Subversive Supermarket: Tactical Interjections into the Everyday Experience

Taylor Johnson

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SUPPORTIVE MARKET

TACTICAL INTERVENTIONS IN THE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE

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PRIMARY ADVISOR: BRIAN LONSWAY

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SUBVERSIVE SUPERMARKET
TACTICAL INTERJECTIONS INTO THE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE

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The architecture of the supermarket and the landscape of food production, processing, distribution, and consumption it is situated within, further isolates the relationships consumers have with their food and routines. Investigating the intersection between socio-political and economic constructs that shape the supermarket, the psychology of the interior constructs, and uses of spatial theory to frame architectural tactics of intervention, the thesis aims to embed a narrative subscript into the existing supermarket experience to expand beyond its systemic constructs and user policies.
INTRODUCTION

The interior supermarket experience within is an underwhelming representation of, and with little reference to, the very complex networks and conditions which create it. It lacks reference to where food comes from, where it goes, and what its true role is in modern life, thus perpetuating the lack of knowledge in its consumers. The supermarket stands as a regimented stage set; its users, the consumers, are integral actors in the show. In order to invoke change or progress within the food system’s consumer landscapes and evolve to meet consumer demands of transparency and traceability, its frameworks must be critiqued and challenged from within, to involve itself, and its users, spatially with the fabric of American food production and distribution.

Architecture has the ability to foster processes of discussion, debate, and social production. This thesis contends that architecture can be a narrative tool for understanding, infiltrating to disseminate knowledge, and thus, exposing the socio-political conditions and political economies that govern supermarket structures, their designed sequences, and the consumer-user behaviors within them, creating a greater dialogue between the institutional structures and the everyday users of the space. Its experiential focus ties greatly with user actions and agency.

In order to act within, and beyond, the frameworks, this thesis investigates what constructs currently operate on the current supermarket and the implications of the fragmented distribution, production, and consumption model on consumer agency.

Through a cross section of research, from Tracey Deutche’s historical narrative on the evolution of consumer behavior in relation to the consumer landscapes they operated within, to Michael de Certeau’s theoretization of the everyday, the site of intervention is understood through a tripartite lens of social theory, political history, and economic realities of the food system. To recognize and analyze current conditions, themes, and scalar factors of the supermarket, and the processes that surround it, is integral to situating the project, and will display how economics and politics are spatialized to form the commonplace narrative and behaviors constructed in the modern supermarket.

The thesis will investigate how a superimposed set of architectural tactics can foster an opportunous and empowering, alternative narrative in the modern consumer landscape. Such interventions will be critically situated through the lens of Paco Underhill’s writing on shopping strategies as applied to the supermarket. Tactically subversive design interventions within, and beyond, the confines of the market will be integral to inform the user and create disruptions in shopping routines. Some spatial interventions will create unavoidable confrontations with reality for both users and producers, while others subversively cut, and can only be experienced by those who seek. The design aims to blur the lines between producer and consumer-user, production and consumption, and the authority that lies within roles. By using architectural elements as infiltrative instruments for empowerment, education, and exposure of current strategies, the limits of the supermarket become active opportunities for a politicized user agency and expanded knowledge for the everyday user in the commodified food chain.
"The architecture of shopping is strictly debased, because it reduced to the diagram, and a diagram of the most basic kind... banal, and relentless. One of our tragedies as architecture is that we are unable to deal with and find interest in this domain somehow. Our intelligence is insulted both by the incredible limitations of architectural imagination that the diagram represents, and in a more anxious way, by the fact that we ourselves have no alternative to provide to it."

- Rem Koolhaas

Harvard Design's Guide to Shopping

Through an understanding of the architecture of the supermarket, the supermarket is a hyper-competitive, strategized spatial condition, governed by logistics, economics, and consumer ideals, and born from a mass standardization of the contested grocery store model.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.1 The supermarket is a hyper-competitive, strategized space, governed by logistics, economics, and consumer ideals, and born from a mass standardization of the contested grocery store model.

2.1 In this setting, what logics govern space and how are economics spatialized?

3.1 How does the architecture foster agency of consumption and autonomous empowerment in its users?

3.2 What dialogues, encounters, exchanges, and interactions are created between the institutional structures in charge, and the everyday users of supermarket space?

4.1 How does observing and analyzing the strategized marketing, economics, and psychology of the supermarket, through a spatial lens of de Certeau and others, lend to the framing of situations for and contingencies of intervention and the use of emphasized or ulterior spatial tactics?

5.0 How does the architecture of the supermarket typology respond to current consumer demands?
SUBVERSIVE SUPERMARKET

TOPIC

MOTIVATIONS

CONSUMPTION AND PROBLEMS WITH THE FOOD SYSTEM, UNACKNOWLEDGED BY THE SUPERMARKET'S STRUCTURE

THE INTERIOR EXPERIENCE OF THE SUPERMARKET IS ISOLATED FROM THE SYSTEMIC CONSTRUCTS THAT DEFINE IT, THUS HANDICAPPING THE POTENTIAL OF THE CONSUMER-USER NAVIGATING THROUGH.

SITE OF RESEARCH

SUPERMARKET CONSTRUCT SHAPED BY SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FORCES, ALONG WITH THE LOGISTICS OF THE FOOD SYSTEM

ECONOMICS SPATIALIZED

EXCHANGES BETWEEN POWERS

CAROLYN STEEL: HUNGRY CITY

FOOD SYSTEM CONTEXT

TRACEY DEUTCHE: BUILDING A HOUSEWIFE'S PARADISE

HISTORIC CONTEXT

PACO UNDERHILL: WHY WE BUY

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

R E S E A R C H

PACO UNDERHILL: WHY WE BUY

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES SPATIALIZED

MICHAEL DE CERTEAU: THE PRACTICE OF EVERYDAY LIFE

EMBEDDING TACTICS IN STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

ANALYSIS

FILTERING RESEARCH THROUGH SPATIAL LENS

APPLYING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS TO ANALYSE THE SITE + ITS TYPOLOGY

HYPOTHESIS (TESTING)

tools + methods

narrative/tour

strategy

inversed

for tactical use

point of exchange

instrument for transparency + agency

CRITIQUE/SYNTHESIS

consumer-user

producer

consumer-user

producer

LENS OF USER

REPOLITICIZING ARCHITECTURE OF THE EVERYDAY
TOPIC MOTIVATIONS
CONSUMPTION AND PROBLEMS WITH THE FOOD SYSTEM, UNACKNOWLEDGED BY THE SUPERMARKET'S STRUCTURE

THE INTERIOR EXPERIENCE OF THE SUPERMARKET IS ISOLATED FROM THE SYSTEMIC CONSTRUCTS THAT DEFINE IT, THUS HANDICAPPING THE POTENTIAL OF THE CONSUMER-USER NAVIGATING THROUGH FORCES AT WORK...

SITE OF RESEARCH
SUPERMARKET CONSTRUCT SHAPED BY SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FORCES, ALONG WITH THE LOGISTICS OF THE FOOD SYSTEM ECONOMICS SPATIALIZED EXCHANGES BETWEEN POWERS

AGENCY IN CONSUMPTION

CAROLYN STEEL: HUNGRY CITY FOOD SYSTEM CONTEXT
TRACEY DEUTCHE: BUILDING A HOUSEWIFE'S PARADISE HISTORIC CONTEXT
PACO UNDERHILL: WHY WE BUY ECONOMIC STRATEGIES (spatial theories)
MICHAEL DE CERTEAU: THE PRACTICE OF EVERYDAY LIFE EMBEDDING TACTICS IN STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

ANALYSIS
FILTERING RESEARCH THROUGH SPATIAL LENS APPLYING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS TO ANALYSE THE SITE + ITS TYPOLOGY

HYPOTHESIS (TESTING) TOOLS + METHODS
NARRATIVE/TOUR STRATEGY INVERSED FOR TACTICAL USE POINT OF EXCHANGE INSTRUMENT FOR TRANSPARENCY + AGENCY

CRITIQUE/SYNTHESIS CONSUMER-USER PRODUCER LEAN OF USER

REPOLITICIZING ARCHITECTURE OF THE EVERYDAY
Site of research: Supermarket

Forces at work: Forces shaped by socio-political and economic factors, along with logistics of the food system.

Swedish architect and economic geographer Paco Underhill: Why We Buy

Economic strategies:

Economies spatialized: Exchanges between powers.

Agency in consumption: The everyday.

Carolyn Steel: Hungry City

Hunger context:

Tracey Deutch: Building A Housewife's Paradise

Historic context:

Economic strategies:

Architectural repoliticization of the everyday.
The supermarket is the modern evolution of the urban market, which classified urban markets’ relationship with food. 

CAROLYN STEEL

PROBLEM
Identifying primary, secondary, and tertiary existing conditions, trends, and concerns.

Currently: Segmented Production/Consumption experience

Systemic Problem(s)
Current food system
- Invisible food networks and large-scale food distribution
  - “[Americans] have never seen food’s true potential, because it is too big to see. Viewed laterally, it emerges as something with phenomenal power to transform not just landscapes, but political [policy] structures, public spaces, social relationships, and cities.”
- Supermarket isolated from time and space
  - IF EVERY ACTION HAS AN EQUAL OR OPPOSITE REACTION, WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF IMPULSE BUYING AND EXCESS CONSUMER CULTURE TODAY?

Current Users: Consumers have little understanding of their relationship to a larger ecosystem, larger network of food, or impact/implications of their decisions
- NO, ARCHITECTURE CANNOT SOLVE THIS!
- But, What it can do: work with what we have, intervene into it, understand it, and question it
  - Key: Politics of food consumption and understanding the constructed supermarket landscape
CONTEXT
Situating the Supermarket in Systemic Constructs

FRAMEWORKS TO EXPLORE:
1. HISTORIC
2. ECONOMIC
3. SOCIO-POLITICAL
4. SPATIAL THEMING/NARRATIVE

FOOD SYSTEM //

MASS PRODUCTION: Turned food into a commodity

FOOD DISTRIBUTION: The travelling and tracking of food from its origins on farm or plant, to warehouses, and supermarkets (nodal points in process). Complex, efficient network of trade routes to feed today’s population

FOOD MILES: Distance, effort, time, and energy expended for food to travel from source to processing and supermarket shelves. Michael Pollan argues that 17% of U.S. fossil fuel consumption is used for food

GEOGRAPHY: Encompasses not only the natural terrain which the city sits within and where its food is drawn from, but also the architectural fabric of the city

INDUSTRIAL FOOD: The cost of traditional locally produced food could be described as a real cost compared to the artificially low costs we pay for industrial food

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY: The right to healthy and ethically produced food, a system where those who produce/distribute/consume are at the heart of the system rather than the needs and wants of the corporations (Patel)

SITIOPA: Sitios, meaning food + topoi, meaning place. Sitopia is about understanding the true value of food and what it represents, so nothing could be more central to its cause (Steel)
"FOOD IS A SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATION, A BODY OF IMAGES, A PROTOCOL OF USAGES, SITUATIONS, AND BEHAVIOR." ¹

"...THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT SUPERMARKETS HAVE GOT THE BUSINESS OF FOOD SUPPLY DOWN TO A FINE ART. ADVANCED PRESERVATIVE TECHNIQUES AND TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY HAVE COMBINED TO CREATE THE ILLUSION THAT FEEDING CITIES IS EASY... THE REALITY IS THAT SUPERMARKETS HAVE A STRANGLING HOLD OVER NOT JUST THE GROCERY SECTOR, BUT THE ENTIRE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT SUPPLIES OUR FOOD. WITHOUT THEM, WE WOULD STRUGGLE TO FEED OURSELVES, AND THAT MAKES THEIR POSITION CLOSE TO UNASSAILABLE. ONE OF THE REASONS IT CAN BE HARD TO APPRECIATE THE EFFORT IT TAKES TO FEED A MODERN CITY IS THE SHEER INVISIBILITY OF THE PROCESS..." ²

¹ Barthes, 29.
² Steel, 66-67.
The supermarket is situated in tracing food distribution/life cycle: Infrastructure tracing geography, production, distribution, connected by transportation:
01 Farm
02 Factory
03 Packing Plant
04 Distribution Center
05 Supermarket
06 Consumer's Home
07 Waste Facility/Compost Facility/Recycle Facility
08 Landfill (or) Back into Cycle

Supply chain transportation/action:
01 Road transport (import, consolidation, local distribution)
02 Rail transport (imports, local container shuttle)
03 Sea transport (import)
04 Bulk purchasing
05 Transportation (self and outsourced)
06 Warehouse/Distribution Center
07 Storage (self and outsourced)
08 Inventory/Sales (in stores and in warehouses)

17% U.S. fossil fuel = Food Miles
SPACE/TIME/INTERACTION INTERSECTION

X: WHERE THE PROJECT IS HISTORICALLY SITUATED

- Trading posts > General stores > Specialty urban neighborhood shops
  - Clerks did the work and select each item for the customer
  - Customers were served by grocer/clerk and would wait in front of counter to request items stored beyond their view (high shelves)
- Self Service grocery stores
  - 1906: A&P Economy Store opened, John Hartford
    - Reduced cost model, standardized layout, eliminated cost and efficiency-burdening services, such as credit accounts and deliveries
  - 1912: Piggly Wiggly, Clarence Sanders, TN
    - By 2012, 1/3 of food sold at public markets was sold to alley peddlers who sold directly to consumers
  - Mid 1920s: expansions were so critical to the chains' strategies that when sales per store began falling at A&P in the mid-1920s, the firm maintained overall profits not by closing stores, but by opening more
  - 1920: King Kullen + Big Bear, and subsequent A+P variation of format
    - Michael J. Kullen, previous worker of A+P and Kroger, created the first whole-sale supermarket, Jamaica, Long Island
  - 1930: Many supermarkets closed their doors for great depression
  - 1930s: After their urban sales were declining, A+P opened their Centennial prototype suburban store
  - 1940s: Supermarkets expanded
  - Supermarket/Chain (Where this project is situated)
  - 1959: After their urban sales were declining, A+P opened their Centennial prototype suburban store
  - Safeway's Marina prototype
  - 1960: Larger stores and discount stores opened
  - 1960: Warehouse stores opened
  - 1980s: Warehouses stores opened
  - 1980s: Categorized by bare-bone structures and bulk discounts, some established supermarkets then adapted this format
  - 1984: New Orleans- A+P FutureStore
    - Upscale stores featured a stark, black and white décor, with service departments in the center of the store and a glass atrium storefront
  - 1990s-2000s: Hybrid versions between cost and quality: Wegmans + Kroger Marketplace
  - 2000s: Click to Shop: Amazon Grocery/Fresh Direct; Internet
    - Responsible for 1%+ of food sales
  - Users cybershop to grab an item and go (fast, easy, convenient), to peruse, gather info, or get in contact with the company
  - Will online technologies and delivery services ever render supermarkets obsolete?

Y: DEGREES OF INTERACTION WITH FOOD: SCALE FROM GREATEST INTERACTION TO LEAST

- Greatest: Direct interaction with food: garden, community garden, farm
  - Farmers Market
  - Local grocer/Neighborhood store
  - Supermarket/Chain (Where this project is situated)
- Least: online selection and home delivery

Ends of Spectrum:

- Physical shopping has advantages of touch, trial, and sensory details, immediate gratification of purchases and social interaction between customers and staff (all of which the online shopping interface eliminates), versus
- No interaction with food - through Online cybershopping - limitless selection, convenience, speed, and more information than physical retailing can compete with, there is no waiting, checkout, no missing items, or restrictive store hours.
THE SUPERMARKET

1. SUPERMARKET AS ICON OF POST-WAR AMERICA
2. COMBINED INTERESTS OF CONSUMER DEMAND WITH CONTROL OF THE STORE FLOOR
3. COMBINES MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS/GOODS UNDER ONE ROOF
4. ROLE OF WOMEN CONSUMERS/USERS
5. QUICKLY BECAME DESTINATION AND DOMINANT INTERFACE WITH FOOD

EVOLUTION: HOW DID THE "SUPERMARKET" EvOLVE TO COME TO BE?

Small-scale food enterprises and public markets were spatial formations for neighborhood politics

Public Market as laborious environment - "moments of autonomy, excitement, and appetite, mixed with suspicion, exhaustion, and performance."\(^1\)

It wasn’t until the 1930s-1940s that mass-retailing strategies took hold of food, and thus, supermarket popularity emerged.

SELF SERVICE

Strategies of the chain store firms had come to define mass retailing and in the process had redefined the nature of all food retailing\(^2\). Strategies include limiting services, increasing self-service, and emphasizing fixed (uniformly) low prices of efficiently large-quantity bought goods

Chain firms had to constantly develop new strategies of standardization, but were met “with customer resistance and localized political or economic vagaries.”\(^3\)

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SUPERMARKET

1. AMERICAN CULTURE/LIFESTYLE SHIFT - MASS RETAILING, LARGE GROCERY TRIPS, SUBURBAN SPRAWL
2. ECONOMIC SHIFT - THROUGH PRIVATE BUSINESS COMPETITION
3. FOOD PRODUCTION - SCALES + QUANTITIES DEMANDED
4. FOOD CONSUMPTION - EXCESS CONSUMPTION + WASTE
5. CONSUMER’S ENGAGEMENT WITH FOOD

1. T. Deutche, 43.
2. T. Deutche, 61.
3. T. Deutche, 71.
The Supermarket
Examining the nature of the supermarket

WHAT IS THE "SUPERMARKET"?
A Supermarket is many different departments brought together under one roof, with a wide selection of food, household items, and services, essentially, super-sized grocery stores.

"The supermarket, that icon of postwar American life, emerged not from a straightforward attempt to satisfy consumer demand but through retailers’ sometimes contradictory efforts to administer government regulations, achieve financial success, and control the shop floor and also through women customers’ negotiation of budgets, familial needs, ethnic loyalties, political desires, and ideologies of domesticity. Supermarkets, and the food they supplied to so many Americans, emerged, through politically minded and socially embedded calculations made by many players."

Historically, their presence and competition destroyed cooperatives and other smaller food markets, chains, dominant food interface.

WHAT ARE ITS IMPLICATIONS?
WHAT IS THE INVISIBLE REALITY OF CURRENT PROCEDURES?

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<th>01</th>
<th>ON AMERICAN CULTURAL LIFESTYLE</th>
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<td>Impacted the US through availability of global foods, self service mass-retailing, reliance on the car (for large grocery trip loads), and facilitating suburban sprawl</td>
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<th>ON ECONOMY</th>
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<td>Private business competition</td>
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Food Waste: Adds 70 million more tons in our landfills each year. The results are pests, odors, toxic liquids and methane gas far more potent than CO2.

On Engagement + Consumer Behaviors

STORE: Interface between design premises, merchandising, and overall operations used by employees and shoppers.

SUPERMARKET: A typology defined by big box architecture; it is typically introverted and mono-functional in nature; model allows each item sold to be seen by shopper, without assistance; the transfers that were once public practices into privatized practices define its architecture space; in suburban settings, take on island-like qualities accessed by car.

PARKING LOT: Quintessential to suburban supermarket landscape; direct effect of car-culture, suburban sprawl, and convenience.

FOOD/FOOD PRODUCTS: Food and food products, including but not limited to meat, poultry, fish, produce, grain, and/or manufactured foods with shelf life.
ELEMENTS OF THE SUPERMARKET:
WAYS OF CONTROLLING THE SHOP FLOOR
Define the supermarket typology—in time, space, and comparative contexts

BREAK DOWN OF ENTIRE SYSTEM OF THE STORE

SUPERMARKET AS TESTING ISLANDS FOR:
01 TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT
02 ECONOMIC DOCTRINES
03 VARIATION ON MODERN PUBLIC SPACE

SPATIAL BOUNDS
01 LARGE FLOOR SPACE, TYPICALLY SINGLE LEVEL — 48,000 sf/average, 45,000 various products carried/average
02 LARGE SURROUNDING PARKING LOTS — Urban-set
supermarkets deal with parking differently underground, above market, or on street

INTERIOR ELEMENTS OF THE SUPERMARKET
AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION (at different scales of engagement)

01 INTERIOR ELEMENTS
ENTRY DOORS
SHELVES/TABLE DISPLAYS/COUNTERS
HEIGHT/EYE SIGHTS
MERCHANDISE PLACEMENT
WALLS/CEILINGS/WINDOWS — SURFACES
BANNERS/BROCHURES/DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE/INFORMATIONAL FIXTURES
FLOOR TILES — Smaller tiles make the shopping cart wheels click faster as it moves across the floor, slows user down and spend more time in an aisle
GROCERY CARTS/BASKETS — Enlarged for children and larger amounts of purchased items
CASHIER LINES
REGISTERS
EXIT DOORS

02 TECHNOLOGY ELEMENTS
UNIVERSAL BAR CODES
Consist of 9 lines of different thicknesses—gives employers image and information of item purchased

SHOPPING CART
evolution from basket to moving chair with basket to larger modern model did not catch on at first as a trend Branded with advertisement of the store
Allowed for women to take young children shopping
Ample space for large shopping trips
Floor space for heavier items
Swing doors to allow for stacking carts together to conserve floor space
Modern carts have been upgraded with tracking systems to avoid theft out of the market, and computers to scan selections, along with recipes and coupons, and changes length of checkout

SELF-CHECK OUT = INDEPENDENCE

SPATIAL DEFINITION: INTERIOR LAYOUT IN PLAN
Perishable periphery vs. Non-perishable core
LAYOUT, SEGMENTED BY DEPARTMENTS
Entry
Grocery cart area
Floor merchandise space
Middle Aisles
Perimeter Wall merchandise space
Service space
Storage space
Food and merchandise prep space
Office and functional spaces
Registers
Customer Service
Exit

FORMAL ATTRIBUTES — CATEGORICAL OF TYPOLOGY
Array/pattern
Obsessive Order, Place, Organization
Single Height programming
Single lines of sight
1. HOW THE CREATION OF THE SUPERMARKET WAS A HIGHLY CONTINGENT, NEGOTIATED, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROCESS; NOT INEVITABLE AND NOT EASILY EXPLAINED AS A RESULT OF CONSUMER DEMAND OR CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND

2. TO UNDERSTAND THAT FOOD RETAILING CHANGES ARE EMBEDDED IN POLITICS AND POLICY, AND LATER MEANING, IF CONSUMERS ARE UNSATISFIED WITH CONTEMPORARY FOOD DISTRIBUTION, THEY CAN THINK OF SHIFTING THE POLITICS AND POLICY IN WHICH THOSE STORES ARE EMBEDDED.

SUPERMARKET STRATEGIES

ECONOMIC - POLITICAL - SOCIAL

1. HOW THE CREATION OF THE SUPERMARKET WAS A HIGHLY CONTINGENT, NEGOTIATED, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROCESS; NOT INEVITABLE AND NOT EASILY EXPLAINED AS A RESULT OF CONSUMER DEMAND OR CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND

2. TO UNDERSTAND THAT FOOD RETAILING CHANGES ARE EMBEDDED IN POLITICS AND POLICY, AND LATER MEANING, IF CONSUMERS ARE UNSATISFIED WITH CONTEMPORARY FOOD DISTRIBUTION, THEY CAN THINK OF SHIFTING THE POLITICS AND POLICY IN WHICH THOSE STORES ARE EMBEDDED.

ECONOMICS - SPATIALIZED

WHAT ARE THE ECONOMICS DRIVING SUPERMARKETS’ SPATIAL STRATEGIES?

HOW ARE ECONOMICS SPATIALIZED?

HISTORICALLY

Smaller supermarkets received their products each day from their source

Current: Privatization and centralized logistic systems introduced supply chain principles

Warehouses and distribution centers - making efficient trips to each store

ECONOMIC POWER

01. ECONOMIES OF SCALE

“The food we eat today is driven not by local cultures, but by economies of scale, and these economies apply to every stage of the food supply chain.”

Currently 34,000 supermarkets with $480,000,000,000/yr in sales (Modern Marvels)

A sole supermarket is usually owned by a chain, which owns and operates similar supermarkets in a region

Example - Safeway: With 1,000s of stores within a region, it operates its own food warehouses and distribution transportation methods to supply each store: 85,000,000 miles traveled each year, 475,000 delivered truckloads per year

Mass Retailing strategies / High Throughput

02. Economic Efficiency = Lower Price

Production
Distribution/Transportation
Supply

Defra: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK. The Validity of Food Miles as an Indicator of Sustainable Development. 6.
WHAT LOGICS GOVERN THE SUPERMARKET?

(LOGISTICS OF MAINTAINING STANDARD OPERATIONS: REQUIRES OPTIMIZED OPERATIONS/PROCESSES)

NEED CONSTANT REFILLED, STOCKED SUPPLY OF PRODUCTS

INCREASING AMOUNTS OF FREIGHT DELIVERIES DEPENDING ON:
- CONSUMER DEMAND
- LOCATION
- SIZE OF STORE

LOGISTICS OF PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION

SEQUENCING: FOOD PROCESSING/DISTRIBUTION FROM TRUCK ➔ SHELF ➔ KITCHEN
- From a truck, food is rolled or carried into the back end of the store in cardboard and cartons.
- A moving belt carries the food boxes into a second story storage area, where they are stacked and stored until needed.
- Frozen food is taken off of a refrigerated truck and stored in a freezer room, and meat stored in a locker. Food used for the day travels to the back of the store.
- Vegetables are cleaned and prepared, as they are needed, they are brought out to the display cases where they are chosen and neatly arranged.
- Meat is ground, packaged, weighed, labeled, priced, and put in the display case for customers to choose from.
- Canned goods are unboxed and brought out to the shop floor, where their lids are priced, and then stacked on shelves based on expiration date.
- Frozen foods are arranged in refrigerated display cases.
- Offices serve as the administrative backbone of the operation—work on sale records from previous days, accounting tasks, security cameras.

POSITIONING OF ELEMENTS

Refrigerated cases must be placed close to generators, plugs, and meat rooms for practical reasons.
Dry goods and household items are placed in the center of the store.
In models where they were placed on the outside, and perishable items on the inside, the amounts of goods purchased declined.

FIG. 1, 2, 3 BASE
Brand (personality) = attitude + response

Historically, brands/firms did not succeed by their economic efficiency, but rather their social promises for independence/autonomy, equality for women shoppers, and modernity.1 Must gain customer recognition and/or loyalty.

The grocery industry is saturated with sectors that satisfy all lifestyles. Niche themes cater to lifestyle choices (all-organic, etc)

Standard grocery

Big-box chain

Warehouse

More brands, more competition (less brand loyalty, more choice)

Customers have more choices than ever before: price, quality, niche fragmentation, and diversity of products

Preference vs. Priority goods ↔ Cross-shopping

‘Now where there is less brand loyalty, and a great infiltration of potential choices, more and more consumer decisions are being made in the store itself through the information and impressions they receive during their trip to the market’.2

Appeal to consumer/consumer demand

Current trend of transition toward health, systemic transparency, and consumers

1920’s, emphasized women’s autonomy and empowerment; mixed with personal attention and were able to win concessions from the stores, such as retention of a clerk to help them choose, weigh, and wrap produce.

IMPORTANCE ON PLACE

“You are here!” (emphasis on here and now)

With their many departments, supermarkets today often provide schematic labeled floor plans:

Show customers where merchandise is
How customers circulate the store?
How much space is defined to each department?

Modern Shopping Guides as navigation counter-points.

BRANDING

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SUPERMARKET MARKETING

MARKET INITIATIVES: Self-service models cut overhead costs, and intentionally removed social dimensions for profits—greater influx of customers and consumer demand for convenience bulk shopping trips

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING: for customer loyalty, customer satisfaction have concluded that emotional experience, thinking experience, action experience and interaction experience impact positively the customer emotional loyalty while emotional experience, thinking experience and action experience impact positively the customer behavioral loyalty.

OLIGOPOLY: “few to sell;” is a market form in which a market or industry is dominated by a small number of sellers, result from reduced competition, companies control each stage (production to sales) of the food industry

FREE ENTERPRISE: (noun) an economic system in which private business operates in competition and largely free of state control. Control factors: politics — production — consumption — engagement.

1 T. Deutche, 43-44.

2 Underhill, 25.
5352   SUBVERSIVE SUPERMARKET
UNDERSTANDING MARKETING STRATEGIES
REPRESENTATIONS OF STORE EXPERIENCE
ADVERTISING
"MARKETING, ADVERTISING, PROMOTION, AND LOCATION CAN BRING SHOPPERS IN, BUT THEN IT'S THE JOB OF THE MERCHANDISE THE EMPLOYEES AND THE STORE ITSELF TO TURN THEM INTO BUYERS."1

1 Underhill, 31.
**EXPERIENCE DESIGN**

- Current market homogenizes its users
  - Eye-level Marketing
    - Sought-after “slotting”: brands can pay up to $1 million for frequented spots
    - 54” women eye level/higher men eye level/children eye level at lower placements
    - Eye-level and End-Caps (Pile it high and watch it fly)
    - Impulse items at the check-out to entertain yourself
    - Yellow as a beacon color- to draw eyesight for good prices, etc.
  - Product grouping
    - Promotional “power aisle” with strongest offers and view to all aisles
    - Things that people frequent- like coffee, baby food, and products that people have to make decisions over are placed in center of aisle, for people to spread out
  - Aroma + imagery to incite hunger
    - Fresh, colorful produce, Baked goods
    - Hoyt + Sauer claimed that the supermarket “must have the open display arrangement, pleasing color, beauty, and the charm that appeal to the American woman.”
  - Order of Products
    - Essentials at the back of store to bring people through whole store
  - Order of price - cheapest at the far end

**ATMOSPHERIC STRATEGIES**

Visual, auditory, olfactory senses (psychology/perception strategies)

- Smell: Fresh bakeries sell product, bakery aroma, which prompts hunger, thus increased purchases through impulse buys
- Sound: Slower, softer music to make people stay in the market longer
- Sight
  - Soft lighting allows people to stay in the store longer
  - Produce illuminated in tungsten light upon entrance
  - Colors- in tiles, etc
  - Theme-park, entertainment qualities added to niche stores
    - Ex. Stew Leonard stores costume characters, county fair ambience
  - Stores want to stand out from each other- for competition reasons
  - Ex. Whole Foods - supermarket turned into favored destination
    - 80,000 sf. biggest store upbeat shopping environment
    - Proactive marketing through cooking demonstrations
    - Touch-screens for customer interactions

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1 T. Deutche, 41.
2 http://www.marketmakeovers.org/mmhv/during/physical-transformation/supermarket-tactics
NARRATIVE OF SHOPPING:
STRATEGIC SCRIPTING

01. Understanding strategies at work
02. Describing the narrative to form a set of orientation cues about the experience of shopping, to then be tested and subscribed.

A narrative of food shopping emphasizes the importance of exchange and consumption to modern power relations, the women's everyday negotiations with grocers within a space testing their political and economic authority is a double edged sword. Women might be "challenging the tenets of mass retail even as they embraced the benefits of particular stores."1

_Tracey Deutche_

"The narrative has proven historical provenance as a strategy of spatial manipulation and control specifically because of the way it accommodates the personal narratives of individual experience. In the context of a brand-obsessed retail economy, the narrative is put forward as a tactic where the overlay of personal and commercial stories heightens the nearly invisible branding of everyday experience."2

_Brian Lonsway, Making Leisure Work_

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1. T. Deutche, 10.
2. Lonsway, 27.
GROCERY TRIP: takes on a religious ritual in today's society, can take the form of primary mode, where consumer spends weekly amount, or secondary mode of residual trips to get a few things; trip is defined by income, trip level, duration of time spent, and location.

SUPERMARKET STRATEGIES:

DECOMPRESSION ZONE: Transition zone between parking lot and entrance of the store, enlarged by the automatic doorways that do not slow down a customer's forward momentum into the store (Underhill 44).

ENDCAPS: Displays of merchandise on the end of every supermarket aisle, can lead into other merchandise located further in the aisle.

PINBALL EFFECT: Dispersal of merchandise which bounces a shopper around the entire store and its many departments.

BOOMERANG EFFECT: When shoppers fail to walk completely from end to end of an aisle, often they go into an aisle and only take the item they need.

BUTT BRUSH EFFECT: When a shopper is disturbed by being brushed by another shopper from behind; it can be the result of poor product placement or inadequate space allocation (Underhill).

CAPTURE RATE: Consumers' eyesight captures an information range from their eyes to their knees.

ARENA CONCEPT: Aisles in the middle of a store are low and gradually get higher as customers reach the store's perimeters, allowing a customer to see everything.

PLANOGRAMS: Map of which products are stacked where on a shelf.

SUGGESTIVE SELLING/ADD-ONS: Items that compliment one another, and often add to a greater impulse purchases.

MERCHANDISE: Goods to be bought and sold.

http://www.nber.org/Franco_American/smith.pdf
SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

IMPORTANCE OF Paths/Nodes/Edges/Departments/Elements

ENTRY SEQUENCE (AS DEFINED BY PACO UNDERHILL)

Sequence from parking lot, to seeing approaching storefront windows, to entrance

Speed/Pace: Fast - Because they head toward the front of the supermarket quickly, they miss any visual cues until 10 ft. into the store

Paco Underhill suggests a “landing strip” to slow their pace as they arrive at the entrance

RETAILING STRATEGIES:

/ Start propaganda/signage on the ground, rather than in the store windows where almost no one looks as they race into the store.

02 ENTRANCE/TRANSITION

Speed/Pace of User: Transitions Fast to Slow, as they adjust to store

Outside before the enclosed entrance is the semi enclosed, indoor/outdoor awning Users must adjust to new lighting, temperature, + beginning of interior space qualities

RETAIL STRATEGIES:

/ Atmospheric quality: Noise/Lighting/Programmatic qualities to slow shopper down
/ This space should be used for simple reminders and visual cues to the company’s brand
/ Offer a basket, cart, MAP, or coupon - things which require the shopper to stop their momentum, pause, and continue on at a slower shopping pace
/ For the customer to take notice, baskets and flyers placed 10 ft. from door
/ Slow down pace moment/settling into new surroundings and the shopping mentality
/ Push merchandise beyond the store and begin the selling spaces at the boundaries of the parking lot (using parking lot space for something more meaningful than parking)
/ Could you slow down the experience entirely through a major discount pile section, or the reject items/merchandise?
/ Place of Largest Influence: To the right of the entrance zone of the store, just as the customer has slowed and become oriented
/ Keep the customers’ arms free of burden and suggests a check-in for their belongings - more hands means more purchased items

STRATEGIC SIGNAGE:

Disseminating text or store information in small doses; emphasis on sequencing and layers to clearly convey a message along the promenade

Wait until a place further in store, where user’s pace is slow enough to read the whole message

Underhill, 44.
WHAT IS THE POINT OF "EXCHANGE" IN THE MODERN SUPERMARKET?

Action: When a person chooses something off the shelf,
The retailer must convert the shopper into a customer/buyer.
What spatiality is attached to that action, and the product’s implications and/or locations?

What tools/elements are needed for this exchange?
Tracing food back to source (produce, dairy, meat, food product, goods etc.)

STORE’S INCOME
- Correlates to store’s ability to appeal to, and keep up with Consumer Demand
  - Customers’ demands: variety and quality, fresh products, convenience with location and hours
  - Historically, supermarkets were based on consumer demand (wants and needs), from women’s autonomy to organic food for people today
- Supermarkets also pay close attention to the consumers’ behaviors, buying and shopping patterns, retail interests, and cultural influences
  - Tracking surveys: what consumers are thinking, buying, habits
- Indicators of good retail performance (Underhill)
  - Conversation Rate: the number of shoppers converted into buyers
  - Time spent rate: more time spent in store = more purchases/sales
  - Interception rate: more contact = more sales
  - Waiting time: thumbs down

Half of all buying decisions were made in the store¹

POINT OF SALE: FACTORS
DISPLAY + PACKAGING; EXPERIENCE HELPS STIMULATE UNPLANNED, IMPULSE BUYING – OVER ½ OF ALL SUPERMARKET PURCHASES ARE UNPLANNED

PLACE, PHYSICAL POINTS OF EXCHANGE BETWEEN USER – CUSTOMER IN SUPERMARKET

- Storefront: Signage as acknowledgement of choice of brand
- Entrance + cart pickup
- Aisle Shelf or Display case: merchandise choice
- Register: purchase
- Exit to parking lot (sub-urban context) or street (urban context)

“Strategies that otherwise demand radical changes in food shopping continue to obscure the inevitable work of navigating food markets and to deny the workings of power at the point of purchase.”

— Tracey Deutche

¹“Design for Selling: A Study of Impulse Buying”
THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE SOCIAL PRACTICES OF CONSUMER-USER, HISTORICALLY AND PRESENT, WITHIN THE EVERYDAY ARCHITECTURE OF THE SUPERMARKET, AND HOW PEOPLE'S ACTIONS ARE BOTH AFFECTED BY, AND CREATE THOSE ENVIRONMENTS, ARE CRITICAL POINTS OF RESEARCH TO UNDERSTAND THE SUPERMARKET EXPERIENCE.

USER (N): CONSUMER

ACTION (V): SHOPPING

CONSUMER: purchaser/user of goods for private means. The act of consumerism is an inherently private enterprise. Supermarkets are set for consumers, not citizens.

BEHAVIOR: Response to a particular situation or environment

AGENT: An active entity. Agent - Perception of Environment - Decision/Choice - Action

AGENCY: Action or intervention, to produce particular effect, synonyms: action, effect, influence, power of role

CIVIC AGENCY - Exertion of influence and power - what choices do consumers have to change/choose routes in this new designed network? option to look, follow paths, seek knowledge, etc.

EXPERIENCE ECONOMY - Experience as commodity, or consumed product; experiential factors tailored to lifestyle, or interests of use

SHOPPING/CONSUMPTION/RETAILING:

SELF SERVICE: Retail model eliminating advice, interaction, and dependence on sales clerks from shopping experience. Appealed to the modern shopper - young, married, independent-minded (but not to the extent of challenging firm policies).1

1 T. Deutche,
THE CONSUMER/USER

Role
01 What is their role? What is their agency?
02 What do they do (practice)?
03 What is space do they/can they generate?

Important Aspects:
Action + Choice

User’s Role Framed by Certeau:
01 Describing, transcribing, and re-scribing the user’s processes and actions
Navigating and inhabiting the narrative set forth in the Place
User’s practice/work transforming the Place into space
02 Developing the user’s agency and critical production of space as they experience
and engage with the supermarket’s current context and histories
03 Vocalizing the consumer’s personal values - spatially

Point of Exchange
Action: Consumer-Into-Buyer

MIDDLE AGED CONSUMERS
Women with children are interested in convenience, and a large amount of them are interested in transparency and traceability, to feed their families healthy food.

YOUNG CONSUMERS
Emphasize transparency and traceability for their food and have an interest in shopping amenities.
Short, multiple trips.

OLDER CONSUMERS
Emphasize transparency and traceability for their food and have an interest in shopping amenities.
Longer weekly trips.
USER ANATOMY

2 hands for reaching for items, hanging 3 feet above the ground.

Eyes focus on what is directly before them, but also take in a periphery. Look at people more than objects.

Where will they walk? And how? What are their paths, speeds, and responses to surroundings?

MODERN CONSUMER
MAKE-UP
USER PATTERNS IN RELATION TO SPACE

KEY RETAIL STRATEGIES, DESCRIBED BY PACO UNDERHILL

A store is designed to take advantage of consumers’ behaviors, where they move and look.

CONSUMER/SHOPPERS tend to be drawn in by new experiences, products, adventure, and sales.

MIRRORS: use reflective surfaces because people will down at mirrored surfaces.

American people tend to walk on the Right—like the way they drive a car.

Shoppers walk forward, and to the right of the aisle, rather than the side-aisle strategy where they have to turn their head or body.
- Designs could be suited for a forward momentum on the user, where they don’t have turn their attention or pause.
- Have displays tilted to the left or at an easily seen angle.
- Chevron shelves at a 45 degree angle to the aisle to expose more of the aisle’s goods to the passing customer.
- To entice customers to travel down an entire aisle, they should place popular goods halfway down the aisle.
- Front and back of the store are important, so the essentials are placed at the back, so consumers are drawn through the whole store.

FIG. 1, 2, 3 Paths

Supermarket as powerful symbol of consumer society and capitalism from the 1940s onward.

Full of government laws, regulations, and guidelines: government-shaped consumer society

Social politics between grocers and consumers/customers

Chain firms had to constantly develop new strategies of standardization, but were met "with customer resistance and localized political or economic vagaries." 1

Retailers relationships with city officials - important

Consumers' own political authority weighed heavily on chain vs. independent competition

Under new Zoning laws, the city had the authority to approve/deny changes to supermarket store exteriors, additions, sign, new locations, etc.

01 Local businesses claimed to be victimized by large chain competitors.

02 Anti-chain movement for state regulation of grocery stores/consumption (received by intense PR schemes from A&P and Kroger to win over local farmers and consumers).

03 In the 1930s, consumption became politically important in a structural way.

"SPACES OF CONSUMPTION OCCUPIED NEW IMPORTANCE IN THE EVERYDAY WORKING OF THE MODERN STATE." 2

Role of Consumer

* Use their consumption as a challenge to political and social order

"THE OLDER NOTION THAT FOOD SHOPPING INVITED, OR EVEN REQUIRED ASSERTIVENESS AND PERSONAL ATTENTION FROM RETAILERS, THAT IT COULD BE A ROUTE TO BROADER ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY, AND THAT IT WAS AS DIFFICULT AS OTHER FORMS OF WORK ALL BUT DISAPPEARED FROM PUBLIC POLICY, BUSINESS STRATEGY, AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS." 3

Current Model

01 Absence of politically charged, conscious encounters in stores.

02 Transition: SPACE OF WORK + POLITICS >>> 1910/20s >>> SPACE OF LEISURE + RELAXATION
Women’s shopping was their work, with laborious negotiations with sellers. The work encounters were intense and uncomfortable, messy social relations. Women would need (1) to choose chain stores rather than their accustomed, neighborhood grocer (2) in large enough numbers to achieve the massive sales that headquarters required (3) to pay off the significant overhead of running large numbers of stores that firms needed (4) to achieve the economies of scale required by their low prices. For this to work women would need to relinquish the authority and personal attention they had been used to in stores, to be willing to adhere to store policy, and to take on many tasks (like transporting goods from stores to homes) that stores had previously offered.1

What sense of power and authority did women have in these settings? What did they actually want? (Tracey Deutche concludes with an illusion to The Stepford Wives, the film’s ending scene, taking place in a peaceful, and idyllic supermarket critiquing modern food procurement: It implied that everyday food shopping required only routinized, mindless labor, that consummate food shoppers—women—could not both perform domestic labor and maintain autonomous thoughts or a desire for authority.)

Supermarkets encourage the production of subject who shop steadily, in large quantities, and without challenging store policy or demanding too much in the way of help or personal attention. Demands for changes in store policy or offerings increasingly occur away from the shop floor. Policies of stores and the state make it difficult to see labor, anger, and acts of assertiveness—even when they do occur.2

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1 T. Deutche, 44.
2 T. Deutche, 223.
HOW DOES THE ARCHITECTURE FOSTER AGENCY OF CONSUMPTION AND AUTONOMOUS EMPOWERMENT IN ITS USERS?

WHAT ARE THE AGENCIES OF CONSUMPTION?
- What agency do the users have?
  - Freedom/Authority of choice
  - View it from a view of activism, rather than indicative of materialism
    - Complacent consumer VS. "Consumers' assertiveness, antagonism, and demands for authority would be disruptive."

WHERE IS THE EMPOWERMENT? (IN ALL ROLES)
- Customer
  - Critical nature, proactive choice(s)
  - Personal responsibilities to buy food
  - Economic authority
  - Autonomy in choice self check-out

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CONSUMER/USER/CUSTOMER?

Evolution of Service Interactions
- Grocer = Clerk = Full Service
- Grocers = Clerks = 1st Self-Service Model (Piggly Wiggly)
- Grocer + Baker + Produce Vendor + Butcher = 2nd Supermarket Self-Service Model, Intro of Departments
- Self-Service Modern Model = enlarged, modernized version

WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SUPERMARKET? (Certeau's "scriptural economy")

As Customer
- How do they respond to the supermarket's environment?
- How do they shape the environment?
  - As Employee (Grocery Clerk/Shelf Stocker/Food Processor/Janitor)
  - As Manager (Front End/Logistics)
  - As Control Room Operator

Catalog of performed, repetitive actions of each role
- As Customer
- As Employee
- As Manager/Executive

Catalog circulation routes + patterns: break down of routine

1 T. Deutche, 225.
01 FULL SERVICE MODEL 1920

02 “KEEDOODLE” MODEL 1948-1949

03 SELF SERVICE MODEL 1976-

04 CLICK TO SHOP MODEL 2000-

05 NEXT EVOLUTION OF CONSUMER

All used as base images for collages.


CONSUMER/PRODUCER RELATIONSHIP
What dialogues, encounters, exchanges, and interactions, are created between the institutional structures in charge, and the everyday users of, supermarket space?

SPATIAL INTERACTIONS
01 RELATIONSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS (PUBLIC SPHERE) TO SPACE: demographics, backgrounds, prior knowledge/preconceived notions.

02 RELATIONSHIP OF AUTHORITY (PRIVATE SPHERE) TO SPACE: incentives, set-in-place policies, status quo corporate agenda.

03 RELATIONSHIP OF POWER TO BUILT SPACE: the spaces, ruled by strategic power agendas and ideologies, regulate its users and monitors their actions.

STRUGGLE FOR AUTHORITY ON SHOP FLOOR

TOOLS FOR CONSUMER (USER)
01 CAR: The suburban supermarket model relies heavily on this element, the space allows for large purchases and family with children, all with the convenience of not having to lift a finger, making once-a-week food shopping achievable, and bulk purchasing feasible with the car’s trunk space.

02 CART: Technology that allows for larger purchases, unburdened hands, and family trips.

TOOLS FOR PRODUCER (RETAILER)
01 SURVEILLANCE: Technology and control used on the exterior and interior property of the privately owned supermarket, discourages against and tracks unsolicited acts by users.

02 LAYOUT:
ARCHITECTURAL TOOLKIT

01 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS
02 CASE STUDIES
4.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

This section embeds spatial theory within the supermarket to better understand consumer possibilities for action and empowerment.

[Research Question 4.1]
How does observing and analyzing the strategized marketing, economics, and psychology of the supermarket, through a spatial lens of de Certeau and others, lend to the framing of situations for and contingencies of intervention and the use of emphasized or ulterior spatial tactics?
As Debord writes in the Society of the Spectacle, the spectacle’s (the Supermarket’s) essential character reveals it to be a visible form of the negation of life, an inaccessible reality, and an affirmation of choices that have already been made in the alienated spheres of production and, then consumption. An exercise in Situationist tendencies, driven by subversion of ideologies, intentional unitary urbanism, and psychogeography, could potentially revive the “living” once again.

APPLICATIONS

Our culture is beginning to shift over the last decade as a greater number of consumers urge for safer, more humane, healthier (etcera) products, more transparency, and knowledge about their foods. How can the structural, architectural space of the supermarket and other structures that categorize everyday western routines support the conscious user and unveil hidden pieces and societal networks?

Which ways can citizen-designers and citizen-architects perform strategic (albeit in a tactical manner) actions, within the established order, to RE-order and subvert from within?

Although 50-60 years have passed since the height of the Situationist movement, their concerns of mass media and concern have only worsened, and their concept of creating a new urbanism of production to allow people to be more of equals with producers rather than submissives, still holds relevancy and is extremely necessary for us to move from puppet toward person.
Although research was spent analysing Situationists, Henry LeFebvre, and his more modern predecessor, Certeau, Certeau is more adaptable to current consumer conditions than LeFebvre’s work. This thesis seeks to evolve this track of theoretical ideas by embedding them into current everyday practices.

Certeau’s work places an importance on people’s potential as critical users of space, who harness power to change and reinterpret it through tactics. The aim is to harness this, to challenge, and reconstruct power structures.

“NEW WRITING” AGAINST THE “SCRIPTURAL ECONOMY”

As Certeau theorizes everyday spaces are embedded with subscripted tactical operations or occupations within the space. These tactical writings are alternative ways of a user’s reading of the space. The users then have the ability to understand the rules or limitations of operating the space, and can seize the opportunity to overlay, embed, or inscribe the space with their actions/occupations.

The spaces of intervention are highly controlled, private institutions. Tactical interventions attempt to establish a series of alternative spaces of action within the frameworks of controlled space.

“THE TACTICAL IS TRESPASSER, PRODUCING MEANING BY DANCING ON THE GROUND OF OTHERS’ [STRATEGIES], ALLOWING FOR CONSTANT DISRUPTIONS IN THE CIRCUITS OF POWER.”

— Michael de Certeau
THEORY #1: SPATIAL TACTICS

EVERYDAY LIFE: The practices of repetition, routine, and unconscious habit/activity/behavior, notably described by Michel de Certeau.

STRATEGY: An inflexible institutional operation, with a uniform set of laws, rituals, and products which it creates needs for. It can be understood as a practice that imposes order through set system, i.e. self-promotional strategies of supermarkets.

TACTIC: Focuses on the processes through time, rather than end results.
**THEORY #2: NAVIGATING SPACE**

**PLACE:** The product of space, which is formed or structured by governing institutional (social, cultural, economic) forces’ strategies, describes a definitive location.

**SPACE:** Place transforms into Space through time, situations, and movements. Space is created as people tactically practice moving in space, thus reconstructing, inscribing, or reinterpreting the Place into space.

- **MAP:** Abstract representation of Place. Described by Certeau as a way to control a place through a singular point of view.

- **TOUR:** Experience through a space, based on the user’s actions and movements. Creates a narrative for a space. Certeau favors the tour over the map for its spatial narrative qualities and dependence on the user’s experience.
4.1 THEORETICAL APPLICATIONS

CERTEAU
UNDERHILL

STRATEGIES
TACTICAL INTERVENTION

FRAMWORKS FOR SITE APPLICATION

GROUNDING CERTEAU

01 OVERLAY

The Overlay shows traces of spatial tactics, uncovers, and presents existing conditions, regulations, and activities.

OVERLAY POTENTIALS:
Superimposition, imposition, supposition

02 SPATIAL COUNTER-SCRIPTS

Actions and/or occupations in space to engage with the existing narrative of the supermarket and its context near and far.

Combining top-down and bottom-up forces/roles sets a new ground for constant negotiation/mediation.

01 PLACE IS FORMED BY GOVERNING INSTITUTION'S STRATEGIES
SPATIALIZING UNDERHILL

02 PLACE IS INFILTRATED BY EVERYDAY USER'S TACTICS
ACTIONS/MOVEMENTS/READINGS/PRACTICES WITHIN SPACE
SUBVERSIVE SUPERMARKET

OFFERING TO SLOW PACE "LANDING STRIP"

LARGEST AREA OF INFLUENCE

TRANSITION ZONE

"LANDING STRIP"
The Narrative/Tour has greater affect on the user's experience than a map.
Rather than a map, the Axon is used as a wayfinding tool.
CASE STUDIES

CHALLENGING THE EXTERIOR OF THE SUPERMARKET

CORE

SPAR SUPERMARKET
Graz, Austria, Love Architecture

Formally, the folded shell arches over the supermarket, extending the interior effects outside into the parking area and creating an extensive entry. The sustainable building enclosure entices eco-friendly, conscious consumers who visit the store.

SPAR SUPERMARKET
Gmunden, Austria, Archinauten

The supermarket design has a civic role. The exterior wall bench becomes a place for gathering in the adjacent plaza. The concrete wall includes glass slit windows, a feature not common in low-budget supermarket structures.

BEST STORES

BEST Store Locations: SITE Architecture/James Wines

Each BEST store location constructs the building enclosure in a different way. In Tilted Building on the far left, the facade is lifting up, exposing the interior, and creating a grand entrance for customers. In Notch Building, the corner entrance is pulled away, forcing the user to walk around it. In the third case study, the facade pulls away each of the layers that make up the typical supermarket facade—the building envelope, the parapets flanking the entry, and the archways over the doors. The design depicts the false depth of supermarket facades.
HISTORICAL

To illustrate the evolution of store design and to demonstrate the complex processes involved in the design and the completion of specific developments.

1. **PIGGYL WIGGLY - MEMPHIS, TN 1916; CLARENCE SAUNDERS**
Highly constructed narrative lends itself to the efficiency of consumption.

   Revolutionary for grocery shopping. First precedent to modern self-service supermarket.

   With the alleviation of store clerks behind the counter, overhead costs decreased.

   Removed social dimension to improve efficiency, product.

   Patent layout: New spatial restrictions and path of the consumer.

   Turn-style to enter the store, once you were in, you could not leave until you were finished shopping.

   Shopping baskets in a container upon entrance.

   Linear-based Aisle system, which customer could navigate, choose, and gather their own goods; goods selected may be billed, packed, or settled/paid for.

   Price tags were used for the first time for food and goods.

   Attention to Design of Store + Package.

2. **KEEDOOZLE - MEMPHIS, TN 1948-1949; CLARENCE SAUNDERS**
First fully automated (electronically operated) grocery store.

   Emphasis on Moment of Exchange and Purchase. Classified by User Action of Inserting Key.

   Merchandise is each placed in separate glass case.

   When you choose your item, you insert a key into the specific case's slot.

   The key triggers wires to light up the light on the front of the case and print your order on a receipt/ticker-tape.

   The receipt is given to the cashier, who processes it and the goods you ordered are brought down the conveyor belt and billed to you 10-15% cheaper prices than competitors.

   Failed as a sustainable market model- could not withstand high demand or traffic.

   Exchange time was slow.

   “RETAIL ... IS AS MUCH ABOUT ITS FAILURES, AS ITS SUCCESSES...”

   _SHARON ZUKIN, POINT OF PURCHASE_
01 ARCHIZOOM - NO-STOP-CITY, PLANLESS PLAN SERIES

The creation of plans in comparison to the landscape of the supermarket/structure, ways to intervene and interject into a coded landscape.

The plans were typed out on a typewriter and codified through limitations of the machine's type settings (rules/codes). Limits on leading, tabs, indentation, spacing (void/gap spaces). The plans was incomplete and allowed for further occupation and understanding.

DISARRAY
OBJECTS IN FIELD/INTERACTIVE

02 BERNARD TSCHUMI - PARK DE LA VILETTE, PARIS

Urban interventions that frame, bridge, connect a larger space.

Fails to be truly human scale, despite being interested in architecture as an event, or sequence.
ARCHIZOOM: NO STOP CITY
PLANLESS PLAN SERIES, 1969

OPERATED WITHIN LIMITATIONS
limits of the machine:
leading,
tabs,
indentation, and
spacing (void/gap spaces)

The plans were incomplete and allowed for
further occupation and understanding.

CONCEPTUAL STUDIES
ARCHIZOOM- NO STOP CITY
CONCEPTUAL STUDIES

ARCHIZOOM- NO STOP CITY

Each plan image consists of two superimposed images: the original base document and the second color-edited layer.
CONCEPTUAL STUDIES
SUPERMARKET ADAPTATION _ ARCHIZOOM INTERPRETATION

Each plan image consists of two superimposed images: The original base document, and the second color-edited layer.
THE SUPERMARKET
IN RELATION TO NO STOP CITY

OPERATES WITHIN LIMITATIONS
limits of the structure
governing rules,
policies, and
regulations.

The plans and constructs which govern their spatial and
experiential factors have voids and gaps for further occupation
and circulation of information.

It shows how to intervene and interject within the limits of a
coded landscape.

CONCEPTUAL STUDIES
SUPERMARKET ADAPTATION _ ARCHIZOOM INTERPRETATION

FIG. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 TOP
"Archizoom No Stop City
(1969)." Digital image. A
Void Building (blog).
Accessed September 10,
2015. http://avoidbuild-
ing.tum-blr.com/post/38885161745/
paa-vo-archizoom-no-stop-city
.1969-the-plans.

FIG. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 BASE
"Safeway Floor Plan." 
Digital Image. Blogging 
Bayport Alameda. June
10, 2013. Accessed 
September 15, 2015.
https://laurendo.-
files.word-
pess.com/2013/06/scr
een-shot-2013-06-03-a
t-4-33-48-pm.png.

Each plan image consists of two superimposed images.
The original base document and the second color-edit-
ed layer. They were then lightened for visual.
BERNARD TSCHUMI - PARK DE LA VILLETT

PARIS

URBAN INTERVENTIONS
1. fragmentation of whole
2. recomposition of pieces
3. points, frames, and bridges to connect moments

The user experiences the larger landscape through elements that frame and connect moments.
CONCEPTUAL STUDIES
BERNARD TSCHUMI - PARK DE LA VILLETTE
CONCEPTUAL STUDIES
SUPERMARKET ADAPTATION _ LA VILLETTE INTERPRETATION
THE SUPERMARKET 
IN RELATION TO LA VILLETTE

URBAN INTERVENTIONS

1. Scripts over/renarrating the experience
2. Places importance on user’s viewport
3. Interactive objects within str

The experience of the user is rescripted from within the supermarket landscape to frame particular moments (information).

CONCEPTUAL STUDIES
SUPERMARKET ADAPTATION _ LA VILLETTE INTERPRETATION
ARCHITECT'S ROLE

01 ARCHITECT AS TRANSGRESSION:

"The architect challenges mainstream paradigms with alternative images and models for spatial organization and inhabitation" - dualities can suggest spaces of control which don’t eliminate possibilities for alternative design interventions, and where alternative designs can be subsumed by a “structured opportunism.”

— BRIAN LONSWAY, MAKING LEISURE WORK

02 ARCHITECT AS CIVIL DESIGNER:
ARCHITECTURE’S ROLE

DISCIPLINARY CONVERSATIONS:
01 Architecture as event(s)
02 Architecture as advertising
03 Architecture as practicing space

Architecture emphasizes an understanding of users in the space, their tasks in relation to the environment. Architecture can address the need to change consumer knowledge and mindsets. There are greater implications of the experience from designed outlets for consumer-user's agency and choice.

ARCHITECTURE AS AN INFILTRATIVE TOOL FOR EXPOSING LARGER SOCIO-CONSTRUCTS AND INCITING CHANGE WITHIN THEM:
01 Teasing out the complexities that construct the supermarket experience
02 To educate people
03 To tailor the experience of each user (child/millenial/adult)

The architecture of the supermarket does not far beyond the ideas of efficiency and economic incentive. The current model distances the consumer from implications of their behavior, and relationships with the larger food system. There is little knowledge of the production and processes of our food. Modern supermarkets have changed the way people think about, and how they eat, food.

Architectural skills and design thinking can be applied to these contexts, to contribute to, and narratively create a more transparent food system. It can also respond to growing demands for consumer transparency by engaging the consumer-user’s action and agency.

ARCHITECTURE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR
01 Transparency and traceability, and
02 To activate the consumer-user’s role in production of space (engages with social, political, and economic)
03 To undo the market, counteracting and unraveling its networks in order to transform the user’s experience, knowledge, and
04 Architecture has the ability to create an experience, one which allows for the next evolution of consumer’s role, while also addressing the constructs of the experience economy. It creates a framework for consumer-users to have a more critical role.

HOW CAN ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN OPERATE HERE (OPERATION, MATERIAL, ORGANIZATION, ETC)?
HOW CAN WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPLICATIONS OF FOOD (SUPPLY, DEMAND, REQUIREMENTS) THROUGH A SUPERMARKET TYPOLOGY?
The architect has the ability to mediate the landscape of the supermarket from inside forces out, rather than standard terms of governance from systemic outside forces in. Architectural design can transform the experience of the supermarket by spatially inversing and extrapolating the conceptual and methodological strategies of the supermarket, thus addressing the context in which the supermarket is situated. The use of the *narrative/tour* and *spatial tactic* as architectural design tools for agency in, and production of, space evolves, and repoliticizes, the role of the consumer-user.
PROJECT TRAJECTORIES

The thesis will investigate how a superimposed set of architectural tactics can foster an opportunous and empowering, alternative narrative in the modern consumer landscape. Tactically subversive design interventions within, and beyond, the confines of the market will be integral to inform the user and create disruptions in their shopping routines. Through these tactical interjections and transformations which counteract current policies and tease out the networks the supermarket is a part of, the supermarket experience becomes undone in one sense, and transformed in another. The design aims to blur the lines between producer and consumer-user, production and consumption, and the authority that lies within roles. By using architectural elements as infiltrative instruments for empowerment, education, and exposure of current strategies, the limits of the supermarket become active opportunities for a politicized user agency and expanded knowledge for the everyday user in the commodified food chain.

AIMS:
1. Through an examination of politics, production v. consumption relationships, and engagement,
2. To create an interesting, thought provoking, divergence from the typological standard,
3. To recontextualize the supermarket back into a greater context,
4. To unveil the truth environment to the modern user and generate a larger consciousness in the public user, to make the common user question and understand the consequences of their habits and actions,
5. To emphasize traceability, transparency, and accountability by integrating info, and situating within, an already established system,
6. To change designed spaces with the corporate interests of the user in mind into spaces with the interests of the user in mind, and
7. Reintegrating the architect’s skills back into the supermarket structure allow the Individual conviction to rightfully take back their integrity as citizens, individuals, people - voiced users, not consumers.

METHODS FOR TESTING:
1. Take a critical approach on, within, and about these thematic spatial practices, without the typified cynical approaches that usually issue and usually acknowledges the complexities inherent in political individual spatial inhabitation
2. Create a space to foster social agency by situating them in realms close to or part of their everyday actions. To seek opportunities for critical situation - more in-depth, informative stance and inhabitation within these landscapes/spaces
3. Negotiate commercial environments by providing greater amount of information, and more levels of information, about an existing location, situating its location rather than its assumed isolation, and to maximize the time one spends in it
4. Use critical framework to better understand how one’s agency shifts in the environments produced by the economic, supermarket experience
5. a navigational scheme and personal narrative to the otherwise thematic overarching approaches in these spaces - an alternative narrative superimposed on the intended narrative
SUBVERSIVE SUPERMARKET

TOPIC MOTIVATIONS

CONSUMPTION AND PROBLEMS WITH THE FOOD SYSTEM, UNACKNOWLEDGED BY THE SUPERMARKET’S STRUCTURE

THE INTERIOR EXPERIENCE OF THE SUPERMARKET IS ISOLATED FROM THE SYSTEMIC CONSTRUCTS THAT DEFINE IT, THUS HANDICAPPING THE POTENTIAL OF THE CONSUMER-USER NAVIGATING THROUGH.

SITE OF RESEARCH

SUPERMARKET CONSTRUCT SHAPED BY SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FORCES, ALONG WITH THE LOGISTICS OF THE FOOD SYSTEM

ECONOMICS SPATIALIZED

EXCHANGES BETWEEN POWERS

AGENCY IN CONSUMPTION

CAROLYN STEEL: HUNGRY CITY

FOOD SYSTEM CONTEXT

TRACEY DEUTCHE: BUILDING A HOUSEWIFE’S PARADISE

HISTORIC CONTEXT

PACO UNDERHILL: WHY WE BUY

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES (spatial theories)

MICHAEL DE CERTEAU: THE PRACTICE OF EVERYDAY LIFE

EMBEDDING TACTICS IN STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

ANALYSIS

FILTERING RESEARCH THROUGH SPATIAL LENS

APPLYING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS TO ANALYSE THE SITE + ITS TYPOLOGY

HYPOTHESIS (TESTING)

tools + methods

narrative/tour

strategy

inversed

for tactical use

point of exchange

instrument for transparency + agency

CRITIQUE/SYNTHESIS

consumer-user

producer

LENS OF USER

REPOLITICIZING ARCHITECTURE OF THE EVERYDAY

REPOLITICIZING ARCHITECTURE OF THE EVERYDAY
PROGRAM: SELF GUIDED MUSEUM-LIKE EXPERIENCE

SITE: Set in supermarket model, which acknowledges distribution networks

SITE HOST
Host qualities required to test the Conditions, Program, and Procedures:
Regimented (typological) supermarket consisting of:
01 Repetition
02 Controlled spaces
03 Stratified programs
04 Segregated tasks of users

STRATEGIC CRITICALITY

YOU ARE HERE
YOU ARE HERE
NONE-OF-YOUR-BUSINESS: LOGISTICS/SORTING/MGMT/WASTE

HYPOTHESIS (TESTING)
tools + methods
narrative/tour
strategy
point of exchange
instrument for transparency + agency
evolving consumer

CRITIQUE/SYNTHESIS
consumer-user
producer

LENS OF USER
TOOLS + METHODS OF INTERVENTION
Spatializing tactics
REINTERPRETING STRATEGIES + THEORIES FOR TACTICAL INTERVENTION

01 UNDERHILL
Utilize Underhill's information for the benefit of the new experience of discovery within the consumer/producer landscape
Identify zones of intervention (at scale of market and beyond)
Waiting time, the amount a customer waits affects their satisfaction and overall purchasing; shoppers' needs and demands must be met with precision. The more people had to wait, the less purchasing was completed. Customers remember negative details longer than those of satisfaction (Underhill).

REVERSE MARKETING STRATEGIES (†)
IDENTITY
BRANDING: Color, tags, attention to some things rather than others
EXCHANGE
INTERACTION
POINT OF PURCHASE
DISCRETE CHOICE

02 FRAMED BY CERTEAU
Analyzing and using STRATEGIES AS TACTIC embedded within the themes and performances governing the supermarket

IMPORTANT FOR ENTERING NEW NARRATIVE ADVERTISING
KEY AREA
BRING INTERIOR EXPERIENCE OUT
CONSUMER-USER OF INTEREST
ESSENTIALS IN THE BACK
OFFER GUIDE!
PHYSICAL BORDER BETWEEN CONSUMER AND PRODUCER
ROUTES FOR NARRATIVE TO EMBED
INFLUENCE BEGINS IN THE PARKING LOT
ROUTES BORDER BACK END OF THE STORE - WHERE THERE ARE GAPS
THE NARRATIVE/TOUR HAS GREATER AFFECT ON THE USER'S EXPERIENCE THAN A MAP. RATHER THAN A MAP, THE AXON IS USED AS A WAYFINDING TOOL.

OFFERING TO SLOW PACE
"LANDING STRIP"
LARGEST AREA OF INFLUENCE
TRANSITION ZONE
EQUIPPED, ORIENTED SHOPPER
ESSENTIALS IN THE BACK
**SITE 1.0:**
A western model of the modern supermarket; one either located in isolation in an urban or sub-urban area, where architectural interjections can expand outside of the building as additions.

**SITE 2.0, CONTEXTUALIZED:**
A supermarket located in a dense urban context, where food is shipping/driven in, and is in isolation of its origins. If this thesis evolves into a project dealing greatly with the context in which a particular store is situated, the area of South Boston becomes particularly interesting. It is a mix of supermarket chains, remaining neighborhood markets, and sprinkling of urban farms/gardens, all, which seem to co-exist without reference to one another.

The South Boston Food Distribution center is located south of the residential urban areas, on a tract of land, separated from the dense urban neighborhoods of the north by bordering highway infrastructure. Set along the south border of Boston, MA, in between Widett Circle and the Seaport District. It is not a place frequented by foot, nor one with any sensitivity to a tangible human scale. It remains an isolated place where food travels in and out of via trucks and vans.

The design focuses on diverting the path from a nearby urban supermarket, toward the Widett Circle Food Processing Center, to local urban supermarkets, and into the alleys below Boston’s private roof-scapes, such as The Food Project. The project aims to bridge between both local and larger scales, engaging users to understand their impacts as consumers with systems at large.

**CONNECTIONS TO, UNDERSTANDINGS OF, IMPLICATIONS AND REMEDIATIONS OF THE LARGER SYSTEM THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF THE SUPERMARKET**
DESIGN QUALITIES FOR EMPHASIS

Spatial
ENVIRONMENT  Support for communication/interaction

ORGANIZATIONS  hierarchical vs. horizontal, centralized vs. decentralized interactions and communications

HEURISTIC  Experience-based combining navigation and interaction with discovery, and learning to understand a more complex system

INTERFACE  A device, program, or system for interaction or meeting. Allows for intersection between large-scale forces and human-scaled spaces, links components, and enhances perception, requires interaction by a user

SYSTEM  structured set of organized principles and procedures, set of connected parts to form a whole. Network of interconnected parts

LIMINAL  a threshold that joins together multiple spaces. Liminal spaces might be formed by physical or perceptual conditions

PROTOCOL  (noun) The official procedure or system of rules governing affairs of state or diplomatic occasions. The accepted or established code of procedure or behavior in any group, organization, or situation

SIMILAR TO: procedure, ritual, accepted behavior, propriety, proprieties, decorum

BRICOLAGE  (noun) in art or literature) construction or creation from a diverse range of available things to a unifying gesture

Formal Qualities

SUBVERSIVE  (adj) seeking or intended to subvert an established system or institution

INFORMATIVE  (adj) providing useful or interesting information; revealing, explanatory

TRANSPARENT  (adj) easy to perceive or detect

AUTONOMY (noun) Freedom from external control or influence; independence

Formal Actions

REACTION  An action performed or a feeling experienced in response to a situation or event

RETROFIT  To add (a component or accessory) to something that did not have it when manufactured

DEViate/DIVERT  (verb) depart from an established course, distract to change direction, reroute

EXPERIMENT  (verb) investigate, test

EXPLOIT  (verb) make full use of and derive benefit from (a resource)

CONNECT  (verb) bring together or into contact so that a real or notional link is established, join together so as to provide access and communication

ENABLE  (verb) give (someone or something) the authority or means to do something

PARTICIPATE (verb) to take part, to have or possess
POSSIBLE INTERVENTION(S)
EXISTING SPACE AS MEDIUM. WITH NARRATIVE WORKS TO CONSTRUCT/RE-
CONSTRUCT INTERACTIONS

01 Experiential "mapping"
Anchored in experiential than map out a field of conflicting spatial and
narrative practices
Alternative narrative
02 Field Guide
Of architectural elements, policies, and regulations (strategies) +
manipulations (tactics)
Aims to empower the user to become producers of space
03 Alternative narrative
Series of inserted architectural tactics
Visual intrusion, overlaps, overlays, (conflicting, contradicting, or meshing)
layers

POTENTIALS
NARRATIVE AGITATIONS WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENT
Narrative scripted first// subsequent process of re-scripting over/edits.
Re-scripting/sub-script the experience
Subvert the supermarket typology to challenge habits

REVERSE/INVERSE/FLIP THE TYPOLOGY: EXPOSED TOUR OF THE GROCERY
What so really going on reveals psychology throughout all the actions?
Mirrors - The user becomes part of the performance/experience
Dissection - Deconstructing the spatial barriers currently absorbing the
misinformation and lack of information in today's supermarket

HACKING THROUGH ADDITIVE/SUBTRACTIVE LAYERS
Nodes + Bridges
Temporary "hijacks" of space (?)
Emphasis on opportunity, choice, and diversity of experience

METHODS OF INTERVENTION

01 Using Architectural Elements of the Supermarket
02 Narrative Subscript
03 Spatial Tactics

KEY FOCUSES
01 INTERJECT IN CURRENT CONDITIONS - through loopholes/voids in code
02 REVEAL THE HIDDEN/UNDERSIDE - of the system
03 EXPOSE BEHAVIORS - both of producer/power + consumer/user
04 ENGAGE - the senses (vision, touch, smell, hearing)
05 DISCOVER - the space alternatively (defamiliarizing practiced spatial)
06 URBAN ACUPUNCTURE socio-environmental theory using small-scale,
spontaneous, spatial occupation(s) on a ranging, yet readable urban context
(this time, applied to the architecture of the everyday, within the
supermarket.

"SUPERMARKETS LOST THEIR MAGIC
WHEN THINGS BECAME FAMILIAR."
— KIM HUMPHREY, SHELF LIFE

Arguing for an evolution of the space, once again
defamiliarize it, to bring back the discovery of place
Excitement, adventure, discovery, rotation/changing
(temporal quality)
**Scenario 01:** The citizen-architect is hired to rebrand the supermarket chain, seeking to reinvent themselves (innovative with new concepts and marketing).

- Uses existing infrastructure, by infiltrating and alternatively traversing the space
- Tool to make consumer more aware of processes, their behavioral implications, and their role as users (put pressure on current processes, behaviors, and infrastructures)
- Emphasizes the spatiality of consumer’s actions
- Turns consumer into producers of thought and action
- Tool for exposing social/economic/environmental/political issues that shape the supermarket, and critiquing current frameworks
- Analyses the supermarket for what it does, the processes beyond it, and that which it is situated within
- Uses supermarket techniques on a larger scale, as it unravels the networks wrapped up in it

**Phase 01: Field Guide**

**Phase 02: Testing scenarios, multiplicities of routes and choices, tour**

**Problematic:**
Exterior experiences + implications not addressed or included
1. SPATIAL INTERVENTIONS

In its essence, the strategic modern supermarket invites competition of brands, prices, advertising, so why not spatially? Manipulating the points of regulation/governance within the current infrastructure(s) that block access and knowledge of the public user can transform one’s experience and resulting greater understanding. These niche spaces can also become public, social constructs. Subtle subversions, deviations, and deformations in gaps of code and space provide opportunities for the public user to develop their own autonomy in decisions/understandings and potential succeeding critique.

Add onto the supermarket/interjecting/deconstructing, subverting/manipulating spatial boundaries Superimposed market- so market can still function for those non-participatory shoppers

Addresses human scale

Revealing transparency/connection small scale interventions within/around/encompassing a single structure, ie. standard supermarket structure - through distortion and subversion of the typical experience, can it divert users and branch out into surrounding networks/context?

Tactile environments? Exposing through network connecting, trap doors, etc. From supermarket to the source and back, rerouting consumer from the front door to a whole network before they make their choices, goes around codes and builds on top, punctures into already there structures. How does code shapes the current spaces and ways to intervene and manipulate such code, create connective tissue.

Rerouting consumer from the front door to a whole network before they make their choices, goes around codes and builds on top of and punctures into already there structures.

How does the regulations and code shape the current spaces and which ways can architecture intervene and manipulate the experience and space driven by such codes?

- Does it act as a parasite? (Architecture of a parasitic nature enters and alters the host for duration of time, entering through voids or loopholes.
- Parasites can often control and change the host.
2. GUIDE

You want transparency? That’s what we’ll give you. Offers choices/routes.

Map readings of the place—showing layers, one mapping is underhill as sites for intervention/different reading of the space, one as is, one by Certeau, etc (show journey as a length).

Itinerary to activate the geography of the supermarket and the contexts in which it is situated. Itinerary will be generated through people’s use and their subsequent choices and produced movements.

Scene sequencing begin with entrance and trap door before even grabbing the basket; enter into warehouse of food’s past buried metaphorical layers below the city (which is in fact, itself a landfill), then directly into the food desert, two blocks over, then back to the market, and have the choice to grab the market and decide what to do.

Stores are designed with traffic flow in mind and have created a system of how and where users move, live, etc. This thesis intends to disrupt, exploit, unveil, and augment the realities embedded in consumer routines. Distinct disruptions and interruptions will be utilized to provoke a metamorphosis in consumer experience and unveil the suppressed features.

INTENTIONS FOR INTERVENTION:

1. INTERJECT IN CURRENT CONDITIONS: in code
2. REVEAL THE HIDDEN/UNDERSIDE
3. EXPOSE BEHAVIORS
4. ENGAGE LARGER CONTEXT

FIG. 1
SUBVERSIVE SUPERMARKET

strategy

inversed for tactical use

instrument for transparency + agency

evolving consumer

LENS OF USER

consumer-user producer
SUBVERSIVE SUPERMARKET

instrument for transparency + agency

consumer-user
producer

LENS OF USER

TOPIC MOTIVATIONS

CONSUMPTION AND
PROBLEMS WITH THE
FOOD SYSTEM,
UNACKNOWLEDGED BY
THE SUPERMARKET'S
STRUCTURE

THE INTERIOR EXPERIENCE
OF THE SUPERMARKET IS
ISOLATED FROM THE
SYSTEMIC CONSTRUCTS
 THAT DEFINE IT, THUS
HANDICAPPING THE
POTENTIAL OF THE
CONSUMER-USER
NAVIGATING THROUGH.

SITE OF RESEARCH

SUPERMARKET

CONSTRUCT SHAPED BY
SOCIO-POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC FORCES, ALONG
WITH THE LOGISTICS OF
THE FOOD SYSTEM

ECONOMICS SPATIALIZED

EXCHANGES BETWEEN POWERS

AGENCY IN CONSUMPTION

CAROLYN STEEL: HUNGRY CITY
FOOD SYSTEM CONTEXT

TRACEY DEUTCHE: BUILDING A HOUSEWIFE'S PARADISE
HISTORIC CONTEXT

PACO UNDERHILL: WHY WE BUY
ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

REPOLITICIZING ARCHITECTURE OF THE EVERYDAY

ANALYSIS

FILTERING RESEARCH THROUGH SPATIAL LENS

APPLYING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS TO
ANALYSE THE SITE + ITS TYPOLOGY

HYPOTHESIS (TESTING)

tools + methods
narrative/tour
strategy
inversed
for tactical use
point of exchange

CRITIQUE/SYNTHESIS

consumer-user
producer

LENS OF USER

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SITE OF RESEARCH

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CRITIQUE/SYNTHESIS

consumer-user
producer

LENS OF USER
Supermarkets have become fixtures in modern routine, their constructs often isolated from the very complex networks and conditions, which create them. The supermarket, with its repetitious, optimally stocked shelves, stands as a regimented stage set; its users, the consumers, are integral actors in the show. A narrative is often constructed within the structure to cater toward the interests at large. This thesis contends that architecture can be a narrative tool for understanding, infiltrating to disseminate knowledge, and thus, exposing the socio-political conditions and political economies that govern market structures, sequences, and consumer behaviors, creating a greater dialogue between institutional structures and the everyday users of the space.

In order to act within, and beyond, the frameworks, we must ask what implications the current supermarket structure and fragmented production/consumption model has on the agencies of consumption. Through a cross section of research, from Tracey Deutche’s historical arguments on gender roles and shopping, to Certeau and Lefebvre’s theoretical everyday situations, this argument seeks to frame its sites of intervention through social, political, and economic realities of the food system. To recognize and analyze current conditions, themes, and scalar factors of the supermarket, and the processes that surround it, is integral, and will explain how economics and logics are spatialized in the current system and what behavioral protocols are in place.

The thesis seeks to ask how can a superimposed set of spatial, architectural tactics within the supermarket foster consumer/user empowerment and opportunity.

“The tactical is trespasser, producing meaning by dancing on the ground of others [strategies]… allowing for constant disruptions in the circuits of power…” – Michel de Certeau

Subversive tactical design interventions within the confines of the market will be integral in inform the user, while intervening into the supermarket experience. They will create unavoidable confrontations with reality for both users and producers, and will divert people into unexpected situations. Such design may blur the lines between producer and consumer, production and consumption, and the authority that lies within those stereotypical roles. By using architectural elements as infiltrative instruments for empowerment, education, and exposure of current strategies, the limits of the supermarket become active opportunities for agency and expanded knowledge for the everyday user in the commodified food chain.
BOURRIAUD, NICOLAS, RELATIONAL AESTHETICS, FRANCE: LES PRESSES DU RÉEL, 1998, “RELATIONAL FORM” AND “SCREEN RELATIONS.” Bourriaud’s theory of Relational Art, forms/units/structures of inner dependencies, produced to invent possible encounters or exchanges, to form a Relational World. He argues for form to produce and shape updates of the Situational ideals and “constructed situations” into modern contexts. The argument places importance on producing human relations through form.


DE CERTEAU, MICHAEL, THE PRACTICE OF EVERYDAY LIFE. TRANS. BY STEVEN RENDALL. BERKELEY: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS, 1984, CHAPTER III “MAKING DO”: USES AND TACTICS, PP. 29-44. Part of a larger set of investigations, focusing on the way people practice everyday life, Certeau argues that everyday life is a practice and process of using and manipulating existing rules and regulations. He defines tactics from institutional strategies, as seizing opportunities in limited contexts. His argument lends itself greatly to roles of consumerism and the context of the supermarket.

DOVEY, KIM. FRAMING PLACES: MEDIATING POWER IN BUILT FORM. 2ND ED. ARCHITEXT. N.P.: ROUTLEDGE, 2008. The book navigates between theories and built forms, to explore space, place, and power. Dovey argues for architects and designers to mediate social practices of power through their designs.

DEUTSCHE, ROSALYN, EVICTIONS ART AND SPATIAL POLITICS, CAMBRIDGE: THE MIT PRESS, 1996, III PUBLIC SPACE. DEMOCRACY TITLED ARC AND THE USES OF DEMOCRACY AND AGORAPHOBIA.

Deutsche’s theory of democratic public spaces explores space as a divided, conflicted, resistant realm. The critique suggests an accessible dialectic to communicate the realities of these public spaces and challenge them to change.

An important source for understanding the role of the consumer, Deutche provides analysis of consumer roles, actions, and behaviors, in relation to larger socio-economic, political events and food purchasing trends throughout the 19th and 20th century. Exploring the complex evolution of the supermarket, it embeds the supermarket store into the contexts, politics, and relationships that shape them.


Rethinking the public sphere requires making visible the different publics, and how they are divided or empowered. By changing the meanings and relationships within the public sphere, the power ratios amongst individuals change. The source contributes new theories for understanding power and public empowerment.


Situates the supermarket historically and critically explains the products we buy, the environments in which we buy, and the attitudes of the users of the environments. The narrative argues the consumer's autonomy lost its magic when supermarket went from new experience to familiar routine. Humphery includes varying degrees of customer opinions and ways of shopping, to realistically 'undo' the system and stigmas, rather than theorize about accepting, denying, or 'making-do.'


An in-depth examination of the food industry and relationships to food. He explores the different places which food is offered, from the general supermarket to the polarized diet vs. the fast food industries. Particular relevance is with the chapter, “A Long Food Chain, The Story And Identity Of The Food Disappear Into The Undifferentiated Stream Of Commodities, So That The Only Information Communicated Between Consumers And Producers Is A Price”.


Rybczynski, Witold. Mysteries of the Mall.
Traces the role of food production and distribution throughout history to clarify food's importance to society—socially, economically, and environmentally. Steel argues for a more democratic, sustainable food system, where personal, local, and large branches of food networking are open, visible, and connected. This source teaches that food is about networks, which consumers, producers, and distributors are greatly intertwined.

The video focuses on a father, a grocery store manager, and a son, showing the processes that go into operating a supermarket before it opens for the morning shoppers. It explains where food is stored, how it is prepared, and the other processes that go on behind the scenes of a supermarket.

A critique of De Certeau and anarchist architecture ("Anarchitecture") tactics in relation to the public space it operates on and critiques. Thompson engages politics in his review of civic spaces, and references Whole Foods as a privatized civic space.

Explains buying behaviors and the selling strategies to induce purchasing. Underhill breaks down the science of shopping and analyses user actions and patterns within this context.


Theoretical view of public sphere, segmented as multiple spheres, the dominant public, and the subaltern counter public. Young's theory of three-pronged publicity of a site's communicatory engagement, relationship among citizens, and form of expression, is important to note.

ZUKIN, SHARON. POINT OF PURCHASE. HOW SHOPPING CHANGED AMERICAN CULTURE. 1ST PAPERBACK ED. NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 2005.

Point of Purchase narrates the evolution of consumerism through the consumer. Zukin explains the changes in culture and consumers through changes in larger networks stores are situated within. Through a breakdown of shopping, she dedicates a chapter to shopping guides, which provides interesting points for guiding a consumer.
SUBVERSIVE SUPERMARKET
TACTICAL INTERJECTIONS INTO THE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE