



Making theory and practice in subsistence markets: An analytic autoethnography of MASAZI in Accra, Ghana[☆]

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ABSTRACT

This paper responds to the need for greater research in subsistence markets that engage new and innovative approaches to scholarship, in particular those that involve initiatives based on interactions between scholars and communities. On the basis of an analytic autoethnography conducted at a social venture in Accra, Ghana, the author empirically explores third space, or third space at work. Third space is defined as a momentary space between one's day-to-day world and other worlds. Building on recent literature that argues for a conception of third space that is less temporary and that allows one to be both here *and* there, this study uses blending, resistance, and negotiation to demonstrate the on-going making of theory and practice. The study also reveals that third space at work may occur on a continuum of in-betweenness and may be shared. The findings are relevant to scholars, practitioners, and global citizens.

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1. Introduction: the need for third space in subsistence markets

“Those critical voices who speak for the poor, the vulnerable, the dispossessed, and the marginalised in the international fora in which global policies are made lack the means to produce a systematic grasp of the complexities of globalization. A new architecture for producing knowledge about globalization could provide the foundations of a pedagogy that closes this gap and helps to democratize the flow of knowledge about globalization itself. Such pedagogy would create new forms of dialogue between academics, public intellectuals, activists, and policy-makers in different societies.”

—Appadurai (2000, 18)

In one of his many provocative and inspiring pieces, Appadurai (2000) acknowledges the need for more innovative approaches to grassroots research on globalization and for researchers to “step back from the obsessions and abstractions that constitute [their] own professional practice to seriously consider the problems of the global everyday” (Appadurai, 2000, 17). Other scholars have made similar arguments specifically about the study of subsistence markets and consumers (Prahalad, 2006; Viswanathan and Rosa, 2007). In the

marketing discipline, increasing interest in transformative research (Mari, 2008) and transformative research projects (e.g. Viswanathan et al., 2007) highlights the growing number of scholars committed to research agenda characterized by the intent to respect, uphold, and improve life (Mick, 2006). Today, an understanding prevails that poverty, marginality, social inequity, rural-to-urban migration, globalization, and a host of other issues—often pervasive to many subsistence markets—necessitate that efforts to understand and effect change in these markets engage both traditional and more contemporary approaches to scholarship. A need now exists for what is termed *third space*, that is, spaces that blend scholarship and practice to yield the making of both theory and practice.

Academics, acting both as scholars and as global citizens, are no longer bound to Bourdieu's (1988) observation that “taking academic practices and insights beyond the academy and making them available in sharable doable ways undermines the system which provides and maintains academics' power” (Fuller and Kitchin, 2004, p. 7). Today, many scholars now seek the duality of writing *and* living theory (Routledge, 1996). The efforts of Viswanathan (2007) and Viswanathan et al. (2008) to provide education and disseminate educational materials that enable entrepreneurial and consumer literacy among low-literate, low-income buyers and sellers in India and the United States through the Marketplace Literacy Project (<http://www.marketplaceliteracy.org>) is but one of many successful demonstrations of how scholarship and advocacy may be blended in ways that contribute both to theory and to marketplace sustainability.

Third space is defined as a momentary space between one's day-to-day world and other worlds (Bhabha, 1994), and is conceptualized as a site at which theory and practice coexist, where third space is liminal (van Gennep, 1909/1960) and “betwixt and between the categories of ordinary social life” (Turner, 1974, p. 51). For scholars,

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third space, then, is the space between the world of the academy and the world of research. For example, Routledge (1996, p. 400), in his appropriately titled “Third Space as Critical Engagement,” used his own experiences conducting research on and participating in a protest against motorway expansion in a city’s largest green space to elaborate on third space as a temporary site in between here and there; a site “where we [scholars] may negotiate the locations of academy and activism.” More recently, however, others have posited that third space is less temporary, noting how scholars may be both here and there and “may occupy ongoing in-between positions that enable them to maintain sustained relationships with places of research” (DeBerry-Spence, 2008). This paper builds on these previous works and aims to empirically examine third space theory, or third space at work, which refers to the simultaneous making of theory and practice. I document third space at work through an analytic autoethnography that uses the example of the MASAZI Visitor and Welcome Centre, a social venture I established in Accra, Ghana. In 2005, the MASAZI center opened at the Centre for National Culture. The opening ceremony marked not only the beginning of a social venture intended to contribute positively to the economic and social dynamics of the marketplace but also the beginning of my own enactment of third space at work.

In documenting my own third space at work, I contribute to a small but much needed literature stream that explores third space from the perspective of marketing scholarship and respond to the need for research to engage a bottom-up understanding of subsistence markets (Viswanathan et al., 2008). This paper also contributes to current conceptualizations of third space by demonstrating how third space can both occur on a continuum of in-betweenness and be shared. I begin by setting forth the methodology for the study, and then provide an overview of the context of inquiry. Next, I present empirical data demonstrating third space at work. Finally, I offer concluding remarks.

2. Methodology

The context herein for exploring third space at work is an analytic autoethnography of my own experience with the MASAZI Visitor and Welcome Centre in Accra, Ghana, during a period of two and a half years. Analytic autoethnography is defined as “research in which the researcher is (1) a full member of the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in published texts, and (3) committed to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena” (Anderson, 2006, 373). This method differs from autoethnography, in which the researcher may not necessarily be a full member of the group or setting and the data may not necessarily include data other than the ethnographer’s own experiences.

Autoethnographic methods are commonly used in the social sciences (Denzin, 2003). The writings of evocative autoethnographers in sociology like Bochner and Ellis (2001), Ellis (1997, 2004), and Ellis and Bochner (2000), as well as postmodern qualitative researchers such as Denzin (1989, 1997) and Richardson (1994) have helped enhance the understanding of this innovative methodology and encourage its use. In marketing, ethnography is a widely accepted methodological approach, used for both theoretical development and empirical examination and has been employed in market studies involving African subsistence markets and/or consumers (e.g., Arnould, 2001; Arnould and Mohr, 2005; Bonsu and Belk, 2003; Bonsu and DeBerry-Spence, 2008). Autoethnography, including the techniques and approaches subsumed, have been both discussed and used in marketing research (e.g., Holbrook, 1995, 2005, 2006; Gould, 1991, 1995; Wallendorf and Brucks, 1993). Furthermore, as Ozanne and Saatcioglu (2008) observe, a variety of different research approaches are currently used in consumer research that aim to understand and engage local peoples, places, and opportunities.

In recent years, autoethnography has been associated primarily with the descriptive, literary approach of evocative autoethnography,

where the key goal is the creation of emotional resonance with the reader based on “narrative fidelity to and compelling description of subjective emotional experiences” (Anderson, 2006, 377). This approach does *not* reflect the methods I employ in this research. Instead, I use the term *analytic* to reflect what Anderson (2006, 387) refers to as the “data-transcending practices that are directed toward theoretical development, refinement, and extension” (see also Lofland, 1995; Snow et al., 2003). Consistent with this articulation, I use analytic autoethnography for the purpose of exploring and refining third-space theory.

Analytic autoethnographic methods are useful in studies that examine scholar orientation *and* the social world. Given this paper’s exploration of third space theories at work (i.e., the experience of scholars being both here and there), autoethnography in this case is not only appropriate but also essential to giving voice to the unique insider insights and meanings needed to comprehend the experience of making theory and practice. Moreover, autoethnography is a particularly well-suited methodology for studies where the researcher has initiated and realized an entrepreneurial venture (Johannisson, 2002), as is the case in this study.

Anderson (2006) identifies five features of analytic ethnography: (1) complete member–researcher status (CMR), (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher’s self; (4) dialogue with informants beyond the researcher’s self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis. The work presented in this paper meets each of these criteria. With respect to the first feature, during the two and half years of this research I served as founder and executive director of MASAZI, a visitor and welcome center I opened at the National Centre for Culture; therefore, I am a marketplace vendor, or CMR. I am held to the same rules of operation as other vendors in the marketplace, both official and unofficial. The remarks of fellow market vendors who routinely state in Twi, “ɔwɔ ha,” which loosely translated means, “She is here” or “She is with us,” captures my status. My CMR status is also reflected in the presentation of the data in this paper, where I refer to myself as a vendor and use the pronouns ‘we’ and ‘our’ to refer to myself and fellow vendors. Furthermore, although my experiences in this marketplace began as a visitor and researcher on theories of meaning creation, my position as a market vendor preceded my decision to conduct research on theories of third space. In fact, only because of my experiences as a vendor was I able to encounter the third space.

With respect to the second feature, Anderson (2006, 383) notes how analytic autoethnography involves a “shift to more obvious and potentially deeper informative reciprocity between the researcher and other group members.” By virtue of my position as a CMR, I am in many ways bound to the belief and value systems of fellow vendors; over the past two years, this has allowed for sustained reflexivity. I documented my own thoughts and reflections as field notes, including comments about my own behavior, thoughts, and opinions as well as those on other marketplace vendors.

With respect to the third feature, unlike conventional ethnography, in which the researcher plays the role of participant–observer but keeps an eye toward maintaining an invisible role in the context, the positions of founder and vendor do not always allow me such invisibility. Instead, I am both personally and professionally engaged with the marketplace under study. Over the course of two years, I spent five months working on-site in the marketplace. I should note that is not uncommon for vendors to travel for extended periods of time (e.g., to tend to sick relatives, to manage family affairs in villages). My time in the market was spent both enacting ethnographic modes of data collection and analysis and executing responsibilities related to daily business operations. The latter primarily consisted of acting as a guest greeter, salesperson, buyer, inventory manager, and popcorn and refreshment server. When not physically on-site, I participated via phone several times a day, every day, with other vendors, suppliers, etc. These calls included discussing such topics as market activities,

order/delivery status, inventory management, customer service, personnel and other general business issues.

Concerning the fourth feature, the research presented in this paper is “grounded in self-experience, but reaches beyond it as well” (Anderson, 2006, 386). In addition to observations, I included data from vendors working in the marketplace, the Centre for National Culture administration, and MASAZI employees. I also attended meetings with various government officials. Occasionally, I included photographs of vendors and market activities and MASAZI video as data. I also included as data documents and materials obtained from the Ghana National Archives, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ghana Tourist Board and the National Board for Small-Scale Industries.

Last, consistent with the fifth feature, the end goal of my research agenda is not to “evoke an emotional response” (Anderson, 2006, 387) but to examine theory.

3. Context of inquiry

3.1. The Centre for National Culture

Located in the heart of the capital city of Ghana, Accra, the Centre for National Culture is locally referred to as the arts center. Established in 1982 under the direction of the National Commission on Culture, the arts center is an outgrowth of the Arts Council of Ghana (Botchway, 1993), which “engages in programmes and activities that aim to develop, preserve and promote Ghanaian Arts and Culture” (MASAZI, 2005).

The arts center is an open market and as one of the largest arts and crafts markets in Ghana is primarily comprised of microbusinesses that sell an array of cultural products, such as carvings, textiles,

paintings, and drums (Fig. 1). The National Board for Small-Scale Industries (Accra, Ghana Office) defines microbusinesses as those businesses with one to three employees. In Ghana, microbusinesses play an important part in the country’s long-term strategy to reduce poverty; moreover, small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) constitute the predominant percentage of the Ghanaian economy (Adei, 2003). In addition to microbusinesses, skilled individual artisans work in the areas of painting, pottery, drumming, theater, and dance. Generally speaking, the four main areas of the arts center are (1) visual and performing arts, (2) textiles (e.g., kente cloths, clothing, purses), (3) carvings (e.g., wood carvings), and (4) administration. By the most recent count, the marketplace houses more than 400 shops (or booths) and more than 750 workers (for a picture of a typical booth, see Appendix A). Women account for only about 20% of the workers. Vendors working in the marketplace belong to the visual and performing arts association, the textile association, or the carving association and are bound to the governing rules (e.g., the types of products they can sell) of each respective association. In addition to the aforementioned operations, the center maintains an array of unofficial operations and activities with significant visible presence in the marketplace (e.g., sleeping quarters, eateries, quick-serve sellers, preachers, beauty salons, barbers, shoe repairs).

The arts center is the most visited tourist destination in Ghana, and according to the Ghana Ministry of Tourism, most of the more than 600,000 tourists that visit Ghana each year spend some time here. The largest groups of international visitors are overseas Ghanaians and Nigerians, followed by British, Americans, and Germans (Ghana Tourist Board, 2003). Local residents also frequently shop the marketplace or attend its cultural performances. During high seasons

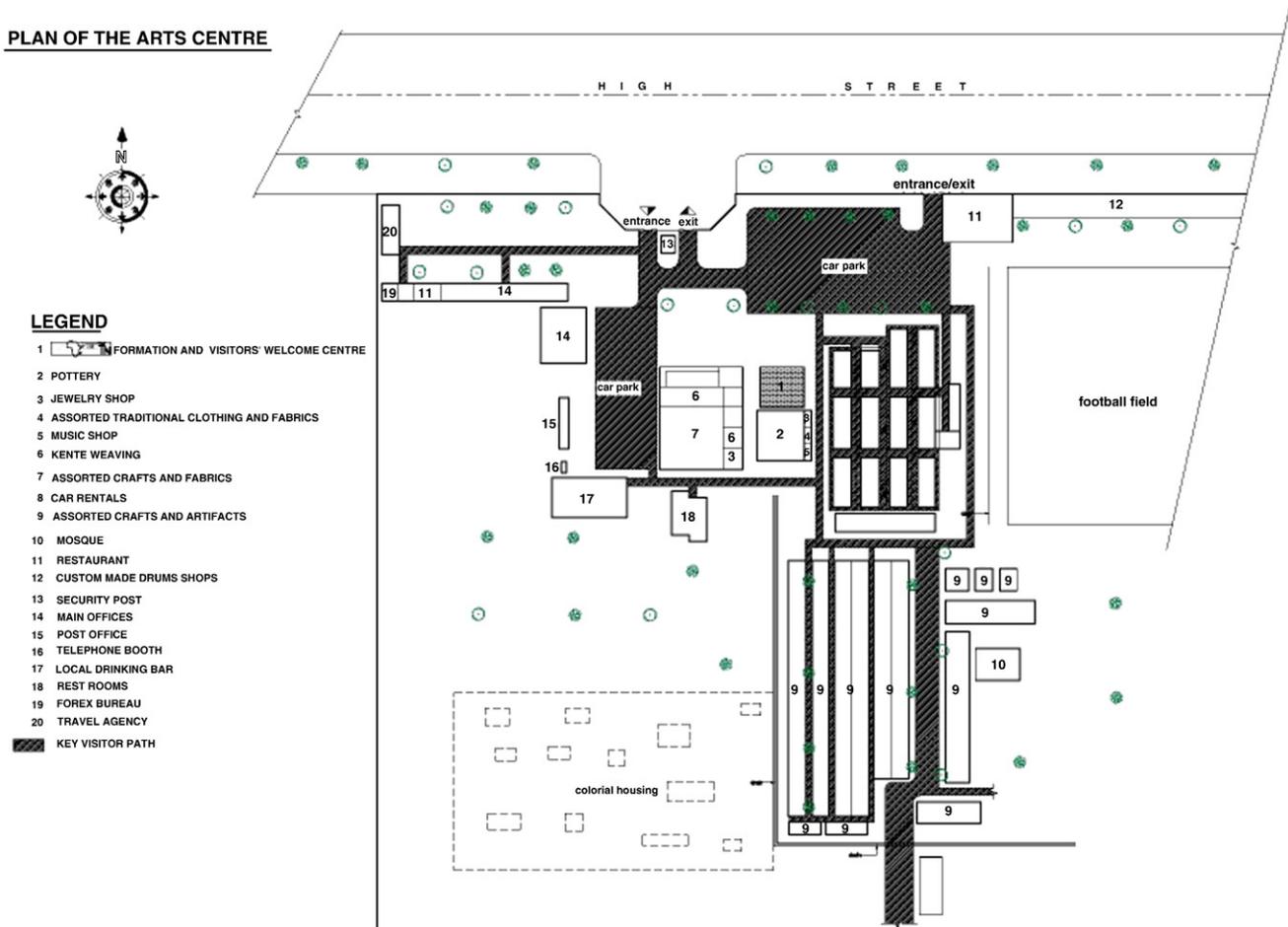


Fig. 1. Centre for National Culture.

(February, June–August, December; Ghana Tourist Board, 2003) on any given day, the market may be abuzz with a mixture of visitors from around the world or busloads of a single tourist group. However, during the low season, the market can be quite slow.

3.2. The MASAZI Visitor and Welcome Centre

The MASAZI Visitor and Welcome Centre is a social venture; that is, a for-profit business based on social objectives. I established this venture in 2005 after having spent time in the market as part of another research project. Through my involvement in the market, I learned firsthand about the complex, complicated dynamics of open markets, as well as the difficulties sellers and buyers face in subsistence markets. In particular, I became keenly aware of how cultural differences and economic imbalances often result in less-than-optimal buyer–seller experiences and financial outcomes. I also came to appreciate the need for marketing research and marketing scholars to better understand and serve subsistence markets (Arnould and Mohr, 2005; Viswanathan and Rosa, 2007). I recognized that, as a scholar, I have the opportunity to contribute to change and to the market's betterment through my work both in the academy and beyond the academy.

With this in mind, MASAZI was established with the following purposes: (1) to provide a cultural transition space for consumers visiting Ghana that encourages a longer stay and an enjoyable visitor experience in the marketplace, (2) to facilitate economic growth for market vendors at the Centre for National Culture and the surrounding communities, and (3) to contribute to existing efforts to create platforms for positive cross-cultural and intercultural interactions between buyers and sellers. I also had more personal objectives that I wanted to achieve, which included making a contribution to discourses that promote positive perceptions of Africa and encouraging responsible investment in African countries.

MASAZI comprises three main areas: an information center that provides visitors with maps of the arts center, tourism brochures and materials, and other information on Ghana; a large outdoor, covered porch that offers refreshments to visitors and vendors (the refreshments are priced to be affordable for market vendors); and a shop carrying authentic, premium-quality African clothing, jewelry, and other products. MASAZI engages in fair business and trade practices and works with only suppliers that are microbusinesses. The intent is to provide entrepreneurs with a steady flow of capital that they can use to grow their own businesses. Since its inception, MASAZI has grown from working with fewer than ten suppliers to doing business with more than fifty suppliers.

The success of MASAZI during its first three years of operation has been incredible; and overall the project has achieved its original purposes and intentions. The project has also served the important purpose for me of demonstrating how my work outside of the academy strengthens and reinforces the need for what I do inside the academy.

4. Third space at work

In this section I journey through experiences with MASAZI and third space at work. Capturing all the experiences of third space is not possible, so I center my presentation around one of the most pressing issues facing both buyers and sellers in this subsistence marketplace; one that necessarily calls attention to the role of humanity in business. Each section intentionally flows into the next, without final summaries, emphasizing the continuity of events. This approach also allows me to provide readers with a more in-depth illustration of the blending, resistance, and negotiation that are dimensions and practices inherent to third space at work. This sets the stage for further discussion of third space as occurring on a continuum of in-betweenness and in shared spaces.

4.1. Blending

One of the most pressing issues facing vendors in the marketplace is the need for working bathrooms. This may seem odd that something so personal and so often taken for granted in many developed nations could take on such importance in a place of business—but this has. Access to clean water and water in general is often scarce, as the water is turned off for some period of time nearly every day and water must be purchased to fill up the water tanks. Thus, toilets cannot function and must be closed off and locked for sanitation purposes. A direct link between bathrooms and business exists, one that reveals the interconnectness and blending of business and humanity. Without restrooms, customers cannot stay for long periods of time in the market and often leave without completing their shopping, which means that vendors make less money. This is especially problematic for the arts center, as many consumers are nonlocals and frequently suffer from the dreaded traveler's diarrhea. Vendors too, must often leave for similar reasons. The following example from my field notes speaks to the magnitude of this problem:

When the tour bus turned into the market, I was surprised and relieved. The market had been incredibly dull for the past two days. Not only had sales been slow, but Trade Fair Grand Sales [a biannual event that competes for customers with this market] is going to start in a few weeks—so I needed the money to pay tailors to sew now, before they got too busy with other orders. I eagerly took my position standing at the front of the porch, hoping the bus would park somewhere near the visitor shop. It didn't, but to my delight the bus is full—at least twenty-five or thirty visitors. They all got off and started off in the direction of the textile market. As usual, the textile folks rushed and so I called [to the customers]. Most didn't respond, but two women looked at me and I walked out to them. One of them explained she was sick and needed to use the bathroom. I explained that the water is off and this means they have two options: go to the sea or hold it. The look on both their faces was the usual look of shock and despair. I've seen it hundreds of times. Both ladies returned to the bus. About fifteen minutes later the bus started sounding the horn, which meant the bus is leaving and everyone should return to the bus. I'm FURIOUS!!!! Once again, the bathroom had beaten us. The bathroom had succeeded in shortening what would have been at least a two-hour stay in the market to less than thirty minutes—barely even enough time to bargain for a key chain.

Amazingly, one of the most basic human needs has found its way into global markets to disrupt buyer–seller transactions and to expose humanity as an embedded element within business. This is frustrating for customers exposed for the first time to the reality of the importance of bathrooms, but even more frustrating for those forced to deal with this inconvenience on a daily basis. Frequently, frustration levels among vendors are high, and shouting and arguing about how to deal with the issue ensue. On one such occasion, Kofi, a vendor in the market for eight years, offered the following remarks: “How can we take care of the customers?... Take care of us... [of] customers and us. Give them good service and make them remember Ghana? Is it possible? Tell me. Why are we here if we are not here to do business?” On this occasion, Kofi eventually packed up his goods and left work for the day.

As a vendor I share in this frustration, yet the blending of humanity makes me also feel a sense of guilt. Global citizens and scholars have failed one another; and marketers have become so consumed with consumption and the study of consumption, that often little room is left for compassion, caring, and humanity. In the case of the arts center, this is often not until the buying and selling of culture is interrupted that one confronts the reality that business and humanity are indeed intermixed. The following excerpt from my field notes illustrates this blending of business and humanity:

Today, MASAZI was soooo busy, especially for a Sunday. Emmanuel and the lady that sells bags around the corner even had to come in and help me, because it was only me and Zoë [my daughter] there. There was a group of faculty and students from Yale and a bus of students from Nigeria. We were making good sales and they were discussing their research with me when a child of a customer said she couldn't hold it anymore and had to use it [the bathroom]. Upon hearing her say this, one of the other customers said she had to go too. Oh Gosh!!! Why now? Of all times, why did this child have to use it now? There were too many customers in here to turn the dressing room into a 'make shift' restroom. Why did she have to go and spoil it for the rest of the group? Every time we start to get something going here, something has to go and ruin it. The child messed up her dress. I felt bad and gave her mother a big discount on a new dress and took a loss.

A reflective reading of this text reveals how easily one may get carried away with the economics of the marketplace, numb to its nonfiscal inner workings—even when they deal directly with meeting customers' needs. Somehow a discount does not seem the appropriate corrective or substitute for humanity. As researcher and vendor I struggle with this issue. Yet working in the third space (i.e., at MASAZI) provides me with a site from which I can investigate these imbalances and opens up an accommodating space for the hybrid and sometimes conflicting identities of vendor, scholar, and global citizen. I am at once allowed to document and study the inner workings of this marketplace and to simultaneously engage in business and advocate a social agenda with my fellow vendors.

4.2. Resistance

Over the past year, the arts center community's perspectives have shifted on the reasons restrooms are necessary. The bathroom is no longer viewed as a mere roadblock to "cash", but become an essential component of customer service and a basic right that workers deserve. As a community, we have become more organized in our approaches to dealing with the need for functioning bathrooms and together we have engaged in several acts to make our voices and needs heard. In July 2006, the tracking of visitor requests and suggestions began, including requests for restroom facilities (Appendix B). Given the need for a central documentation repository, issues of illiteracy, and the large number of visitors that stop at the visitor and welcome center, MASAZI was the primary tracking site. Kwame, a textile shop owner smiled and remarked, "Finally, there would be proof... proof that we need bathrooms for our customers." And, as the field notes here may show, even I could not help myself from delighting in the thought of surprising administration with this information:

Charles from Admin just left here, talking about the availability of tourist brochures and what not. I think he was just fishing for some information. I kept thinking, "We got 'em now." We're [vendors] going to have just what we need to get their attention. It won't be the same old talking and talking and talking and then someone over at the other administration saying they thought the bathroom issue was already taken care of. When we show them, they will be shocked [smiles]. We're getting our acts together now, so they're forced to get theirs [together]. They'll be forced to see who we are and what we mean by business. Imagine that. Imagine, we can use it [the restrooms] and keep customers happy too. Hmmm.

To all involved, feelings of empowerment emerged. The simple act of tracking customer restroom requests was liberating and enabled vendors to resist the administration's dismissive attitudes toward vendor rights. In addition, the collective efforts enabled us to resist the

identities imposed on us by visitors, administration and others, and to move towards a shared understanding of our role in the marketplace. Vendors were not merely sellers of cultural wares but important stakeholders in the representation of this market and Africa to its global visitors. The customer tracking document became a tool to highlight vendor injustices and offered a way to push vendor needs into broader discourses of marketing the marketplace, developing tourism, and branding the country—all of which are key issues for the success and sustainability of the arts center.

About a month into the tracking process, however, among some vendors, sentiments grew that tracking was not enough. Customers kept coming and they kept leaving quickly. Vendors' sense of taking control began to dissipate, and several desired that more be done to legitimize both vendor and customer needs. Writing down requests no longer seemed enough. I also noticed that vendors were making fewer efforts to track properly, and I feared slipping back into the passive act of complaining as the only means of resistance. Back at one of the carving shops, I came upon an intense bargaining session between a husband and wife and vendor that had been under way for about 15 min. A husband and wife had teamed up as 'good cop' and 'bad cop' to negotiate for four wood carvings that had just been repolished to the couple's liking and were now being wrapped. Standing just outside of the shop was the couple's young daughter and the wife's mother. The outcome of the discussion became our next step. The following reconstructs that day's event:

KWASI (shop owner): So, I want you to have this. So how much will you pay?
 WIFE: I like it, but like I said, it's just like the one the guy in the back shop offered me.
 HUSBAND: Well, it's slightly different, so I think 180,000 cedis [about US\$20] is fair.
 KWASI: Oh, my friend, 180 is no good. I treat you nicely here. It's cool. You look, we polish them and I want you to have a good price. But, 180 is no good. Make it 220. 220 is good.
 WIFE: Well, we'll come back later. Will you be here tomorrow? We have to go now. I need to use the bathroom. Where is that? I'll just go and they can wait for me and then we can finish.
 KWASI: Let us finish business first. 220 is a good price. This wood is quality. It is quality wood and will not crack.
 HUSBAND: Where is your bathroom? We'll just go there and come back. My wife needs to go.
 KWASI: Let me direct you to the administration. They have facilities there. You can use the bathroom there.

Kwasi subsequently directed the customers to the administrative building, knowing full well that bathrooms were there but not working, and knowing that the customers would not be back to buy the carvings—he would simply hang them up again and wait for the next customer to come along.

I smiled and took bittersweet solace in the fact that although a potential sale was lost, the administration would now have to deal with an unsatisfied customer. In fact, I did not feel one bit bad. But should I have felt badly? After all, not only the foreign tourists seeking arts and crafts souvenirs from trips to Ghana kept this market going, but also laboring vendors. Our efforts and successes played a significant role in shaping customers' experiences in the market. Moreover, from my previous experience conducting interviews with consumers about country branding, I knew all too well that the vendors' efforts at the arts center contributed to visitors' overall perceptions of Ghana, especially considering that the Centre for

National Culture was often one of the first or last places that many tourists visited.

Once again, the vendors' struggle to obtain working facilities included customers. This time vendor resistance took the form of referring all customers requesting bathrooms to the administration. At times we were passive, sending consumers to the administration only when they asked for the bathroom. On other occasions, we were more aggressive and encouraged customers to "take a break and use the restrooms" that conveniently could be found at the administration building. Clearly nothing was convenient about either the suggestion or the outcome; and this approach was not a long-term solution. Referrals, however, served as a much-needed protest; a protest against the deaf ears of administration and, to some extent, a silent protest directed toward visitors of the marketplace—for these visitors, global citizens, were in many ways just as blind to the repression of vendors as the administration was. They were simultaneously advocates and adversaries, disturbed by the temporary inconveniences caused to them, yet apathetic to the permanent working conditions of those whose wares they so delighted in buying. Through vendor collective resistance, however, we attempted to do away with the rigid boundaries that defined their world and our market.

4.3. Negotiation

Certainly, a nice ending would be that the vendors' combined efforts resulted in the purchasing of water for the water tanks and subsequent working bathroom facilities (i.e., a happy ending), but nothing comes that easy in a subsistence market. Everything must be negotiated—*everything*.

In September 2006, after two months of tracking customers' requests and referring customers to administration, a letter came to me from administration indicating that they had received customer complaints about not being able to get maps of the arts center at MASAZI. I realized right away that efforts to elevate worker needs to issues of customer and marketplace importance had not gone unnoticed and that we were making headway. In all likelihood, customers had not complained about maps; instead, the administration was responding to the effects of customers continuously requesting restrooms. An excerpt from a conversation between another vendor and me gets at the heart of this issue:

- EMMANUEL: They [the administration] see what's going on. They are on the ground. The head office is there, but the administration, we are both here. So, what do you say?
- BENET: I don't know. They didn't just start walking [didn't just become aware of the situation]. They've been here. This isn't anything new. We are all on the ground [we're all here dealing with this].
- EMMANUEL: We need to respond though. You need to talk with them. I have already gone over there, so you need to talk with them and say something too.
- BENET: Talk about what? Are they blind? They are just thinking about something [money] in their pockets. Anyway, I'll talk, but I don't know where to start. I guess we'll respond to their letter and send the tracking data to the folks at the ministry and the head office.
- EMMANUEL: I'll wait... We'll wait for what comes next.

Surprisingly, the letter from administration had caught me off-guard. I had become so comfortably immersed in the struggle that my attention had drifted away from a resolution. Along with the other vendors, I now had to rethink what we really wanted. Although a water supply to create working bathroom facilities remained an issue, a greater desire for something else emerged—the "something else" however, was not fully

defined. What did we really want? Who did we want to be in the market, and how did we want to be there? Our tolerance of the unacceptable hovered over the marketplace and penetrated our thinking. We became aware that maybe something else existed beyond what we had tolerated for so long. Maybe we deserved more. Maybe we were more important than we had even thought. These questions and issues required both reflection and negotiation, yet were clouded by an increased awareness of the complexities of the marketplace. While engaging in this process, the many complexities and contingencies embedded in the marketplace became clearer to me than ever before, as did the subsequent paradox that the closer we moved toward a resolution, the more dissipated the issues became. What was unmistakable was that this dynamism made the identification of a single goal or outcome highly problematic. Moreover, the instability associated with operating in a subsistence market meant that as vendors we were constantly retranslating the social meanings of both place (e.g., the arts center as a global market and a local arts and crafts center) and identity (e.g., vendors as marketplace consumers and producers); in effect, we were 'becoming' for the future. We were (re)translating the present into an unknown future.

I also questioned how I could best contribute as a scholar to the transformation of social relations between vendors and administration, buyers and sellers, locals and nonlocals. Addressing this meant interrogating myself as to my roles as scholar, vendor, and advocate. I concluded that these identities are imbricated, and that MASAZI indeed presented a way for me to negotiate the multiplicities of my roles. MASAZI also provided me with an outlet to better understand and theorize about subsistence markets, as well as to effect and perform change in nonwritten ways. This recognition led me to an answer to the original question posed: what I wanted and what we wanted collectively was a sense of permanency in a market characterized by flux.

Certainly, no single step taken in response to the administration's letter would absolutely resolve the situation; but instead be an attempt to satisfy our own realistic and unrealistic expectations about water supply in the marketplace. We responded to the administration with a letter specifically addressing concerns about the availability of maps of the arts center at MASAZI. We also used the opportunity to introduce the findings of the MASAZI customer tracking information, to send them to the head office and to other high-ranking officials at the Ministry of Tourism, and to incorporate the suggestions and requests into several formal presentations on national tourism development. A group of us met with senior ministry officials to discuss the bathroom and other issues pertaining to vendors, customers, and the marketplace, such as safety, security, and unauthorized solicitors.

And so the negotiation process continued. Several months later the market witnessed the installation of a few portable lavatories that required no water—initially vendors did not support these because of the high usage fee. What is more, the lavatories quickly became unusable because of the odor and a lack of upkeep. More than a year after the initial tracking study, water was purchased for the tanks and the immediacy of the bathroom issue was resolved—for the moment at least. An even greater realization, perhaps, was that the presence and participation of MASAZI in the marketplace was at once an outcome of circumstance and a circumstance influencing an outcome.

5. Conclusion

"There is considerable reason to work on problems that one feels deeply about, and although we approach problems as social scientists, the goals of changing how people perceive problems and suggesting solutions are legitimate."

—Lempert (2001, 26)

As the epigraph to this section suggests, scholarship and advocacy need not be mutually exclusive. The findings from this analytic

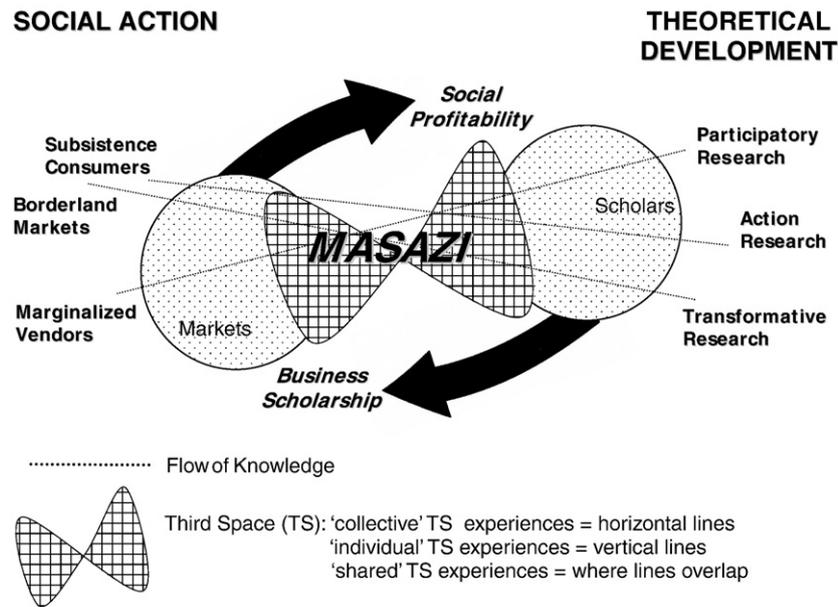


Fig. 2. Third space.

autoethnography powerfully demonstrate this to be the case. Through the examination of subsistence markets like the arts center and social ventures like MASAZI, one witnesses the blending, resistance, and negotiation as intrinsic dimensions and ways of enacting third space at work or making theory and practice. Not surprisingly, then, for those who live in poverty, the economic and noneconomic facets of one's life are often intertwined (Viswanathan, 2007). This research reveals a similar imbrication in the blending of humanity and business as revealed through the issue of water and bathrooms, in the blending of scholarship and practice as evidenced through MASAZI, and in the blending of identities. The latter is observed, for example, when one's role as marketplace producer and consumer overlap or the identities of scholar, advocate, and global citizen become inescapably intertwined within the university system and the marketplace (Sibley, 2004). Contributing to the hybridity of third space at work are acts of resistance and processes of negotiation. Resistance enables the interrogation and breaking down of separation and the binary conditions it creates, whereas negotiation engages us in the rethinking and retranslating of principles to view one's work through different lenses (Bhabha, 1995). Taken together, enacting third space not only allows but also invites paradoxes and contradictions (English, 2005) without transcending or repressing them (Bhabha, 1995), which thus yields the fertile ground necessary to make theory and practice.

The research presented in this paper contributes to theorizing and scholarship in several ways. First, the research provides empirical support that third space may indeed be experienced as an *ongoing* position of being both here *and* there (e.g., global market *and* local arts center; local vendor *and* global citizen; DeBerry-Spence, 2008). This differs from a conceptualization of third space where one is neither here nor there. Moreover, this work moves beyond current conceptions of third space as temporary or short lived (Bhabha, 1994; Routledge, 1996). The acknowledgment of third space in this study seems to benefit scholars with histories of long-term commitments to both the theoretical and the practical agendas of research (e.g., MASAZI) and for individuals who operate in and research subsistence markets, where the global and the local are now both firmly rooted.

A second contribution of this research is the notion of a shared third space that occurs on a continuum of in-betweenness; that is, sometimes third space is experienced individually and other times as more of a collective experience. Recent work by Gutiérrez (2008, 129)

discusses a collective third space characterized by "the ideals and practices of a shared humanity, a profound obligation to others, boundary crossing and intercultural exchange in which difference is celebrated without being romanticized." Several of these characteristics seem apposite, or relevant, especially viewed against the backdrop of the arts center vendors who are situated as both marketplace producers *and* consumers suspended in both the local *and* global and engaging collective resistance and negotiation in the struggle to balance business and humanity. Still, not all the experiences of third space are collective; at times, as scholar-advocate, my experiences of third space differed from those I experienced as a member of a larger group (i.e., vendors) in the marketplace. Furthermore, my experiences of third space as a vendor were not always collective. Thus, Routledge's (1996) perspective that third space is one's own is also relevant.

The conceptualization of third space as both collective and individual illustrates how third space is a continuum of in-betweenness. This also raises the possibility of a shared third space that acknowledges the commonalities of individual third space experiences and the connectedness of one's own experiences of third space with those of others. A shared third space does not mean that everyone involved experiences third space in the same way; instead, a shared third space recognizes the overlaps that occur on the continuum of in-betweenness (Fig. 2).

Finally, a third contribution of this research is its theoretical focus and the methods used. Marketing research is in great need of studies based on collaboration with local constituencies (Denzin, 2001) and grounded in understandings of local opportunities and constraints (Ger, 1997). To this end, third space theory and analytic autoethnography are powerful tools for both the researcher and the researched. Each as a tool aspires to "reduce and circumvent power relations normally involved in research and development" (Kesby, 2005, 2037) and seeks to embrace inclusive visions of reflexivity (Maxey, 1999). They also acknowledge a non-dualistic view of reality as socially sedimented *and* affected by human agency, thus creating the possibility for imaginative and interacting individuals (Johannisson, 2002). Bringing theories of third space and innovative research methods further into the scholarship of business and marketing will provide additional platforms for giving voice to the marginalized, render more comprehensive theorizing and foster greater responsibility as global citizens.

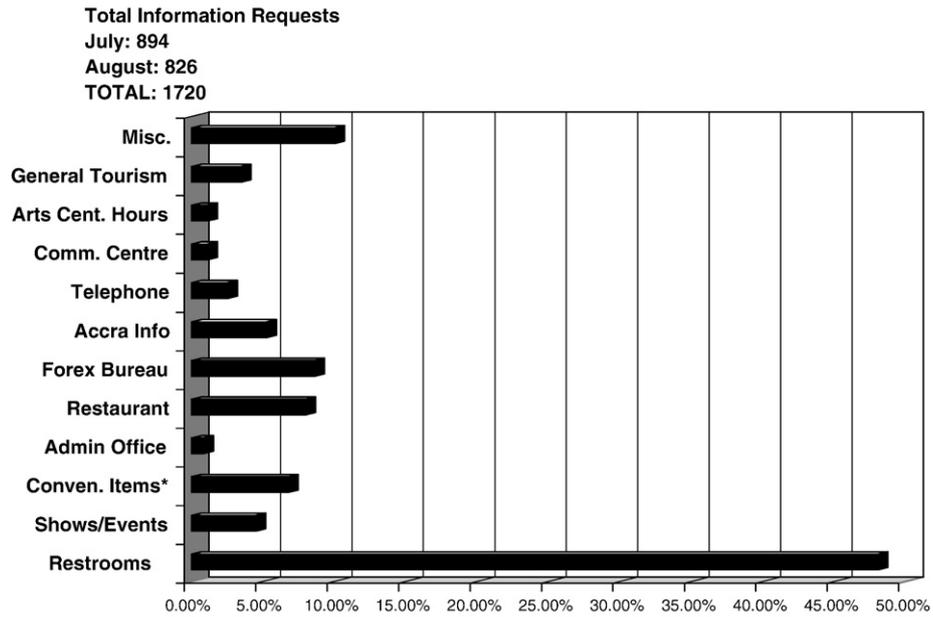
Appendix A

Typical booth/shop



Appendix B

**INFORMATION REQUESTS (%)*
(July/August 2006)**



* Percentages based on information requests, not guest count

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