an achieved order in the built environment, or an ideology, but also an order that is itself always undergoing change from within through the actions and innovations of social agents”. Soja (1989;1996) concurs, writing that the study of space offers an answer according to which the social relations of production have an existence to the extent they have a spatial existence, they become inscribed in there and in that process produce space itself. At one level there is a dialectic movement between what can be seen and recognized as a marketplace, in its tangible form and the less transparent and restrictive qualities of modern markets as networks of a capitalist class planning and creating business opportunities, which explains how intentions to manage movement and direct action to achieve a commercial enterprise becomes materialised in space. Note for instance how Slater and Tonkiss (2004, p. 16) try to square the abstract dimension of conceived market space and the physical space of the marketplace and the social action that there takes place: “behind the department store or mall most definitely stand the private markets for finance and capital, the strategic calculations of the marketers and urban planners, the networks of power-brokers”.

Yet at another level, there is an inherent element of recalcitrance that pervades social action within space. Despite attempts to mould and guide consumers into behaving in uniform ways so that intentions of achieving profits can be achieved, these are never a fully successful (Ritzer and Ovadia, 2000; Ritzer, 1999; Ritzer, 1998). For example, shopping malls are seen as ‘open invitations to trickery and tenacity” (Fiske in Schor and Holt, 2000, p. 308) through the making do of an unemployed youth or disenfranchised shoppers who ignore the normative dimension of space and turn into something else altogether. Whether it is the abuse of the air conditioning, water fountains and toilet facilities, what happens in a marketplace in terms of social action and relations, to borrow from Lefebvre (1991, p.55) prevents “abstract space from taking over the whole planet and papering over all differences.” De Certeau’s (1984)
work has been particularly influential in describing how landscapes and built
environments of capitalism as being open to resistance. His Practice of Everyday Life
in itself is a celebration of consumer practices as ways of resisting or to cite de Certeau
(1984: xiv) to “bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed tactical and
makeshift creativity of groups and individuals already caught in the nets of discipline.”
His interest in unearthing the making do of consumers, who he describes as ‘renters’ is
also located within the confinements of perceived space, this he makes manifest when
articulating his research agenda: “But our research has concentrated above all on the
uses of spaces, on the ways of frequenting or dwelling in space” (de Certeau,
arenas of political struggle at both economic and ideological levels since it is there
where “the art and tricks of the weak can inflict most damage, and exert most power
over the strategic interests of the powerful”. It follows then, that these interactions
make of market space not only a contested one, but one in the process of being made
as a result of power.

That power creates space, and that place enforces power, is taken as a generally
accepted fact of social reality (Sack, 1993; de Certeau, 1984; Soja, 1989; Soja, 1996;
Lefebvre, 1991). Marxian and more recently post-structuralist studies influenced by
Foucault’s work on power have examined the role of space and geographic expansion
as a function and product of power. From a Marxian tradition, the creation of a market
as a means of production itself is instrumental in expanding capitalism and domination
of the bourgeois class. Through post-structuralist lenses market space adopts a
disciplinary role in locating objects and subjects in space and materialises the types of
divisions and hierarchies established by a given knowledge. While Marxian studies
have said much about, commodity relations, capitalism and its expansive nature and
how it creates and destroy space, here I am more interested in examining the ways in
which space itself is defined as a market and how it adopts a disciplinarian
countenance.

MARKETS AS DISCIPLINARIAN SPACES

The arcade, the mall and the shop are spaces of seduction and power. With
their precarious sense of openness, the partition of spaces, the use of mirrors, well
dressed window-displays, soothing music and aromatic smells, there is an intention to
rationalise and systematise practices. Shop-keepers, managers, retail assistants and
consumers are said to be caught by the traps imposed by the space as they help
perpetuate the logic of capitalism by parading through sanitized corridors and themed
spaces to showcase, sell, buy and consume commodities (Fabijanic, 2001; Goss, 1999;
Goss, 1993; Castree, 2001; Cook and Crang, 1996). In the strategic location of
escalators, eating and entertainment areas there is a permissive yet restrictive quality to
the landscapes and architectures of capitalist enterprises. The construction of market
space as a disciplinary space, goes beyond the purely metaphoric, that is thinking of
the market as dictating false needs, to think of the type of discursive ploys and truths
vested in rationalising space by making it a disciplinary mechanism that literally
helps makes distinctions between proper things and actors and is conducive of certain
practices.
Mansvelt (2004, p. 27) summarises this as a shift from looking at the underlying economic determinant in the production of space which was central to political economy to seeing how “power is affected to create, social, material and moral geographies of inclusion and exclusion”. This implied a shift in reading culture in its setting, as opposed to economic patterning and the circulation of commodities as a function of exploitative relationships between classes and generally centres on understanding how to cite Gregory (1994, p.76) meanings are embedded into the “topoi of different life worlds” and “threaded into social practices and woven into relations of power”. This has brought about historically grounded analyses of how knowledge is shrouded in space (Murdoch, 2006) and focused examinations of how people resist in space (Sharp, Routledge, Philo and Paddison, 2000; Howell, 2000; Robinson, 2000; Thrift, 1996; Thrift, 1999; Thrift, 2004). While post-structuralist readings of space are becoming more popular its topography is uneven and dispersed; both Mansvelt (2004) and Murdoch (2006) cite a long string of diverging approaches, including semiotics, cultural theory, feminism, psychoanalysis and linguistics. Despite it not being a unified theory, the Foucault’s work is often cited as influential (Philo, 1996; Murdoch, 2006; Mansvelt, 2004; Allen, 2003; Thrift; Sharp et al., 2000) and foundational to some of the more conceptual examinations found in the literature. For example Allen (2003, p. 7) sustains that “no assessment of power relations, space and spatiality would be credible” unless it included the work of Foucault. Similarly, Thrift (2000) qualifies Foucault’s work as instructive for human geographers as it sheds light on the mutability of space, which in its constant state of becoming something, produce new ways of behaving.

Sharp et al. (2000) observe that while there are not many strictly Foucauldian geographical accounts of space, there is a growing number of geographers who are explicitly using his ideas on power as frameworks to guide their own substantive research into the geographies of power (Howell, 2000; Robinson, 2000; Philo, 1988; Robinson, 1990; Allen, 2003). The application of Foucauldian tools to understand space as a product of power echo the trajectory and porosity of Foucault’s theories on power. Foucault’s affair with power is consistently polymorphous and pervasive. In essence, however, Foucault was concerned about the strategies of power (Clegg, 1989; Hindess, 1996; Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996). At the heart of this is the interface between power and knowledge, establishing a truth that structures the field of action of a free agent. In this way, Foucault taps into the micro-politics of power where behaviour is not moderated by internal standards, but by an internalisation of an external discourse. Discourses are relatively well-bounded areas of social knowledge that McHoul and Grace (1993, p. 34) explain are "material conditions (or set of conditions)" enabling and constraining "the social productive imagination."

There are two theoretical moments in Foucault’s intellectual development that are used to examine ways in which power operates in the production of space and through it; his archaeological histories and his genealogies. During his archaeological period he sought to analyse the “conditions under which certain relations between subject and objects are formed or modified, to the extent that these relations are constitutive of a possible knowledge” (Foucault in Gutting, 1994, p. 314). In achieving this, he dug beneath the surface of given fact, to describe the processes through which knowledge, objects and subjects where constituted, without recourse to “a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of event” (Foucault, 1980, p. 22). For Foucault (1983, Foucault in Gutting, 1994), the production of proper ways of
knowing is an act of power. He describes truth production as a result of localised struggles, which appear as sudden ‘take offs’ or epistemic breaks when emerging practices are seen significant enough to trigger discussions over what things are and how one is to act upon them. In his genealogies, Foucault was more interested in the examination of power in its knowledge creating process. During this period, Foucault espoused a disciplinary model of power which established distinctions between the normal and the deviant, creating, as he writes in *Discipline and Punish* “the material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge” (Foucault, 1977). In his most genealogical works, like *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, he produces exhaustive accounts of how certain knowledges produced around objects and practices were effected. In the first work, this takes the shape of meticulous and very spatial accounts of the practice of detention while in his first volume on sexuality it covers pedagogical measures aimed at controlling children’s sexuality. When discussing his *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1980, p. 248) clarifies the intentions behind his genealogy of the prisons was to grasp the conditions that made the practices of imprisonment acceptable at a certain moment. In that particular project it was about studying the “interplay between a ‘code’ that governs ways of doing things” how people are to be graded and things to be classified, and the accompanying justifications for operating in this fashion. It is important to note as do Flynn (in Gutting, 1993) and Murdoch (1996) that these approaches do not exclude each other. Foucault (1977a) sees both frameworks as working together, at an archaeological level, for instance the focus in on understanding the rules of truth production and circulation at a particular point in time, while at genealogical level, it is about uncovering how those knowledge become materialised. This recursive interplay between knowledge production and its material effects in forms of discipline are more obviously captured in distinctions he makes between forms of knowing (veridictions) and programmes to establish proper ways of doing (jurisdictions.) These qualifications capture the products of power at a discursive and material sense.

Foucault’s histories are being re-assed by human geographers through the lens of space. His discussions on power as normalizing procedures to discipline ‘free agents’ are given a concrete materiality within the prison with its isolation wards (*Discipline and Punish*) the clinic and its spaces to cure and those to contain the deceased (*Birth of the Clinic*), the architecture of separation imposed by the space delegate to the mentally ill (*Madness and Civilisation*) and the distribution of space and architectures designed to manage and govern populations in 18th century liberal societies (*Space, Knowledge and Power*). Spatial relations as concrete representations of power relations are deeply embedded in the types of histories he writes about the birth of the clinic, the prison and the liberal city. Foucault’s engagement with power and its knowledge creating function bolts onto ‘space’ as an implicit operator. Not only does space emanate as a brutal reminder of the what knowledge creates, for example distinctions between able bodies and those which need to be normalized literally separated by architectural forms; but also it gives power a modus operandi. Philo (in Crang and Thrift, 2000, p. 222) evaluates Foucault’s genealogies and archaeologies as demonstrative of “the role played by spatial relation in the complex writings of discourse, knowledge and (crucially) power”. Foucault’s work for Philo can be seen an excavation of geometries of power that structure the history of the “mad, the sad and the bad” (Philo in Crang and Thrift, 2000, p. 222). His histories are
always about the specific and institutional. They deal with the particularity and specificity of spatial arrangements which are shaped by knowledge and enshrined within micro-spaces, like the asylum, jail and the school. In this way disciplinary power not only creates a potential field of action for agents and lenses through which objects can be understood, but also sophisticated apparatuses of discipline that administer the objectification of individuals needing disciplining. It follows then, that in order to see market space as product of power and also an apparatus of discipline there needs to be an analysis of how power operates in the 1) classification of things as commodities and spaces as markets, and 2) secondly, an examination of the role of space as a material effect of power and active link in amplifying a given object and subject position once placed in a specific market space.

Classifying space as markets and things as commodities as product of power-knowledge

The thinking up of space as a market where objects and actors are arranged in space desire, purchasing and selling of a product an effective assemblage of procedures, says something about the type of knowledge that validates its very presence and functioning. A market space appears as a singular and intelligible space, which is product of a distinct way of thinking and knowing and this makes it something which has been classified, and ‘ordered’ as such. The sheer recognition of some objects as being, or likely to be commodities from those which are sacred, like human life, body parts or historical sites indicates that there is some kind of grid or order which allows for similarities and distinctions to be made. Foucault (2001 [1966]) describes this as an 'order of things' which renders it possible to think and say something while making others unthinkable. This order makes it possible to distinguish commodities, non-commodities, singularise market actors, markets and other spaces (Foucault, 2001 [1966]). What space could be is wedded to the ways in which the space, its use and production is first classified, ordered and hierarchised.

Foucault explains the production of order as a historically bound process that makes it positive to see relationships between things by virtue of allocating meanings and values to things. This in turn determines what is to be known, and how one may think and talk about it. In other words order is facilitated by knowledge created. The production of knowledge comes to constitute a set of discursive practices that embrace and delimit “a field of objects’, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms of the elaboration of concepts and theories” (Foucault, 1977c, p., 199). In The Order of Discourse (Foucault in Young, 1989) he describes discursive practices by the ‘delimitation of a field of objects’, an appropriate subject position for the agent of knowledge and a number of norms regarding the elaboration of proper concepts and theories. This could be interpreted as the construction of the conditions necessary to think, say and do which gives objects, subjects and we could add, spaces, their singularity. Agreeing on how space is to be used, therefore brings about a system of classification, a proper way of knowing, that would allow the partitioning and use of space for given purposes (much of the Foucauldian inspired analyses of space, work on the premise that the production of space, responds and are constituted by discursive regimes). Knowledge therefore would come to provide something of a lens or structure through which objects can be appraised as commodities and spaces identified as market spaces, and imposing an order which is instrumental in classifying them as such.
The question of how ‘things’ are classified as commodities, or put differently what makes a thing a commodity can be elucidated by drawing from Foucault’s analysis of wealth and exchange in *The Order of Things*. A commodity is described as a historically bound thing that responds to the order imposed by an episteme (a set of rules which renders it possible to classify and know things in a certain way). Foucault illustrates this by noting sudden take offs and breaks in how value is ascribed and commodities understood. For instance, he notes that the standard of equivalence involved in a system of exchange determining the value of a thing before the 16th century is “nothing but the marketable value of the metal.” During the Renaissance, it was the intrinsic quality of the metal used as coinage which determined the value of a commodity. Foucault detects a rupture in the 16th century, where it is the function of exchange, rather than value being determined by a precious metal that functions as a sign, “establishing itself by itself” according “to criteria of utility, pleasure or rarity” (2001 [1966], p. 191). In this way, after the 16th century a thing of value would be one that could be the most substitutable in a process of exchange, thus making ‘value’ something that was determined by consumption, “whether it be that of the work in order to subsist that of the entrepreneur taking his profit, or that of the non-worker who buys it” (Foucault, 2001 [1966], p. 210).

There is an obviously political and contested nature in the determination of value, as it commands a series of divisions and ways of managing and dealing with things, making some valuable and others less so. This political vein to the making of things a commodity, take the shape of a series of programmatic questions within Foucault’s consideration of what creates value. For instance, he asks “why are there things that men seek to exchange; why are some of them worth more than others, why do some of them, that have no utility, have a high value, whereas others, that are indispensable have no value at all?” (Foucault, 2001 [1966], p.206). In answering those questions, what Foucault uncovers is the epistemic breaks in the types of rules by which a thing is considered valuable are historically situated but never fixed. The lack of rigidity and sudden take offs in rules which render it possible to identify and study things as valuable commodities, make it possible to consider value in terms of a precious metal during the Renaissance and value determined during the exchange in the 17th century.

Put simply then, the determination of what is to be considered valuable and ‘exchangeable’ as a commodity is connected to a particular code of order or grid of classification. These changes in how value is instituted expose the contingent and precarious status of what is considered proper, given a particular period. This volatility has been discussed elsewhere in terms of viewing a commodity as a temporal state in the life of a thing and studied by following its trajectory and stages in and out of a commodity state (Strasser, 2003; Agnew, 2003; Castree, 2003; Goss, 2005; Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986). Arjun Appadurai (1986) describes commodities as things in transit, and thinks of them not as a terminal condition but rather a situation in the social life of things for which its exchangeability is dominant in its past, present or future. These permutations which mark a commodity in its trajectories are captured in Kopytoff’s (1986) analysis of commodification and singularisation, where he argues that the only thing that remains constant in the life of a commodity is change. The biography of a thing as a commodity stretches through a series of classifications and re-classifications in an “uncertain world of categories whose importance shifts with every minor change in context” (Kopytoff, 1986, p.90). Mutability extends not only to what is considered a commodity, but is in built in the commodity status itself, as it...
comes in out and out of a commodity state depending on its social context. In order to identify a commodity, the analysis invariably leads to the non-commodity or the non-commodity state. The type of explanations that Kopytov uses to describe the commodity form as it being “comparable”, “having something in common with a large number of exchangeable things” in opposition to the non-commodity, as it being “uncommon, incomparable, unique, singular and therefore not exchangeable with anything else” denote a system of classification that awards forms with distinct idiosyncrasies. Put differently, something can be exchanged while others can’t. A classificatory grid identifies objects which are singularised for being sacred and unique from those that can have an exchange value. These grids however, are not fixed. There are a number of historical examples that poignantly illustrate how what was once classified as a commodity is no longer and vice-versa. These include religious relics (Geary, 1986); pets (Grier, 2003); education (Doti, 2004; Freeman and Thomas, 2005); historic sites (Goulding, 2000), healthcare (Tomes, 2003; Mann Wall, 2003) and nature (Bakker, 2005; Liverman, 2005; Castree, 2003). Kopytov helpfully introduces his work by referring to the exchange of human life through slavery as a now defunct system of classifying ‘humans’ as commodities to illustrate the transitory ‘commodity’ status of some things and beings. Similarly, Geary’s (1986) account of how body parts in the form of relics were treated as commodities in Medieval Europe shows too that what was once a proper way of classifying a thing, no longer is. More recent historical analyses of how for example medical care in the US was re-classified from a form of service to a commodity between the 1910’s and 1940s (Tomes, 2003) or how the acquisition of ‘pets’ changed from being a form of sharing, neighbourliness and part of the give and take relations among children to a modern pet industry between 1840 and 1930 (Grier, 2003) are demonstrative of the transitory nature of things in commodity and non-commodities states.

The dictums regulating the process following cultural systems of classification that would make a certain item valuable, when opened up, disclose rules whereby value is subject to a series of hierarchies. That is, there are objects which are classified as valuable and suitable to be exchanged, and others which in some cases are seen either to be too rare or common, to have any exchange value. In this sense ‘value’ is a contested category, subject to the operation of a system of classification, and its intelligibility as Kopytov illustrates with his comparison of primitive and capitalist societies, is dependent of the systems of signs and cultural classifications that originate them. Different systems of signs and ways of classifying things can come into conflict, especially when a hierarchy between systems of exchange is not established by the market structure it itself, but is imported, for instance, from moral and religious arguments to dictate what is to be considered commodity and how it is to be transacted.

Foucault’s dictum that the creation of knowledge is rendered significant via the creation of cultural objects (in this case market space and commodities) and that both products are functions of power is instructive. It reminds us that new systems of representation – grids to organize what is to be considered a commodity and market spaces as well as the conditions that make it possible to think of and act upon a thing as a commodity and space as a market space– articulate newly ordered spaces of knowledge in which the object of representation (e.g. the commodity, the market space) becomes observable, measurable, quantifiable, in short known (Foucault 1972; Hacking 1982, 1986; Ong 1982). The very act of making something known is a
function of power. In Foucault we read this dependence between knowledge and proper ways of thinking and doing as a function of power. In his history of the practice of imprisonment and disciplinary power he writes “there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault, 1977a, p. 27). At the heart of this is the interface between power and knowledge, establishing a truth that structures the field of action of a free agent. Foucault highlights this when defining truth as a type of discourse that promotes a function as true and the means by which true and false statements are sanctioned.

However, the very variability of these classifications, and the reluctance in a given period to see a thing as a commodity, for example education in Medieval times, say something about resistance as a correlative of power. In effect, there comes to be a battle towards the definition of proper knowledge that brings together competing actors and perspectives in strategic ploys to objectify things (Foucault, 1978c; Foucault, 1975; Foucault, 1977a; Foucault, 1994a; 1977b; 1977c). That is, the production of proper ways of knowing is usually a result of struggles over definition, establishing the rules through which objects are to be known and the conditions under which proper knowledge can be produced. Therefore Foucault, frequently presents truth production as sudden take offs, event or breaks, which come to produce new ways of knowing. Foucault further clarifies how one comes to understand the production of truth as result of localised struggles over definition by drawing on what he coined ‘eventalisation’. The event constitutes a schism, a point of departure for struggles over definitions where emerging practices are seen significant enough to trigger various discussions over what things are and how one is to act upon them. To the struggles embroiled in defining an object, there is also the possibility of change that opens up in the interplay between proper knowledge and how an individual is subjected by it, makes of the production and effects of knowledge a necessary muddled affair. The points of friction and resistance that are caught in what Foucault calls “games of truth” (Foucault, 1994b) where the strategic, intentional production of spaces to produce and reproduce relations of power are met with the clandestine actions of those operating at a lived level. Put differently by Foucault when discussing the tactical polyvalence of discourses (Foucault, 1978c, p.101), “we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies”.

In The Subject and Power Foucault revisits his power-knowledge nexus, by explaining the type of truth games that are involved in the delimiting a ‘field of action’ for a free agent. This field, with its fluid and changing catalogue of possibility, in some respect, can be teased into a spatial configuration. Space comes to be a material of a regime of practice, a form of veridiction that gives home not only to programmes seeking to allow subjects to recognize themselves as objects of a given discourse (Foucault, 1982) and objects organised in space.

The disciplinary dimension of markets

When space is produced into a market, it is done in the spirit of exerting some kind of control over the boundaries that it creates for itself so that “activities involving the consumption of space have in common the use of thoroughly commodified and or/regulated environment” (Gottdiener, 2000, p. 269) and are amenable to profit making initiatives. The making of space as a market space therefore points towards
the examination of specific arenas where subjects recognise themselves as market actors and objects are recognised as commodities. The very construction of that space comes to demonstrate how discursive formations relative to dictating how value is to be measured, and how agents are to behave in front of a valuable commodity, (selling it, gazing at it, purchasing it) is inscribed in space. For instance in Fabijanic’s (2000) description of the arcade as a disciplinary mechanism, the role of capitalism is explicit in the project of creating spaces to shop in and dream; in themselves these spaces are pivotal in supporting capitalism’s need to produce bodies to consume what is produced. Instituting consumption practices therefore has been taken into account as effective mechanism to control and discipline urban populations. For example the proliferation of the arcade after the 1830s across Europe attracted the bourgeoisie and upper classes’ need to exercise a superficial sense of freedom through selecting commodities in attractive semi public places.

In Foucault, space appears as a necessary modulator of power and knowledge. The function of space that can be read in Foucault’s writings like Space, Knowledge and Power, and Discipline and Punish is operational, as it extends over subjects and objects the dictums of the knowledge operating through it. Especially in Discipline and Punish there are helpful observations on just how space becomes a brutal remainder and accessory to the disciplinary forces embracing objectifying subjects. In this way, architecture acquires a transformative role, as it aims to “transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effect of power” (Foucault, 1977a, p.172). Architectures of discipline have a mixed real and ideal spatiality that awards them a relatively permanent configuration in the creation of buildings, rooms and furniture, but also a more discursive countenance, an ideality that, as Foucault puts it, projects assessments and hierarchies. This more discursive function is eased in through games of visibility and division. Visibility, because space exposes and subjects the ‘deviant’ to the constant gaze of an unseen warden (see Foucault’s extensive discussion of panoptism, pages 195-228); hence “their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them” because “it is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (Foucault, 1977:187). Space comprises a system of partitions that itemises and creates subjectivities around a desired norm. This latter point is explained in Discipline and Punishment when Foucault discusses the art of distributions in what he calls places of exclusion ‘protected places of disciplinary monotony’ (see pages 141-149). Such places like the prison, the barrack, monastery, factory and the school were meant to partition space, so that each individual had his own place; his own cell, desk or bed. How the disciplinary model creates analytics of space is explained by Foucault when describing a naval hospital in Rocherfort. In this space “the arrangements of fiscal and economic supervision preceded the techniques of medial supervision” and so drugs are classified and placed under lock, patients assigned a specific place, contagious patients isolated, giving space the role of individualising “bodies, diseases, symptoms, lives and deaths” (Foucault, 1977:144). Later on Foucault introduces the order or rank to fine tune his spatialisation of the carceral model where he equates discipline with the art of rank, where different actors and objects are placed within a network of relations. Reflecting on this spatial flirtation with power Foucault makes of space, not only architectural and functional but also a hierarchical mechanism. His disciplinary power manifests its prowess and potency in its ability to organise and arranging objects and bodies in
space. The type of spatial relations that appear in his work are just formal geometrical and architectural spaces but are saturated with knowledge.

In the *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Bentham’s panopticon is borrowed in its geometric and spatial splendour as a metaphor of disciplinary power. The panopticon is a prison structure where a guard, strategically located at its centre could police inmates’ behaviours, but who in turn could not be seen. The threat of the guard’s gaze would eventually condition prisoners to auto-regulate their own behaviour, leading to their successful self-disciplining. In the panopticon there is a tangible, spatial element in the making of bodies docile; there is the architecture conceived to economise the burdens of power through which an invisible gaze is artificially recreated in the organization and distribution of space. The analytical configuration of space is made possible through the economising efficiency of the panopticon. As a disciplinary machine, the panopticon renders wardens obsolete disciplining agents when compared to the architectural face of power. In *Discipline and Punishment*, Foucault describes the role played by the panopticon as follows:

“Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers.” (Foucault, 1977:201).

The architectonics of a space which reproduced the design of the panopticon with its gallery like structure, and perspectivist design have been seen as a method of control through which the gaze is directed towards commodities displayed on beautifully dressed window shops. This design, emulated according to Fabijanic (2001) the design truism of the prison. In his article he juxtaposes the carceral model with the arcade design by comparing, for example the John Haviland’s Eastern Penitentiary in Philadelphia built around a circular watch tower surrounded by one story illuminated corridors with the floor plans of the *Galerie Colbert* and *Galerie Vivienne*. The rationalisation and compartmentalisation of space is interpreted by Fabijanic as an attempt to use space for purposes of control. On the subject he writes:

“Like the cells in Moabit, the shops are identical in size. Internally, the ones below the Colbert's large dome are mirror images of each other, while those on the main corridor of the Vivienne are more haphazard in design, with different closet or back-room space, stairs here and there leading to different levels, and occasionally passages to other shops. An overview of other floor plans shows that, while such differences are sometimes evident, the overwhelming tendency is toward sameness, determined by the design solutions this provided builders who constructed arcades, and by a general preference for an "equal playing field" for tenants (i.e., that shops have no immediately obvious structural advantages that might translate into greater commercial success)” (Fabijanic, 2001).
The exercise of power is made fluid, efficient and highly innocuous in the arcade. Just as Foucault’s hidden guard stood in the central tower is used to explain how external discourses are internalised by agents, in the arcade the pressures of civility and good conduct were self instituted, leading to a form of self patrol and exercise. In such equation, Fabijanic speculates that there is no real physical guard (e.g. in the shape of management of shop owners) but rather capitalist ideology that embraces all acting partners caught in the arcade.

The spaces of Foucault’s histories of the present, where power operates in making bodies docile are always specific (e.g. the barrack, a monastery, a school, a prison). The operation of power in this sense which is described as microphysical, is so, because it happens in the specific spatial containers. Foucault goes some way in his books (Discipline and Punish, Madness and Civilisation, History of Sexuality Vol.1) and interviews and shorter essays (The Subject and Power, Space, Knowledge and Power, Truth and Power, Questions of Method, What is Critique?) to explain just how power is materialised into specific programmes which have very real effects. To cite Foucault (1978a, p.254), these effects are crystallised into “institutions… inform individual behaviour” and “act as grids for perception and evaluation of things”. Take Foucault’s description of power in Truth and power (1977c, p.307) as something that ‘induces pleasures, forms knowledge, produces discourse’. In that same interview he adds that what he found “most striking about these new technologies [to discipline] is their concrete and precise character” (1978a, p. 312)

Space itself is accessory in the classification of objects and subjects. It materialises divisions and hierarchies between things and objects, by enclosing the mad and the deviant, by placing them in built environments, it organising them according to how they are to be classified and acted upon. The distinctions that knowledge creates are marked in space (Allen, 2003; Thrift, 1996; Thrift, 1999). Following on, knowledge that creates distinctions between objects, making some commodities, and acts upon free agents, so that they can recognise their functions and roles, as consumer, producers, sellers, regulators, is according to Thrift (1999), situated. The residence of an object (albeit it being temporal) in a commercial venue accentuates its commodity form, auctions for instance accentuate the commodity stature of the thing. When the ‘form’ is removed from a particular geography its candidacy as a commodity can be challenged, and metamorphose into something else. These processes and the significance of specific contexts are also captured by Appadurai’s (1984, p. 15) definition of a commodity form as something that may help provide a link “between the social environment and of the commodity ad its temporal symbolic state”. It follows then, that it is the specific context which helps determine the nature and phase of the commodity and its candidacy to the term. Similarly, buyers, browsers and sellers would tend to discipline themselves into performing their roles the most when situated a specific market space. Market actors in unison would be inventing themselves (Rose, 1995) and their market identities heightened particularly within the spatial confinements of a market space. A process of self discipline creates clear demarcations between preferred behaviours for market actors who are complicit in acting upon themselves.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
In this paper a spatial construction of markets as a product and conduit of power has been explored by discussing how the production of new markets may be theoretically explained. This has been done by drawing from Lefebvre’s understanding of space and the dialectics between lived, perceived and conceived spaces and by building on Foucault’s power-knowledge dyad and his disciplinary model of power. The creation of new markets, the way in which they come into being and the benefits accrued by innovative firms who steer the creative process has received much attention in economic and marketing related literature (Agarwal and Got, 1996; Foster, 1996; Gersoski, 2003). For most marketing and economic researchers, there is nothing political or physical about a new market. New markets are described as natural developments in a firm’s life as they seek competitiveness, sustainability and expansion. Recent studies say very little about the conflicts and struggles that may arise in the making of new markets. Instead, the creation of a new market has been described elsewhere as processes that takes place in entrepreneur’s minds (Soberman and Gatignon, 2005; Kornum and Mogen, 2007; Carroll, 1997; White, 1981; Bala and Goyal, 1991) or as a regulatory structure binding market actors together (Fligstein, 2000; Fligstein, 1996). With the exception of Fligstein’s work, discussions have tended to be power-free. I opt for a more power focused and situated understanding of how new markets are created. In doing so, I focus on how power produces new market space. Specifically, I argue that a market space has a very real and present character as it can be entered and experienced. This tangible dimension, in addition to the social action it facilities and normative dimensions regulating what can and cannot be done, makes market spaces idiosyncratic and distinguishable from other spaces. Store layout, built environment, architecture, lighting, position of tilts and commodities all speak of a system of classification that creates distinctions between different markets spaces and other non-market spaces. A market space is also drenched with abstraction, and it is here where the intentionality of power is encrusted in space as it seeks to mould social action.

Borrowing from Lefebvre’s (1996) unitary theory of space, I put forward a spatial frame that brings in together the physical, conceived and lived dimensions of space, as a framework to help historicise how new market spaces come into being and speculate on just how such spaces are products and modulators of power. Market space, made up of a conceived-perceived-lived triad in itself says very little about how power creates space. However, its value, like Lefebvre’s triad, can only be appraised when applied to a specific and concrete situation. In evaluating his triad, Lefebvre (1991, p. 46) argues that “spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces contribute in different ways to the production of space according to their qualities and attributes, according to the society or mode of production in question, and according to a historical period”. From here, it follows that historicising how a new market space is produced is not about writing generic histories of how capitalist spaces emerge over time, or how all markets are created, but about narrating the particular history of a market space. The focus on the specific is prominent in Foucault’s genealogies as he latches onto a handful of examples to describe the disciplinar function of built environments (e.g. a prison, a school, a sanatorium). By moving from and back between knowledge necessary to think up and legitimise market space, the concrete manifestation of what that knowledge creates in terms of spaces, the divisions it makes visible, as well as the social action that takes
place within space, a more nuanced analysis of the idiosyncrasies of market space production can be purveyed.

The emphasis on new market creation is not fortuitous, as it is by the historical contingencies that come together in the commodification of space, or, put differently, the production of a market space, that an analysis of the power struggles caught in its making can be seen more clearly (Foucault, 1980). It is in meeting that requirement that existing empirical and conceptual approaches to understand the role of space in perpetuating capitalism are less helpful. The expansion of capitalism as a mode of production, which has so far been translated into many textual analyses of the geographies of capitalism and fewer, ethnographic and phenomenological accounts of people experience those place, say very little about the nuances of how those spaces were created in a first place. In addition to this, the focus is not on a specific market space, but rather how capitalism itself is reproduced and expands in space; in fact the market is seen as separate from the analysis of retail spaces. The separation between markets and capitalism is noted in Harvey’s (1975; 1988; 1998) geographic readings of Marx’s work where the market is treated as a necessary vehicle for the expansion of capitalism as it “is active demand for commodities produced” (Harvey, 1992, p. 239). As a requirement of capitalist expansion, the market is accounted for but is deprived of a spatial residence and a considered analysis of just how the market acts upon objects and agent. In Marxist geography it is the whole world that is opened up for analysis, and the grand stories of commodification of space intermingle with those smaller stories which read in landscapes mechanisms to stupefy subjects into consuming or becoming labourers. What a Marxist geography might lend to this study is a historical susceptibility towards seeing how space is made a commodity itself and it supports the processes through which things are commoditised. In doing this, the study works as a history of seeing how space is commoditised and/or used in the process of commoditising things.

In addition to this much research into the role of space in perpetuating capitalism has been unnecessarily polarised. That is, there are strict divisions between powerful capitalist elites who can create space, and the weak who can only resist in space. The weak labourer or consumer versus the powerful bourgeois, as sole actors involved in class struggles in and about space skew the history of the production of space, as one guided by powerful factions (bourgeois) and excludes the weak (Massey, 2000; Sharp et al., 2000). Understandably, the matter of just how these space are produced and how power operates through this production, have been overshadowed by a more orchestrated body of research that describes what is produced (retail spaces) and strategies used to ensure the survival of capitalism as a dominant form of production and way of life and the exploitation of the labour force. This emphasis on class struggles that take place in spaces already created, may provide insight into how an exploited class resist the logic of capitalist space, but cannot reveal much about how that space was created.

Instead, it may be fruitful to take in account how power operates in determining what is to be accepted as proper use of space and how things are to be classified. To look at the historical conjecture which brings about the deployment of various discourses seeking assign proper ways of knowing, constitutes and important moment in the analysis of power, and brings not only a more political understanding of market creation, but also seeks to A focus on a key event as an ‘epistemic break’ around which discursive struggles develop in a bet to determine what a space and those contents in space may be can help see how all power moves through all actors.
Thus, a study of how class struggles propel the production of a given space so as to ensure the expansion of capitalism is made methodologically more amenable to a study of new space production by focusing on the historic contingencies leading the production of a given knowledge. In this way, it is more about understanding the interplay of discourse and practices that made it possible to classify a given space as a suitable one to extract surplus value from. It is about effecting and materialising in space those separations that are created by the establishing the rules by which a space is deemed valuable and proper. In the case of market space, a key defining feature that makes it a market space, and not somewhere else, is the commodity form. With Foucault I grant the spaces of the market with a key role in creating divisions and points of visibility for all those who enter it, thereby facilitating the identification of other players, norms of exchange and goods as commodities. Like things that inhabit in space, space too can be opened up to an analysis of discursive practices that underpin the ways in which they make objects knowable.

The history of how a new market came into being, told as a conjunction of power relations, may offer an alternative reading to that which describes nascent markets as a creative entrepreneur’s brain child. The history of a specific market space that narrates the developments making its production possible and legitimate, that can unearth those actors in contest in defining what that space be, how a given knowledge is perpetuated and others buried, how classifications, hierarchies and attempts to discipline are made visible in space could be telling of how non-market spaces are commoditised and the struggles caught in its production. And that is a history yet to be told.

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