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Markets and Diversity: An Overview



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Abstract

This document provides a synthetic overview of a project to build an inventory of key literature on the subject of “markets and diversity.” The first phase of the project involved a literature search and compilation of one hundred bibliographic items and assembly of as many digital copies of these items as possible. This literature was gathered using various databases and Internet search tools and a range of search terms (some creativity was required given the reality that a simple search for *markets* and *diversity* yields thousands of items, almost none of which are related to an ethnically diverse, physical marketplace). I employed search terms specific to regional marketplaces and types of markets (i.e., *bazaar*, *souq*, *fea*, *feira*, *open-air market (OAM)*, *open market*, *farmers’ market*, *street market*) with various combinations of markers of diversity (i.e., *ethnic*, *immigrant*, *class*, *race*, *gender*), as well as more specific thematic terms (i.e., *cosmopolitanism*, *entrepreneurship*, *inclusion*, *interaction*, *Orientalism*, and so on). No parameters were set with regards to time period, region, or publishing date, although a concerted effort was made to find recent work in the field. While there has been a great deal of research on marketplaces, and debate about the social nature of economic exchange (often using the marketplace as a field-site), remarkably little research focuses on the “diversity” of “markets” as we understand it. I have thus included recent work on marketplaces not focused on diversity per se (i.e., on the relationship between market traders and the state, the political economy of markets, and contact with globalization/modernity in the marketplace), as well as some of the economic anthropological/sociological literature on the social dynamics of trade.

The second phase of this project involved the annotation of forty of these bibliographic items. I selected those that focused most specifically on diverse markets. For each of these annotations, I provide the 1) disciplinary background of the author(s), and where possible, their institution; 2) research questions; 3) conceptual framework; 4) group studied; 5) methodology; 6) findings; and 7) significance of the research to the field. This paper, as the final phase of the project, provides a synthetic overview of the literature for publication as a working paper.

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I. Introduction

Marketplaces have long existed as spaces of economic and social/cultural contact and exchange. These spaces take a diversity of forms: market buildings, open-air markets, street markets (both official and unofficial), purpose-built markets, periodic markets (weekend, festival, weekday, night, morning, and so on), permanent and mobile markets (Pena 1999), as well other spaces of exchange such as British car boot sales, “jumble sales,” and flea markets (Crewe and Gregson 1998). Diversity also characterizes the products represented in the marketplace, which range from second-hand goods, produce, food, jewelry, art, services, and counterfeit goods to traditional handicrafts—all of which are imbued with conceptions of origin, quality, fakeness/authenticity, modernity/tradition, and familiarity/uniqueness.

While a significant body of literature on marketplaces exists, much of this research focuses on the developing world, where the market is seen something “archaic,” a fading remnant of a more traditional economy. As the “meta-narrative” of “The Market” (the abstract realm of rational, profit-maximizing exchange) dominates, interest in the physical marketplace, or “real marketplace” recedes (de la Pradelle 1995; Shepherd 2009). Although a great deal of research in the last decade, particularly in immigrant-receiving societies, has argued for the importance of spaces that encourage inter-culture/racial/ethnic contact (i.e., mixed housing developments/neighborhoods and public spaces—see Amin 2002), surprisingly few scholars have considered diversity and markets together. This working paper is driven by the potential of marketplaces to serve as sites of meaningful interaction between diverse groups of people. As such, it is concerned with understanding the ways in which the market has previously been theorized across disciplines, periods, and regions in order to proceed with future research on “markets and diversity.” I begin with a brief historical overview of the evolution of diverse markets. I then develop seven major themes emerging from the literature:

1. The social dynamics of trade in the marketplace
2. Markets as spaces of contact
3. Consuming diversity: Orientalism and cosmopolitanism
4. Markets and the state: Governance and policy
5. The political economy of the marketplace
6. Markets and social inclusion
7. The spatiality of the marketplace

I conclude by offering some thoughts for future research.

II. Historical Markets

As McMillan (2003) notes, “markets have been around as long as history” and have always been spaces of cultural growth and “reinvention” (4). Five thousand years ago, markets sprang up along trading circuits between cities in the Fertile Crescent, leading to the production of the first written documents: goods and livestock inventory for sale in the marketplace. From the sixth to the fourth centuries BCE, the Agora was the “heart of Athens,” hosting a market as well as theater, politics, athletics, and religion (McMillan 2003, 5). Chinese night markets can be traced back to the eighth century CE and their form has spread with Chinese migration, throughout Asia and to North America (Yu 2004). Pena (1999) dates street vending in Mexico to the Aztec Empire. Early markets often brought groups of people across geographical and topographical boundaries, as in the case of the fourteenth century Carpathian mountain folk fairs in what is now Romania (Geana 2006). These fairs, which coincided with Christian feast days, were simultaneously about access to trade and social relationships through dancing, music, and inter-marriage. After the fall of Constantinople (1453 CE), the bazaar played a crucial role in the consolidation of the Islamic Empire, particularly through revenue generated via collection of the *waqf*, a religious charitable donation, from merchants (Dale 2010). The state played an instrumental role in the construction of the market and had an economic interest in protecting non-Muslim merchants (Dale 2010).

Marketplaces were also central to early European cities. Interaction between East and West served as a catalyst to the renaissance; these markets of the fifteenth and sixteenth century were spaces where “eastern and western societies vigorously traded art, ideas, and luxury goods in a competitive but amicable exchange” (Brotton 2002, 1). The renaissance marketplace also offered a space where the rigid social mores of the day were temporarily suspended in lieu of spectacle and theatricality (Bakhtin 1984). As well as being sites that have historically brought different people together, marketplaces also have a much more somber side; as Ahluwalia notes, the African colonial marketplace was the starting point for the slave trade (2003). Furthermore, marketplaces have served as field-sites for colonial ethnographic excursions, where the “primitive” traditions of the colonized were documented and represented for the Empire at home, stimulating European fascination for the “Oriental bazaar” (Lysack 2005).

Markets continue to be important cultural symbols, associated with particular regions (i.e., American actress Sarah Jessica Parker’s trip to the *souq* in Dubai in the

recent film, *Sex and the City II*), as well as time periods (medieval England). In North America in particular, farmers' markets have recently been re-born by "local food" movements (and the "100 mile diet"), and other markets have been boosted by a nostalgic desire for face-to-face interaction in public space (Clough and Vanderbeck 2006). Western marketplaces have also been reinvigorated by the arrival of immigrants for whom markets function as spaces of informal employment, the source of ethnic goods, and sociability (Olsson 2007). In the global south, however, markets have often come under attack from the state and global financial institutions, who see them as informal economic activity that must be brought into the formal realm (Ahluwalia 2003).

III. Themes from the Literature

1. *The Sociability of Exchange & the Market*

The longstanding debate over the social significance of exchange in the marketplace provides a useful starting point to our discussion of "markets and diversity." Since J. S. Furnivall's (1939) writings on the colonial Indonesian marketplace, economic anthropologists and sociologists in particular have debated the cultural/social meaning of buying and selling in the marketplace, and the implications of this interaction for diverse societies. Furnivall emphasized the social significance of economic interaction, arguing that the marketplace is the "only place in which the various sections of a plural society meet on common ground" (449). To M. G. Smith, however, economic interaction between groups is a non-event—the seeming "symbiosis" of the marketplace is accompanied by "mutual avoidance" (Smith 1965, vii). The debate can thus be broadly divided into two camps: those who are pessimistic about the quality of interaction in the marketplace and those who see marketplace as something more "magical" (Watson 2009).

The first camp, led by M. G. Smith and R. Maisel, warns against an "Edenic vision of sociability" in the marketplace (Maisel 1974). Maisel examines the expressed motivation for vendor participation in the Alameda Penny Market in San Francisco. These vendors maintained that their decision to hold stalls in the flea market was driven by the marketplace's "easy atmosphere," its "good vibes," as well as a "pride in being participants in a social activity where blacks and 'rednecks', hippies and squares, homosexuals and straights visibly rub shoulders" (494). Alameda was repre-

sented as a place where “benevolence” and “character” intervene to set the value of goods. Ultimately, however, when pressed, the vendors revealed profit maximization as the overarching goal. Maisel argues that although vendors “claimed” a social motivation for participation (via the “myths” of sociability in the market), market success was always described in terms of “profit and loss,” and not on social terms (503). Thus, according to Maisel, “at the end of the day,” profit trumps sociability in the marketplace.

The second strand of literature views the marketplace as a social space, operating outside the confines of pure economic interests. Plattner, for example, in a study of the Soulard Farmer’s Market in St. Louis Missouri, demonstrates how vendors sacrifice short-term profit maximization in order to cultivate “habitual relations” with customers that allowed them to “maintain a long-run niche on the marketplace” (399). Although not denying the profit motives of vendors, Plattner nevertheless demonstrates how the social intervenes in an environment of seemingly “pure [economic] competition” (1982, 401).

Both Furnivall (1939) and de la Pradelle (1995) emphasize the marketplace as creating an equal playing field for diverse groups of people, regardless of class, social status or ethnic background. De la Pradelle compared the Carpentras Market in France to a nearby French supermarket. He argues that the fixed (and unequal) power dynamics between producers and consumers in the supermarket (which favour the producer) preclude sociability. In the marketplace, however, the possibility of bargaining allows people a more expansive role—allowing them to come together to “create a public space” (345). The Carpentras marketplace becomes composed of “citizens” of a space that brings together an array of social groups that would not normally interact (for example, North African immigrants, people from the French countryside, members of the bourgeoisie, and so on).

Within the positive camp, several scholars have focused on the role of the marketplace in shaping the value of goods themselves, by bestowing them with cultural meaning, or offering a social experience. Kelly (2003) describes how Hawaiian T-shirt vendors were able to survive competition from Wal-Mart and other megastores by offering a shopping experience that was distinctly social—an approach that attracts both tourists and locals. Kelly argues that craft fairs serve as a social activity as well as a place to search for unique items/variety, or to follow local artists’ work and are thus “equally” social and economic events. The fairs provide a source of customer feedback (i.e., a silent customer indicated a need to review a design), and camaraderie is emphasized as attracting customers and vendors alike. Despite cheaper

prices at big box stores, discount chains, and malls, shoppers (both local and tourist), continue to frequent craft fairs because they feel they are getting a product that is authentic, more unique, reflective of local culture and way of life, as well as a “warm feeling” of social interaction that passes between salesperson (who may often be directly involved in the product’s design) and consumer. Along similar lines, Shepherd’s (2009) analysis of street vendors in the Eastern Market in Washington, D.C., demonstrates how the stories told by vendors play a role in creating product value. The recounting of these stories to customers, and the ensuing interaction, shapes product value structures in the market.

A number of important contributions have also been made from outside of the discipline of anthropology. Gregson and Crewe (1994; 2003) and Crewe and Gregson (1998) examine alternative retail spaces, such as British “car boot sales” as spaces where sociability provides one of the most important motives for exchange. Car boot sales rose in popularity in the 1990s as Sunday trading become legal. Each Sunday, vendors fill their trunks with second-hand merchandise and pay a small fee (between five and seven pounds) to park at the “fair” location, usually an outdoor, suburban or “urban fringe” field, parking lot, or playground. Buyers pick through the trunks, bartering on the sale and paying in cash (1994, 261). Participants are enticed by the “communal” quality of the car boot “crowd”; social networks, friendships, and rivalries are formed and negotiated through these events over time, in a way that is qualitatively different from the “anonymous crowd of the mall” (1998, 43). The markets are thus simultaneously about social relationships and entrepreneurial skill.

Focusing on markets and diversity, Watson (2009) emphasizes the importance of sociability to the marketplace in a study of eight markets across the UK. She describes markets as sites allowing for “‘rubbing along’, social inclusion; theatricality/performance; and [the] mediating [of] differences” (1581). As she puts it, the “informality of market trading and shopping, the openness of market spaces, the proximity of stalls to one another, the lack of restraint on entering and leaving market sites clearly gave rise to a multitude of easy encounters and informal connections” (1582). Interaction provides the “social glue” that holds the marketplaces together, but sociability varies across the markets. Sociability was stronger where eating/drinking/sitting spaces were set-up, and around stalls selling “unusual items.” Watson’s respondents also highlighted the role of the markets in forming “social bonds across different ethnicities,” especially between newer immigrant groups and the long-established Jewish market traders. Where there were fewer non-whites and where traders were predominantly white, more racist attitudes were experienced (1586). Watson’s

work is thus important in bridging the gap between those who have considered the social nature of markets (interaction between people in general), and those who are working on questions of diversity (but who have not focused on the marketplace as a site of interaction).

2. *Spaces of Contact*

Another theme of the literature on “markets and diversity” focuses on the role of the marketplace as a point of contact—where “disparate people meet in order to carry out their local way of life” (Alhuwalia 2003,142). Here, the marketplace is conceptualized as a meeting place, and numerous references liken it to the Roman agora (see de la Pradelle 1995; Kelly 2003; Hunt 2009). Similarly, Alhuwalia (2003) highlights the similarities between the Kenyan term for “public meeting” (*baraza*) and the word *bazaar*. In Kenya, *baraza* signifies the “meeting of minds ... aimed at building understanding and consensus” (Alhuwalia 2003, 142). Contact within the market is approached, on the one hand, by considering the implications of social interaction between people on identity and relationships, and on the other hand, by considering interaction in a broader sense: involving people, but also goods, ideas, and broader processes of globalization and modernity.

2.1 *Identity*

I turn first to consider scholarly work on social contact in the marketplace, and particularly how it shapes the identities of individuals and groups involved. Interaction in the marketplace can create a shared sense of identity or reinforce feelings of sameness among people. Geana (2006) explains how the fourteenth century Carpathian folk fairs (in what is now Romania) were instrumental to the development of a Romanian national consciousness. The periodic markets (on Christian holidays) allowed for inter-marriage and kinship ties across three distinct political territories. The periodic contact encouraged the entrenchment of common religious and cultural practices, as well as linguistic homogeneity. Thus, one way of thinking about contact in the marketplace is through the convergence of social practices—which may impact national or ethnic identity.

Contact with difference in the marketplace can also reinforce feelings of difference between groups. Liu (2010) examines the increased presence of Chinese traders in a Ghanaian marketplace. As a survival strategy, Ghanaian traders, undercut by the lower cost of Chinese wholesalers, attempt to represent Chinese wholesaling as an

“illegitimate” activity in the marketplace. Busch (2010) also demonstrates the relationality involved in the ways in which German shoppers and a Polish food vendor represent each other during a sales transaction on the German-Polish border. During the interaction, the participants are shown to draw on specific linguistic “devices” to gain bargaining power over the other. The German shoppers, for example, repeatedly made reference to the vendor as a “trickster,” or as a subject of their “holiday flirtation,” while the Polish vendor attempted to create an atmosphere of friendship and hospitality. Busch demonstrates how even the mundane interaction over buying sausages is loaded with meaning and has implications for identity. Ultimately, people “assign people and objects to categories” using devices to make sense of the “interaction” and their social/cultural position (75). Sometimes this interaction involves asserting difference.

But marketplace interactions can lead to the development of hybrid identities and identity renegotiation in a more positive sense. Kapchan’s (1993, 1995) analyses of interaction between female vendors and male shoppers in the Moroccan bazaar suggest how the presence of women in a traditionally male dominated area creates the space for cultural negotiation during the transaction. Interaction in the marketplace between the majority and new immigrant cultures has also been shown to challenge and to change the majority culture. Olsson (2007) describes the arrival of waves of immigrants in a farmers’ market in the southern United States. In the Dekalb Farmers Market, which employs mainly immigrants and refugees and caters to both native southerners (black and white) and immigrants, there has been a gradual “intermingling” of new cultural practices with the “down home,” instead of an expected cultural “clash” (56). The increasing diversity has also helped to challenge the black-white dichotomy and “resistance to change” associated with the region. The market founder sees himself as “doing his small part in helping race relations” (53). As Olsson argues, the Dekalb Farmers Market represents the “quiet revolution of immigrant and food [which] continues to upset and redefine the meanings of local, regional, and global identity” (56). Watson (2009) explains that sometimes the very act of “rubbing along ... has the potential to militate against the withdrawal into the self or private realm.” Even a seemingly insignificant encounter can “challenge racist discourses” (1581–82).

2.2 *Modernity*

In the developing world, contemporary market spaces have also been conceptualized as sites of contact with globalization. Alhuwalia (2003) argues that marketplaces in

Africa serve as a counterpoint to globalization, allowing Africans to reassert themselves in the face of international institutions such as the World Trade Organization, World Bank, and structural adjustment-oriented development projects. Despite these institutions' best efforts to "modernize" Africa (and formalize the economy), seemingly informal markets have persisted, popping in up in refugee camps and in spaces re-appropriated from global capitalism. A Shell station in Western Uganda illustrates this point. The "best lit place in town," the station is the

site at which virtually all people who are in town converge. It is here that hawkers peddle their food and wares, making it an unofficial marketplace. In this way, the petrol station, a signifier of globalisation and Western extravagance, has been appropriated and given meaning at the local level. (140)

While the state sees the market as an opposing force to modernity, Alhuwalia emphasizes the market's role in encouraging an "alternative modernity" (see Gilroy 1993; Appadurai 1996)—one "that is not simply a mimicry of some universal modernity but a modernity with its own peculiarities" (138). The market at the petrol station thus allows for "transculturation" as the local community comes in contact with a global commodity (oil), and this commodity is re-appropriated—and imbued—with multiple hybrid meanings and functions.

Similarly, the way in which modernity is exercised in the marketplace is examined in a second-hand street marketplace in Tonga (Besnier 2004) and in a periodic market in rural China (Liu 2007). Besnier demonstrates how, in a country structured rigidly by status hierarchy, the Tongan *fea* (market) brings together a number of marginalized groups—Chinese migrants, Mormon converts, women, and diasporic Tongans who receive remittances from overseas in the form of second-hand goods (clothing, shows, household items, and so on—as well as elites. Status mobility is achieved via the collection of objects from elsewhere and the appearance of cosmopolitanism in the marketplace (i.e., knowing what is "in fashion" overseas). Besnier argues that

as a buffer zone between modernity and tradition, between the diaspora and the homeland, and between the outside world and Tonga, the Nuku'alofa fea is where the boundaries between these contrasting categories are placed under scrutiny and argued over, both benignly and stridently. (37)

In rural China, a state-sponsored periodic marketplace also brings the Nuosu ethnic minority in contact with the processes of globalization. Such pressures are not absorbed in full. Rather, they become intertwined with local traditions, infused with local kinship ties and conceptions of morality along with "market rationality" (15).

Thus, in the global south, the marketplace functions as an important social site where consumption is practiced as a form of modernity.

3. *Consuming Ethnicity in the Marketplace*

A third way in which scholars have approached diversity in the marketplace has been to consider the ways in which marketplaces have both historically, and contemporarily, allowed for the consumption of ethnicity, by a colonial/white/majority culture. From the colonial period, the eastern “bazaar” has been viewed from an Orientalist fascination with the exotic and desire to consume the “Other” while contemporary ethnic markets provide a source of cultural capital, elevating the market consumer to cosmopolitan status.

3.1 *The Oriental Bazaar*

Colonial and post-colonial marketplaces are approached from a post-structuralist perspective, concerned with a colonial/Orientalist fascination with the mystery and exoticism, particularly of the Eastern bazaar, a common Orientalist theme. Along with depictions of the desert and harem, Orientalist painters of the nineteenth century, such as American Addison Thomas Miller, painted countless market scenes of carpet and vase merchants. The bazaar was also a focus of Orientalist literature. Flaubert’s descriptions of the Cairo bazaar portray the European as a “watcher” of the Orient, “never involved, always detached,” for whom the Orient is a “living tableau of queerness” (Said 1979,103). The Victorian poet Christina Rossetti told of the mysterious power and danger of eastern merchants in the bazaar to Victorian women in “The Goblin Market”; Rudyard Kipling, writing of his travels to Canton, entitled the chapter, “shows how I came to Goblin Market and took a scunner at it and cursed the Chinese people” (280). Kipling described the markets of Canton as horrific spaces marked by “chaos” and “devils” (Ricketts 1999; Lysack 2005). Yet despite the association with fear, the bazaar was fascinating to Victorian society. As Lysack explains, the rise in popularity of the eastern bazaar as shopping destination for the middle class Victorian woman established a mode of imperial consumption that was predicated on the act of “looking.” In the bazaar recreated at Liberty’s department store, women could take in the “spectacle” created through the display of various eastern products: silks, shawls, and other textiles. The marketplace was thus intimately linked to imperialism, race, and gender—and the Orientalism of nineteenth century England. As Lysack argues, the oriental bazaar was used to bring a domestic (female) audience into the colonial project.

Post-colonial marketplaces have also been considered from this lens. Witz, Rassool, and Minkley. (2001), for example, highlight the ways in which South African “markets” are constructed to serve a Western tourist appetite for the traditional and “authentic” Africa. The Ratanga Theme Park features an Old Market Place designed to represent the “bustle” of the Marrakesh style *souq*, offering a “history of the ‘Orient’” and a “taste of the East” for consumption by contemporary Western tourists. Craft markets in guided tours of the former townships involve craftspeople “in situ ... in traditional costume, ready to demonstrate the function of the object” (285). The creation of the “authentic fake” for tourist consumption is also described by Alraouf’s (2010) analysis of the Manama souq renovation in Bahrain. The Manama souq is the “traditional” market in Bahrain, where spices, cloth, fruit, and nuts, as well as other “traditional” goods are sold. The market serves a diverse clientele: Bahrain’s multi-ethnic population comprised of Indians, Persians, and Arabs, as well as international tourists. The proposed souq renovation, however, ignored the historic and contemporary diversity of the Manama souq. The project, for example, made little mention of the historic “little India” zone of the bazaar where South Asians have historically held stalls and instead attempted to maintain a vision of the bazaar by emphasizing “continuity, sustainability, and balance,” and traditional Gulf architectural motifs. The renovation attempts to uphold a vision of the “authentic fake”—an image of the middle eastern bazaar that is fixed, unchanging, and homogeneous—thereby ignoring the “real source of authenticity” and quality—their support of locally diverse communities.

3.2 *Consumption and Cosmopolitanism in the Market*

A related conceptual framework, concerned with the processes of cultural capital, distinction and cosmopolitanism, approaches consumption in contemporary ethnic marketplaces. Drawing on the work of Bourdieu on cultural capital and distinction, such theorists explain how the experience of ethnicity in the marketplace—through food, goods, customs, music, and “culture”—bolsters individual cultural capital. Through connoisseurship of ethnic practices, one demonstrates one’s cosmopolitanism. Craftspeople and vendors, who offer products that appear authentic to specific audiences, exploit this desire for cultural capital. Kelly (2003) for example, explains how consumers seek “symbolic capital” in Hawaiian craft fairs, non-traditional retail locations that are seen as significant sources of “authenticity and cultural capital” (242). Similarly, Chang et al. (2007) demonstrate the ways in which Japanese visitors to Taiwanese night markets seek out authentic experiences. Hindman (2009)

examines the ways in which expatriates (many of whom are diplomats) in Katmandu, Nepal use consumption of local art and craft to elevate their social position. Expatriate shoppers in Nepalese markets seek to distinguish themselves from the other group of whites (tourists) by cultivating expertise of local goods and how to “get a good deal” (671). Hindman explains how merchants play into this practice by praising foreigners for their “eye” (for quality, or authenticity). Purchases are displayed in the expat home and used as cultural capital. In the case of foreign diplomats, the objects enable the “performance” of “status as cosmopolitan subjects” in subsequent diplomatic assignments (669).

In the last three sections we have seen that interaction in the marketplace is a social act, often bringing diverse groups of people together. We also see, however, that this interaction is not always positive—as it can reinforce difference, inequality, and “Otherness.” Although, in theory, the marketplace situates people on an equal playing field, in reality, unequal power dynamics often stymie meaningful interaction. Important questions remain as to how the “magical” potential of markets can be encouraged to create sites where different groups of people can work out differences without being confined to expected roles.

4. Markets and the State: Governance and Policy

A fourth area of research centres on the relationship between markets and the state. This work examines the regulatory activities of the state in the marketplace. Marciszak and Van der Velde (2008) for example, demonstrate the effect of European rescaling on apparel markets on the Polish-Russian border, particularly given the tightening of the border following Poland’s acceptance into the European Union. Hunt (2009) examines the ways in which the Columbian state uses policy on the marketplace to “pedagogicalize” citizenship through vendor relocation and recuperation schemes. She argues that the actions of the state against vendors represent the state’s attempt to impose “market values” on citizens in a neoliberal context (346). A more specific focus on cross-border social interaction is taken up by Valtchinova (2006) in an analysis of periodic fairs on the Bulgarian-Serbian border. Although the Bulgarian socialist state permitted free economic exchange in the fairs, allowing Bulgarians to “experience capitalism,” social interaction was highly constrained by the watchful eye of authorities who wanted to prevent the spread of “capitalist propaganda” and Bulgarian “escape.” Even a one-on-one conversation between a Bulgarian and a Serb was considered suspicious activity. He argues that, until the 1970s, while goods were

exchanged freely, social interaction was “tightly controlled” by the Bulgarian socialist state.

Another strand of literature within the theme of the state concerns the interplay among marketplaces, urban policy, and diversity. Human geographers, interested in the consequences of urban regeneration schemes and gentrification for marginalized residents such as new immigrants and ethnic minorities, have taken up this line of inquiry, particularly in the North American and British literature. City officials and urban planners view multicultural neighbourhoods as vital to the cultural cache and economic vitality of a city; their colorful marketplaces provide a “picturesque backdrop for consumption,” encouraging tourism and related economic activity (Shaw, Bagwell, and Karmowska 2004, 1983). Serious doubts have been raised, however, as to whether the tourist and function role of such spaces (as living and working spaces) can be “reconciled” (1988). In particular, Shaw, Bagwell, and Karmowska argue that the increase in people visiting the marketplaces from outside precludes “spontaneous interethnic and intercultural encounters” as the “the one way traffic of onlookers ... become[s] intrusive, disturbing the rhythm of people’s everyday lives” (2004, 1997). Along these lines, several scholars have attempted to flesh out the conditions that encourage the flourishing of marketplaces that support diverse groups—and the developments that stifle them.

In particular, the limitations of purpose-built market spaces are emphasized by Clough and Vanderbeck (2006) and Dines (2007). Clough and Vanderbeck’s (2006) analysis of Burlington, Vermont’s Church Street Marketplace raises serious questions about purpose-built market spaces in planned Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) as public spaces encouraging engagement. The Church Street Marketplace is known and represented as a vibrant public space supporting multiple social groups and serving as a space of activism and protest, as well as economic activity. While a great deal of political activity is permitted on the street, Clough and Vanderbeck reveal clearly enforced rules regulating behaviour in the marketplace. Public safety or “tastefulness” is used as grounds for policing (for example, in the case of a staged “die-in” to simulate deaths from AIDS). Although the authors’ focus is not on ethnic diversity (but rather, a diversity of political opinions and activities), the study nevertheless has important implications for urban policy and diverse marketplaces. In particular, the authors emphasize the restrictions on social activity and interaction in public spaces that are controlled by economic interests, suggesting that markets cultivated for tourism and economic potential may preclude meaningful interaction between different groups in the marketplace.

Dines' (2007) case study of Queen's Market in London also warns against urban regeneration programs that aim to render marketplaces more conducive to consumption. In the wake of London's race riots in 2001, and in the lead up to London's bid for the 2012 Summer Olympics, the Queen's Market, a multi-ethnic open market in the ethnically diverse neighbourhood of Newham, became the target of a development plan (Dines 2007). The plan aimed to make ethnicity more official and visible (for example, through murals and other aesthetic elements of urban design) and to increase social interaction. Despite the market's role as a key public and social space to the neighbourhood—for example as a space for elderly residents to stroll, or for racialized minorities to wander without fear of harassment—officials and planners viewed the existing market as chaotic, unprofitable, disorganized, and dirty. They aimed to give it a “more coordinated appearance” that would be more conducive to consumption, by creating an “orderly assembly of customers.” The ethnic diversity of the market was considered superfluous to consumption.

5. The Political Economy of the Marketplace

A fifth area of research examines the marketplace from a political economy perspective, considering its role as a space of economic inclusion for precariously positioned groups. A number of authors support a view of the marketplace as an economic safety net in insecure political and economic environments (although diversity is not always a central concern). In both developed and less-developed economies, participation in the market can be seen as a way to meet basic needs that are not “met by the state” (Hunt 2009). A great deal of work has been done on the importance of the informal economy in the developing world, and some of this concerns the marketplace, particularly in Latin America (see Bromley 1998a, 1998b; Stillerman 2006; Bromley and Mackie 2009). The role of marketplaces during the post-socialist transition in Europe and Central Asia has also emerged as a dominant theme of research, where markets have served as mediators of economic dislocations (Konstantinov, Kressel, and Thuen 1998; Czakó and Sik 1999; Sik and Wallace 1999; Marcinczak and Van der Velde 2008; Spector 2008; Kaminski and Raballand 2009). In these post-socialist “bazaars,” competition for scarce resources, as well as decades of communist ideological denigration of the marketplace as “backward,” have sometimes complicated ethnic relations. Konstantinov, Kressel, and Thuen (1998), for example, emphasize how Roma participation in trader tourism (and mar-

ketplace vending) along the Bulgarian-Turkish border further stigmatizes an already marginalized ethnic population.

While there has been a great deal of research on immigrant and ethnic entrepreneurship as an outcome of social and economic marginalization, surprisingly little has been said about the role of the marketplace in mediating these experiences. In immigrant-receiving countries, relatively informal spaces such as the marketplace can serve as the only means of employment, or as a means of supplementing income. De Bruin and Dupuis (2000) emphasize the importance of the marketplace for the economic participation of national and ethnic minorities in New Zealand's Otara Flea Market, who are confronted with national welfare state restructuring in New Zealand as well the wider processes of global labor transformations. The Otara market was constructed in part to provide a source of cheap goods for a low-income communities (that is predominantly the Maoris and Pacific Islanders but it also attracts Chinese migrants) with high levels of unemployment and underemployment. De Bruin and Dupuis connect the difficulties facing immigrants from East Asia in the labour market in New Zealand and their participation as vendors in the flea market. Vendors participate simultaneously in the formal and informal economies. One vendor, for example, sells second-hand T-shirts she receives from a friend overseas (informal), while at the same time selling made-to-order special occasion Maori formalwear (formal). This simultaneous arrangement bolsters the chances of "survival" in the formal economy. Marketplaces also allow ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurs to branch out of the enclave economy into the wider market (Olsson 2007).

Stoller (2002) demonstrates how economically marginalized and "culturally alienated" West African immigrants develop complex networks of social capital and trading as a coping strategy, making a living by selling a "simulated" Africa to African Americans. L'Hote and Gasta (2007) emphasize the relationship between street vending in Alicante, Spain and the country's new impetus to attract immigrant labor, although there is only limited formal employment availability. Many of these immigrants—from Morocco, Senegal, Ecuador, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria—lack access to formal employment contracts and work seasonally or through verbal contracts. Entrepreneurship in the Alicante market is thus a product of necessity as traders often expressed dissatisfaction with their line of work and difficulty in finding other work. Further, because many of the goods sold on the street are illegal, the migrants establish an early negative relationship with police, which makes later entry to the formal labour market difficult. Nock (2009) considers marketplace entrepreneurship

in a rural environment, detailing the ways in which Mexican agricultural workers rely on participation at “swap-meets” to supplement their (seasonal) incomes.

6. *Markets and Social Inclusion*

Markets also play a role in the social inclusion of immigrants and minorities. Watson demonstrates how markets in economically deprived neighborhoods in the UK serve as a social safety net. Traders were found to care for customers, by providing tea, helping the elderly around, finding seating, and sometimes childminding while customers shop. Watson uses her findings to challenge Robert Putnam’s (2000) argument about declining social capital. As she argues, Putnam discounts “the less formal and visible forms of social connection that occur outside the more commonly recognized sites of social encounter” (i.e., marketplaces) (Watson 2009, 1589). De Bruin and Dupuis (2000) as well as Olsson (2007) also associate the marketplace with altruism and charity, describing the market as a space in which people want to help one another. Furthermore, as Olsson explains, the market provides a means for immigrants to come together and meet one another. They also serve as places where ethnicities can access the items and products that allow them to carry out their own cultural practices and teach them to their children (Olsson 2007). In the San Joaquin Valley, “swap-meets” provide an important space for Hispanic immigrants to “form networks, to circulate information, to reminisce about home, and to have fun” (Nock 2009, 315). Church, community, and political groups use the spaces to disseminate information. Swap-meet customers relate their use of the market space to nostalgia for “home” (315).

7. *The Spatiality of Markets*

Finally, the spatiality of the marketplace must be given consideration as a crucial part of interest in markets. The market is conceptualized as a public space (de la Pradelle 1995; 2006) increasingly impinged on by government (Hunt 2009) and planning (Zacharias 1993; Dines 2007; Bromley and Mackie 2009). Clough and Vanderbeck (2006) draw on theoretical contributions of Henri Lefebvre’s “right to the city” to consider people’s struggles over participation in the marketplace. Others, considering Chinese night market spaces in particular (Yu 2004; Wu and Chi-Cheng 2007), emphasize the ways in which night markets entail very specific conceptions of space. The Taiwanese term *shi*, for example, describes the market setting in terms

of its “compactness” (*jieshi*), concentration, and “formation” (*chengshi*) of vendors/buyers in a “heterogeneous” retail setting. There is no definition of the number of vendors/particular spatial expanse, but rather the definition of a night market relies on the “unquantifiable ambiance created by such an assemblage” (Yu 2004, 138). Night markets must be *renao*, which can be translated as “hot and noisy.” The *shi* depends on *renao*—“the emotion that transforms formal occasions into warm and interactive events ... enthusiastic human interactions” (138). *Renao* is created in the night market through densely packed vendor stalls, narrow paths through these stalls, smoke, bright lights and displays, shouting, hawking, and loud music. Seemingly disorganized vendors, as well as the display of items such as “raw meat” and animal organs are part of *renao*. Permanent shops surrounding the night market either mimic the market by setting up wares outside their doors, or distance themselves from the “chaos.” Perhaps the spatial insights drawn from these works can be usefully applied to other considerations of marketplaces elsewhere.

V. Conclusion

Markets have long served as both economic and social spaces, bringing disparate groups of people together. The ideal, “diverse market” is a space of open exchange, where social rules and hierarchies are suspended—and people meet on an “equal playing field.” In reviewing the literature on marketplaces, it becomes clear, however, that the marketplace does not always foster positive exchange beyond the economic. While interaction between diverse groups can encourage a sense of shared identity, hybridity, or appreciation of difference, contact can also reinforce social difference and exacerbate pre-existing tensions, particularly under circumstances of economic competition. A key question thus concerns the types of market spaces, and conditions, that encourage meaningful interaction. Marketplaces, whose ethnic cache is played up to attract members of the majority culture, for example, are not likely to be “equal playing fields” or sites for the working out of social difference. As Hage aptly puts it, the “multicultural fair” often

conjures the images of a multicultural fair where the various stalls of neatly positioned migrant cultures are exhibited and where the real Australians, bearers of the White nation and positioned in the central role of the touring subjects, walk around and enrich themselves. (2000, 118)

Despite Hage's view, the literature on marketplaces supports the contention that these spaces serve as meeting places and as sites of economic participation for diverse people that may go beyond the one-sided consumption of ethnicity. How can these discourses of multiculturalism and tourism be reconciled with the social and economic function of marketplaces? What is the relationship between economic transaction, sociability, and diversity? Can we plan for these spaces? Insight on these questions is offered by literature on the publicity and spatiality of marketplaces. There is certainly room for future research on the conditions supporting positive and meaningful social and economic marketplace exchanges between diverse people.

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