

Of counter-spaces of provisioning:

Reframing the sidewalk as a parasite heterotopia

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Abstract

This paper considers the concept of heterotopia in the context of public space. Based on observations and interviews with 19 disposers and/or gleaners operating on bulky item collection days, it shows that the sidewalk is (1) a liminal space for unwanted objects that are in transition between disposal and destruction or reappropriation; (2) a regularly practiced space, the meaning of which is redefined by disposers (for depositing) and gleaners (for provisioning); (3) a place of illusion that mirrors the profusion of goods produced by the linear economy; and (4) a space of compensation for the pitfalls of the consumer society. These findings provide a theoretical basis for the new concept of *parasite heterotopia*, a term that refers to a space that is appropriated by a tactical use of a regulated place, which both reflects and contests a dominant ordering on its own territory. The paper adds to previous literature on heterotopias and sustainability by questioning how this “time-space” is involved in the dialectics of capitalism and criticism.

Keywords

Parasite heterotopia, liminality, alternative spaces of provisioning, sustainability

Introduction

Many previous marketing studies have viewed places as contexts in which market activities unfold. They have focused on conventional urban places for provisioning, such as shopping malls (Maclaran and Brown, 2005) and retail and flagship brand stores (Borghini et al., 2009; Kozinets et al., 2002). In these socio-spatial units, researchers address the way spatial arrangements are designed to produce atmosphere, excitement, and a sense of place (Warnaby and Medway, 2013).

Other studies have detailed how commercial environments are challenged in various ways by anti-market events and venues. For example, swap meets (Belk et al., 1988), flea markets (Sherry, 1990), car-boot sales (Gregson and Crewe, 1997), garage sales (Herrmann, 2006), trade fairs (Peñaloza, 2000), anti-consumerist celebrations (Kozinets, 2002), and mythical sites (Belk and Costa, 1998) alter, or sometimes even abolish, the very nature and principles of exchange. Such eccentric and countervailing “counter-sites” echo Foucault’s (1986) notion of heterotopia. They are “places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society” as “a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which real sites found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault, 1986: 24).

Some heterotopias are ephemeral events infused with a carnival-like spirit; they are episodic sites of anti-market activities. But public-space heterotopias can also take the form of more or less permanent and delineated places where alternate ordering or countervailing temporalities emerge (Hetherington, 1997; Johnson, 2006). For example, parks (McEachern et al., 2012) and “terrains vagues” (Allweil and Kallus, 2008) may become claimed spaces that are appropriated differently than their planned social usages and demarcated from more clearly defined urban zones.

Of a more dissenting nature, “heterotopias of resistance” (Kohn, 2003) form enclaves in the urban fabric that challenge the dominant consumerist logic. Driven by a strong anti-

capitalist ethos, new consumption communities (Moraes et al., 2010) and rebellious neighborhoods (Chatzidakis et al., 2012) oppose the market system through spatial arrangements that are immediately visible (e.g., large areas devoted to farming or other self-sufficient activities, marking of places with obvious signs of anti-liberal ethos). They carve out anti-commercial heterotopias, or special places in space that subvert or invert “the logic and ethos of the marketplace” or the “spectacle” (Bradford and Sherry, 2015: 131). By recreating a sense of collective, ludic, and communal uses of space for non-market purposes or by contesting market rules and values, they organize spaces differently from their surroundings (Hetherington, 1997).

Although their relational dimension makes them places of contrast and “otherness” (Foucault, 1986; Hetherington, 1997; Soja, 1995), such counter-sites have not always been recognized as such. Marketing studies have emphasized their utopian nature (Belk and Costa, 1998; Kozinets, 2002; Maclaran and Brown, 2005) without pointing to their oppositional character. While utopias (*topos* meaning *place* and *u* designating its absence) are “places without places” (Foucault, 1986), heterotopias make tangible the materiality and spatiality of places in which alternate ordering (Hetherington, 1997) and resistant forms of social organization are concretely enacted (Chatzidakis et al., 2012; Kohn, 2003). Compared with the notion of utopia, the concept of heterotopia provides a better account of the spatial and material dimensions of place.

In defining heterotopias, Foucault (1986) underlines the secluded character of such sites. By assuming that “places of this kind are outside of all places” (Foucault, 1986: 24), he strongly emphasizes the idea that heterotopias, such as cemeteries, prisons, asylums, and brothels, necessarily stand at a certain distance from dominant places or (as with ships and Jesuit colonies) are located in remote areas. Thus, previous studies overlook some of the more fleeting and transitory ways of occupying space that Foucault (1986) refers to as “temporal

heterotopias.” In particular, the way in which a space can be used tactically to contest a dominant order *from inside*, on its own territory, remains under-explored.

In this article, to complement existing theorizing of heterotopias, we shift the focus from the strategic and stable appropriation of place to tactical and creative uses of “the space of the other” (De Certeau, 1984: 36). We link Lefebvre’s (1991) theoretical model of how urban space is produced, perceived, and lived to De Certeau’s (1984) and Foucault’s (1986) views on how spaces can be variously practiced and (re)appropriated for resistance. We also highlight the importance of the entanglement of space and time, a notion that has been emphasized through Foucault’s (1986) “heterochronies,” De Certeau’s (1984) “tactics,” and Bakhtin’s (1981) “chronotope.” By analyzing how people make use of the sidewalk on bulky item collection (BIC) days, we unpack the existence of a *parasite heterotopia*—a place that is temporarily appropriated by a tactical use of a regulated space so as to challenge its surrounding environment. Our results show that the BIC system provided by municipalities unwittingly creates such parasite heterotopias and fosters an anonymous recirculation of goods among strangers. In creating a liminal space for objects just outside people’s homes—homes being the primary site of consumption—the BIC system makes the sidewalk both a mirror of, and a compensation for, the throwaway society (Prothero and Fitchett, 2000).

Production of space, social ordering, and heterotopias

Space is not simply natural; it is primarily social. It “subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder” (Lefebvre, 1991: 73). Space is not a “space in itself” (Lefebvre, 1991: 90); it is the outcome of social relationships that are always deployed *in* places. Lefebvre’s (1991) attempt to account for the dialectical production of urban space results in a triadic model in which space is both discursively and materially constructed

(“conceived”), practiced (“perceived”), and represented (“lived”). The “conceived space” derives from the representations conveyed by urban planners and institutions, which produce a dominant order imposed through knowledge and spatial arrangements. The “perceived space” reveals how a society makes use of space concretely through everyday routines and urban layouts or networks that link workplaces, private lives, and leisure activities. Finally, the “lived space” reflects a complex representational activity whereby images and symbols of places are appropriated, questioned, and sometimes altered. The articulation of the conceived–perceived–lived triad by no means makes Lefebvre’s (1991) conceptualization an abstract model. Rather, its internal tensions bring to light the dynamic social ordering process that modernity has fostered and that can be challenged (Hetherington, 1997; Soja, 1995). These tensions create resistances (margins) that the center strives to reintegrate or eliminate (Lefebvre, 1991).

In developing another view of resistance *in* space, Foucault (1986) forged the concept of heterotopia. By listing dozens of such counter-sites, he explored “spaces of otherness” likely to disrupt taken-for-granted realities and called for a “heterotopology”—a systematic study of sites that mirror and contest the space in which we live. Although such places have been investigated in various ways in architecture, design, sociology, geography, and the humanities (Decrop and Toussaint, 2012; Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008; Hetherington, 1997; Soja, 1995), heterotopias remain under-documented in marketing literature (for an exception, see Chatzidakis et al., 2012). Heterotopias articulate six overall principles that emphasize their (1) ubiquity (found in every culture), (2) historicity (are not immutable but vary over time), (3) heterogeneity (assemble incompatible sites in the same place), (4) temporality (accompany a break in space *and* time), (5) porosity (are simultaneously open and closed), and (6) dialogical/relational function (both represent and contest the dominant order to which they respond). By standing a certain distance from where the dominant order unfolds, these “other

spaces” offer a liberating and resistant potential. They echo De Certeau’s (1984: 36) notion of “strategy,” in which an actor possesses “a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority can be managed.” From this perspective, anti-consumption venues such as Burning Man (Kozinets, 2002), Mountain Man (Belk and Costa 1998), and permanent sites of anti-market resistance (Chatzidakis et al., 2012; Moraes et al., 2010) are examples of these strategic places.

In contrast, limited attention has been devoted to more precarious or temporal heterotopias, such as festivals or carnivals. As shown by Bradford and Sherry (2015), while the former revitalizes the sense of community that modern individualism has undermined, the latter provides a temporary reversal of hierarchies and values. However, both the festival and the carnival take place in the public domain and operate overtly. They conform with the authorized uses of the public spaces they temporarily occupy. Even political street protests such as Occupy Wall Street—in which place emerged as a tactical resource for sustaining the movement and enhancing its visibility—are implicitly subjected to conditions governing public space occupancy, which include the risk of being evicted (Hammond, 2015).

To complement previous theorizing about the intertwining of space and time (Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008), we analyze temporal heterotopias that are enacted in a strategic rather than tactical way. In contrast with the preceding examples, in which public sites are openly conquered, appropriated, and used for acts of dissent or protest, parasite heterotopias operate silently in “the space of the other” (De Certeau, 1984: 36) (*para* meaning both aside [from the norm] and against). Parasite heterotopias are carved out in existing places and opportunistically created by play to counter the dominant social ordering (Hjorth, 2005). Drawing on Bakhtin’s (1981) concept of chronotope, we analyze the sidewalk as a regulated public space, whose tactical use on BIC days makes it a parasite heterotopia.

The chronotope of the sidewalk: Temporality and spatiality in the public space

Developed by Bakhtin (1981) to describe the narrative dimension of literary artwork, a chronotope is the entanglement of spatial and temporal dimensions that produces a coherent and concrete time-space. In many literary works, for example, the road is a place that the hero travels along physically, but it is also a metaphor for the time the hero has lived through. From this standpoint, the sidewalk is a chronotope: portions of streets dedicated to the circulation of people and things, epitomizing an efficient management of the flows and sequencing of human rhythms.

Although the origin of the sidewalk can be traced to the Romans, it was non-existent in the Middle Ages (Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht, 2009). Daylight barely penetrated streets, where public and private life, shops and commercial activities all were closely intertwined. The slow shift toward modernity began in the mid-1900s and was gradually materialized by street widening, sanitation, cleaning, lighting, and security. In France, where this study was carried out, the first sidewalks were built in 1781 to protect pedestrians; in 1845 their construction was made legally mandatory. Shops were pushed back off the street, leaving the roadway for a growing circulation of coaches and cars. The sidewalk, as a conceived space, thus evolved over time through successive political blueprints and regulations (Blomley, 2010).

The rationale behind these various changes, Garden (2006) contends, was primarily that of fluidity, which accompanied more efficient urban management and social control. For example, the prefect Eugène Poubelle introduced the trash can in 1873 in Paris (and gave his name to it). From then on, residents were required to place their refuse in boxes early in the morning before truck pick-up. Overall, this new attention to hygiene embraced a wide range of issues pertaining to waste and public order. Municipalities were in charge of defining town planning and safety rules. As a result, the sidewalk became a highly regulated and constrained

time-space where every effort was made to prevent obstructions. In particular, bulky items were allowed on the sidewalk only if they conformed to municipal collection schedules and rules. At the same time, commercial activities migrated to peripheral zones and street vending, illegal activities, trafficking, and other marginal occupations were strictly controlled (Duneier, 2000; Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht, 2009; Whyte, 1943). This leads us to examine how the sidewalk came to be tactically appropriated by gleaners and disposers and how the tactical use of public space by those actors reflects and challenges the dominant order in its own place.

Method

We conducted our research in France, specifically in Paris and its suburbs, where most municipalities organize BIC days. Our study uses qualitative triangulation, first with observation of sidewalks on BIC days in Paris and various municipalities in the Paris region. In the case of Paris, people are required to fill out an online form to have their objects collected. In all places, we observed the sidewalks at various times to check compliance (or non-compliance) with the public rules. We conducted additional observations via Google Street View that provided numerous examples of anarchic depositing of objects in the streets of Paris. We then conducted in-depth interviews with six ‘disposers’ to unpack how they make use of the sidewalk on both BIC and non-BIC days.

In addition, because a significant proportion of French people (40%¹) retrieve such objects before their collection by the municipal services, we conducted additional in-depth interviews with 13 amateur gleaners (commonly known as dumpster divers in other contexts, Brosius et al., 2012; Fernandez et al., 2011), who occasionally or more regularly dispose

¹ A recent survey, ObSoCo (2013) estimated that nearly 40% of French people in varying degrees of frequency retrieve used objects from the sidewalk, especially on BIC days.

and/or retrieve objects from the sidewalk (Brosius et al., 2012). Ten of the 13 were also disposers (Table 1).

We recruited our 19 informants through a snowball technique. Based on initial discussions, we selected informants to ensure diversity in terms of socio-demographics, as well as familiarity with and frequency of disposing and/or gleaning. Rather than seeking a representative sample, we looked for information-rich cases (Patton, 1990) capable of providing detailed and varied representations of their practices and rationales. The final sample consisted of 11 women and 8 men (aged between 22 and 75 years, average age of 42 years). Five young people—one gleaner, two disposers, and two with mixed practices—had low incomes, placing them below the poverty line; eight belonged to the middle class, situated between the poorest 30% and the highest paid 20%; and six informants were from the upper class.

Each interview began with “grand tour” questions (McCracken, 1988a) on disposing and/or retrieving practices—types of objects, how often, for how long, for what reasons—and how these activities were experienced. Depending on whether the informant was a disposer or a gleaner, the interviewer asked to what extent they found it appropriate to deposit/retrieve items on/from the sidewalk and how they perceived the BIC system through what they observed. The interviews took place at the gleaners’ or disposers’ homes or at the university; they averaged 1.5 hours in length (ranging from .75 hours to 2.25 hours), and were fully transcribed. The final data set consisted of 141 pages of single-spaced transcripts.

The researchers analyzed the data through thematic and axial coding after repeated and thorough readings of the informants’ discourses. Following discussion and resolution of any differing interpretations, four themes emerged about how the sidewalk is perceived and used, that is, (1) as a liminal space for superfluous or discarded objects, (2) a place with a shifting meaning (namely, for provisioning or passing things on), (3) a place of illusion reflecting the

profusion of goods, and (4) a space of compensation for what the throwaway society abandons and rejects. Together, these four themes contribute to the theorization of the sidewalk as a parasite heterotopia, a place that both mirrors and compensates for the consumption system in its own space.

The sidewalk as a parasite heterotopia

A temporary site for unwanted goods: The sidewalk as a liminal space

The origin of the term *liminality* refers to how rites of passage are enacted in special places and times (Van Gennep, 1960). In his study of primitive societies, Van Gennep unpacks a general pattern of rituals that enable people's change of status through a three-stage process: a split from the initial social group, a liminal stage, and aggregation to a new group. Liminality corresponds to a phase of uncertainty or indeterminacy, referring to what the individual is no more/not yet. Requiring "privileged or sacred or forbidden places" where these transformations occur, Foucault (1986: 24) refers to "crisis heterotopias." The concept is relevant to both humans and objects. The garage, for example, is a liminal place that provides an intermediate space for things within a process of transformation (Hirschman et al., 2012). Placing things outside marks a final separation and their removal from the home and the garage, where they may have been cooled off (McCracken, 1988b). For as short a time as possible (according to the laws that regulate the uses of the public space on BIC days), objects remain in an outdoor transitional space before moving toward a new space (a waste treatment center or a new owner's home if retrieved), a new state (de-constituted/recycled or repaired and reused), and a new status (de-singularized or re-singularized).

Shifting the meaning of place: The sidewalk as a space for disposal and provisioning

Residents of cities where the BIC system is provided have the opportunity to dispose of things that cannot be placed in trash cans, which is a convenient means to get rid of goods that are no

longer of utilitarian, financial, or sentimental value. By tolerating disposal, the BIC system, however, encourages a tactical and temporary use of the sidewalk. It provides disposers with a quick way of externally evacuating the disorder that may threaten their private space (Dion et al., 2014).

This practical side of the BIC system coexists with trade-offs that disposers have made between the destruction of their goods and various forms of redistribution such as reselling, passing items on to relatives, or giving them to charitable organizations. But many informants emphasize the difficulty and cost of these alternate solutions.

It's mostly a matter of time. I don't have time to write an announcement, to mail the parcel. I could have sold these rollers at a flea market, but now I don't go to flea markets any more. It's too tiring. So, I put them out on the sidewalk. (Léa)

As a result, disposing of objects on the sidewalk transforms the place, which becomes an area for goods of all kinds, including some not bulky or damaged, such as our informant Gosia's "whole bag of clothes and shoes that were outmoded but still wearable." Figure 1 shows that the blue lampshade, the glass cabinet on which it is placed, and the cart on the left are somewhat dated, but in perfectly good condition.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Furthermore, some informants make a point of saying they intentionally put out items in good condition. Reassured by the fact that these items may be of interest to gleaners, some informants use the BIC system to enable people in need to provision themselves.

I deposit things I want to get rid of without necessarily wanting to throw them in the trash. For one always thinks about the person who will pick them up. Leaving something outside represents an offering for whoever takes it. (Muriel)

This requalification of the sidewalk as a space for passing on reusable items also leads some informants to deposit them at times other than those scheduled by the municipalities, thereby redefining the intended use of the sidewalk (Lefebvre, 1991).

I put out things in the street when I move, or when I decide to change my furniture. I don't do it surreptitiously and I know very well that doing so is illegal. In any case, the stuff put out on the street

doesn't stay there long, so I don't see why it should bother the authorities that we put out stuff on the street which doesn't even stay there for 24 hours. (Philippe)

Despite a strong desire to avoid physical incivilities by polluting the environment (Douglas, 1966; LaGrange et al., 1992; Warr, 1990), Philippe justifies breaking the rules through the rapid disappearance of the items put out. Similarly, while Héloïse describes herself as obsessed with cleanliness and often irritated by the visual pollution of public spaces on BIC days, she nevertheless says she put out some salad bowls—which in no way conform to the definition of bulky items—on an unauthorized date.

My mother said, 'Put them out on the sidewalk. There'll be someone they'll be useful for and who'll like them.' And in fact it took me half an hour to find a good place to put them. Because I wanted them to be seen, but not too much, and at the same time, they had to be taken. So, well, I eventually found the place, I put them next to the trash can – because no one would look inside – so I put them next to it, and I went past 20 minutes later and they were gone. (Héloïse)

This extract illustrates how Héloïse used public space to tell others that the goods were to be taken. Such legal and illegal uses of the sidewalk underscore the tactical nature of some disposers' practices: finding the quickest way to get rid of what they no longer want, providing justifications for doing so by mobilizing the figure of a hypothetical gleaner, and depositing various items, whether bulky or not. The sidewalk is therefore used tactically either as a transit space for objects that disposers wish to put into circulation or as a final separation for things intended for destruction. In both cases, the sidewalk constitutes a transitory space for objects that will be reappropriated or destroyed. Their accumulation outside people's homes results, however, in the creation of a space of illusion, mirroring the consumption society.

Mirroring the world of consumption: The sidewalk as a space of illusion

The BIC system gives rise to a temporary transformation of public space. It allows residents to temporarily clutter the sidewalk with large, clearly visible items that take up space and often encroach upon pedestrian areas (Figure 2).

Insert Figure 2 about here

This mass of unexpected objects in public space helps produce the illusion of what Amandine, as a gleaner, depicts as a “large self-service store.” As she points out, the BIC system is a space “where everyone gives away what they don’t need and is not worth the trouble of selling.”

The sidewalk is a space of illusion not only because it mirrors the “spectacle” (Bradford and Sherry, 2015) through the variety and abundance of goods that consumer society has produced, but also because it presents a distorted image of it. The products are not brand new but generally old and worn, and though some are still usable and sometimes charming, others are often broken or incomplete (Figure 3).

Insert Figure 3 about here

Unlike stores, flea markets or garage sales, the items on the sidewalk are rarely showcased. But sometimes tidily arranged piles and interesting items made easily visible, within reach, or tagged with a note encouraging passers-by to take them, help create this illusion by mimicking merchandising techniques (Figure 4).

Insert Figure 4 about here

Lastly, what makes the sidewalk “another space” (Foucault, 1986) is the unpredictability of the offering that turns the area into a “bazaar economy” (Geertz, 1979) and intensifies gleaners’ feelings of treasure hunting (Brosius et al., 2012). The sidewalk becomes a space of free goods where anything can be taken if one dares to do so.

In sum, the time-space of the sidewalk on BIC days is a de facto organization of a spontaneous provisioning space in a public place that is not designed, perceived, or socially instituted as such. The regulatory system that permits the depositing of objects and does not prohibit their retrieval makes the sidewalk a space of asynchronous give-and-take between disposers and gleaners. As a space of illusion, the sidewalk appears as a mirror held up to consumer society: a fortuitous, disorderly, motley shop window of its cast-offs and rejects (Bauman, 1995). By exhibiting a range of used goods in varying condition, the sidewalk juxtaposes different times in the same space and thus represents one of the dimensions of heterotopic places. But unlike all other market sites—both conventional and second-hand—such parasite heterotopias form one of the few kinds of non-institutionalized spaces in which goods are free and accessible to all, without any financial requirements or social conditions for access. It thus plays the role of a space of compensation, the dimensions of which we examine below.

Countering the throwaway society: The sidewalk as a space of compensation

According to Foucault (1986), heterotopias can create spaces of illusion or build perfect and ordered spaces that compensate for the flaws of the world in which we live. By harboring a mass of discarded products and hosting (depositing and/or gleaning) activities driven by anti-market, artistic, social, and environmental criticisms, the sidewalk both reflects and challenges the consumer society.

First, the anti-market criticism reverses the principle of reciprocal exchange at a set price and replaces it with a model of free give and take. For the poorest members of society in particular, the sidewalk is a significant source of supply at times of financial difficulty. Géraldine, for example, who has been out of work for several months, shows that recovering equipment or necessities from the sidewalk compensates for problems with accessing the conventional marketplace.

For me, everything on the sidewalk is always good to take. The types of objects that I collect are clothes for me and my children, household appliances and furniture, even books sometimes. The reason is that they are absolutely necessary for me, otherwise I wouldn't do it. I don't do it for fun. (Géraldine)

The sidewalk also provides an exchange system that liberates both disposers and gleaners from calculations. While disposers avoid the need and constraints to sell their possessions, gleaners are freed from their obligation to pay for goods. Amandine, a regular buyer of second-hand goods, sees the sidewalk as a place apart that, even more so than flea markets (Belk et al., 1988; Sherry, 1990), releases her from the guilt associated with spending.

There's something rather magical, rather mystical about BIC days that doesn't exist anywhere else. That's why I think finding things there is much better than buying something. If money's involved, the burden of the object weighs on you. You have to pay more attention if you buy it. In a secondhand market I wouldn't buy something that is simply beautiful but not of any use to me. On the sidewalk, you can take something, then put it back on the next pile and say 'I don't want it any longer.' (Amandine)

Second, the artistic criticism condemns the disenchantment of the world and the alienation of consumer society and, conversely, values creativity, autonomy, and authenticity (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). Several informants, such as Joël, express this type of criticism; their artistic training predisposes them to revisit the concept of waste. As an artist, Joël often re-uses materials for his own creative projects. He also retrieves pieces of furniture that he finds stylish or valuable. For him, these objects have real aesthetic potential; gleaning helps compensate for the waste produced by the throwaway society.

I feel that people throw things away easily because they are objects without value, lots of not very expensive things which they tire of quickly. But ignorant people can get rid of very valuable things. They throw them away because they're out of date. (Joël)

Third, social criticism condemns the relations of domination and exploitation of labor by capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005). Catherine, for example, deplores the lack of consideration for those who made products, testifying to people's efforts invested in them.

When I see these things on the sidewalk, I'm aware of the work that has gone into them and it distresses me that they have been abandoned. There's work, time and value embodied in these abandoned objects. Globalization creates ephemeral products with ephemeral materials, ephemeral processes and ephemeral people. It's waste that I have no wish to contribute to. (Catherine)

Apart from its relationship with products, Catherine also deplors how consumer society and “liquid modernity” (Bauman, 1995) lead to the destruction not only of objects but also of people whose lives become transient.

Fourth, environmental criticism condemns the waste and over-consumption that is polluting the planet and destroying its ecosystems. Vincent, who defines himself as a “recycling expert,” makes use of BIC days to collect, repair, and restore objects left out in his neighborhood, thereby giving them a new life.

Everything I come across, I repair it if necessary and I give it away to the people around me. At home, we don't throw things away. So we make and repair. We weren't brought up with this idea of waste. It's so obvious that we're heading towards disaster if we continue to consume without restraint. (Vincent)

This practice, made possible by the BIC system and its spatial framework, shows that the sidewalk compensates in various ways for the pitfalls of the consumer society.

Discussion

In this article, we have explored the theoretical value of the concept of heterotopia and more specifically of parasite heterotopia, to account for how the meaning of places may be shifted. The sidewalk is a quintessential heterotopic space, as defined by Foucault (1986). While the BIC system tolerates a temporary occupation of public space, such liberality makes the sidewalk a place of “effectively enacted utopia,” in which consumer society is “simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (Foucault, 1986: 24). By making visible an abundance of miscellaneous, often dilapidated, but free objects, the sidewalk on BIC days presents a mirror and inverted image of the market society. It is a de facto organization of an unspoken system of circulation between those who, for reasons of convenience, dispose of unwanted items and those who retrieve them, variously extending the lifetimes of the objects, respecting their spirit, finding new uses for them, or simply putting

them back into working order. It is an anti-market system, operating in public spaces, that perfectly illustrates the concept of heterotopia (Foucault, 1986).

But because this provisioning system also reflects and challenges the market society on its own territory, we introduce the concept of parasite heterotopias—spaces that are temporarily appropriated by the tactical use of regulated places, thus reflecting and contesting a dominant ordering (Hetherington, 1997). This concept helps theorize the tactical and temporal dimensions of urban space as it is practiced (“perceived”) (Lefebvre, 1991).

Our concept of parasite heterotopia thus enriches previous literature on space, resistance, and heterotopias in three ways. First, it emphasizes the entanglement of space and time (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008), showing that the uses of places align with temporal slicing. For example, BIC not only creates “fully visible territories that exist within the urban fabric of public spaces” (Allweil and Kallus, 2008: 193), but these places also come into being through the time-space thereby created.

Second, it helps theorize the tactical character of urban spaces as practiced (Chatzidakis et al., 2012). It shows that using a public space in an alternative way involves opportunities (De Certeau, 1984), a dimension that has been neglected in previous research (Dehaene and De Caeter, 2008; Hetherington, 1997). Disposers’ and gleaners’ tactical and deviant uses of the sidewalk, though likely to occur at any time, illustrate how the particular time-space or chronotope (Bakhtin, 1981) provided by the BIC system creates “the chance offerings of the moment” (De Certeau, 1984: 37). It thus underlines how the unexpected appropriation of urban predefined spaces may be of interest for the question of consumer resistance. As in the “arts of resistance” (Scott, 1990), disposers and gleaners silently organize a provisioning system behind the market’s back—incidentally preventing municipalities from making profits from the recycling of valuable materials. Moreover, it shows that the non-conforming use of the BIC system fosters alternative or sustainable provisioning practices. In

so doing, it enriches literature on heterotopic places for consumers' ethical and sustainable practices (Chatzidakis et al., 2012).

Third, our concept complements literature on heterotopias, which focuses mainly on those located at a certain distance from the dominant spaces they aim to subvert, not those at the margins of society. In our study, the discrepancy between what is allowed on the sidewalk on BIC days and what actually takes place is precisely what creates a parasitic heterotopia, that is, a space that is appropriated for challenging the consumer society and showing it as illusory. By demonstrating that the sidewalk both mirrors and contests the dominant ordering, we advocate for a more inclusive approach of heterotopias as spaces of illusion *and* compensation, a configuration that Foucault (1986) presented as mutually exclusive.

Limitations and conclusion

We re-examine the concept of heterotopias in marketing and consumption studies. By exploring the theoretical value of Foucault's (1986) seminal conceptualization, we shed light on parasite heterotopias as counter-spaces that are temporarily and tactically appropriated to challenge the prevalent ordering on its own terrain.

This first empirical investigation of parasite heterotopias calls for a deeper exploration of various tactical appropriations of public space. For example, our study excludes professional gleaners (those who retrieve items mainly for financial reasons) because their motivations are very different from those of regular gleaners. We also exclude food gleaning, because this seems to occur with a (more or less) tacit agreement from merchants and retailers and does not create the same parasitic use of space as BIC. However, these contexts may contribute to clarify theory about the boundaries of parasite heterotopias.

Another limitation entails the cultural and geographical setting of our case studies. The paper focuses on the Paris area, and BIC days likely are managed differently in different cities

and countries. For instance, in the United Kingdom, disposers generally have to make an appointment with municipal services to remove their items. This solution limits visual pollution on the sidewalks and minimizes the negative impacts of BIC on image territory (LaGrange et al., 1992; Warr, 1990).

The concept of the parasite heterotopia opens fruitful avenues for further research. First, it provides an impetus for exploring how regulated public spaces are appropriated to criticize market society, as shown by the Occupy Wall Street social movement (Hammond, 2015) or the “la repasse” phenomenon (Fuschillo and Cova, 2015). It also questions whether parasite heterotopias can be commercial. Following Serres (1997), we contend that parasitism implies living at the expense of organisms and/or systems from which it draws all its sustenance. Because parasite heterotopias challenge the very heart of the market, commercial parasite activities should be carried out by diverting the regulated use of space to enact an alternative social ordering. From this perspective, street trade may illustrate such commercial parasite heterotopias. For example, Brown (2015) brings to light the various controversies that animate the debate around collective use rights of public space and the informal economy, showing street traders’ claims for space and legal access for urban work to be highly political. This issue also resonates with the recent Uber controversy, in which public spaces have been appropriated by new actors in the sharing economy to challenge the quasi-monopolistic market of traditional taxi companies. From a different angle, our study may allow researchers to account for the various ways in which the marketplace appropriates public places to co-opt anti-market criticisms (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007). We conclude that the concept of parasite heterotopia can help reveal how space is involved in the dialectics of capitalism and criticism (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005).

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Table 1. Profiles of the 19 informants.

Gender	Name	Age	Profession	Family status	Disposer	Gleaner
F	Amandine	22	Plastic arts student	Cohabiting, no children	Yes	Yes
F	Gosia	34	Sales assistant	Cohabiting, no children	Yes	Yes
F	Bérénice	41	Professor	Married, 3 children	Yes	Yes
F	Léa	45	Project leader in a ministry	Married, 2 children	Yes	Yes
F	Anne	50	Researcher	Married, no children	Yes	Yes
F	Muriel	50	Teacher	Married, 2 children	Yes	Yes
M	Vincent	38	Customer department manager	Divorced, 2 children	Yes	Yes
M	Eddy	23	Temporary gardener	Cohabiting, no children	Yes	Yes
M	Stéphane	49	Teacher	Married	Yes	Yes
M	Joël	61	Painter	Married, no children	Yes	Yes
F	Géraldine	30	Unemployed	Divorced, 2 children	No	Yes
F	Patricia	54	Secretary	Married, 3 children	No (exceptional)	Yes
F	Catherine	58	Project leader at the Ministry of Culture	Married, 3 children	No	Yes
F	Héloïse	28	Student	Single	Yes (exceptional)	No
F	Hélène	30	Unemployed sales assistant	Cohabiting, no children	Yes	No
M	Axel	30	Webmaster	Cohabiting, no children	Yes	No
M	Paul	34	Illustrator	Married, one child	Yes	No
M	Philippe	42	Computer scientist	Married, 2 children	Yes	No
M	Laurent	75	Retired	Married, 3 children	Yes	No



Figure 1. Illustration of the variety of items deposited (waste and re-usable).



Figure 2. Items taking up space on the sidewalk on BIC days.



Figure 3. Appealing objects in good condition (left) and broken or dilapidated (right).



Figure 4. Situations in which items are arranged to encourage their removal. A gleaner takes a clock left in a prominent position by a disposer (left and middle pictures). On the right, a TV bears a note saying ‘In working order.’