Transaction Spaces
Consumption Configurations and City Formation

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Abstract

Consumption forms and is formed by the city. How, when and where commodities are transacted is essential in this urban drama of mutual relationships. This thesis explores how consumption and everyday life in cities are interrelated. The specific objective is to analyse how commodity transaction situations are configured and constrained in time and space, and, how consumer service spaces are formed in and are part of city formation. Transactions are conceptualised as economically and socially situated material projects constituted by consumers, commodities and producers. Commodities and values are transferred and created through transaction spaces. The theoretical perspective is framed around consumption and production of spaces, and particularly informed by Hägerstrand’s time-geographical thinking and Lefebvre’s work on urban space. Methodologically different examples of consumption projects and spaces are used to discuss configurations and formations for commodity transactions.

The thesis stresses material and time-spatial constraints for commodity transaction and it discusses the blurring of boundaries between what conventionally has been separate social and economic activities and places. Changing transaction configurations and the formation of consumer service spaces in the city are explored through analysis of different consumption places and commodities such as books, coffee and clothes and property development projects in Stockholm city centre. Transaction configurations display geographical and historical continuities and changes as well as time-spatial flexibility and spatial fixity. Transactions spaces are continuously formed and reformed through processes embedded in the global cultural economy, urban development and politics, as well as through people’s everyday life. Producers’ strategic production and consumers’ tactical appropriation of transactions spaces are accentuated as crucial in the spatial practice of transactions, places and city formation.

Keywords: consumption, transactions spaces, city formation, everyday life, commodities, urban development, consumer services, retail, spatial practices and representations, time-geography, Stockholm
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The journey of writing this thesis and doing the doctoral research project has been both challenging and rewarding. It has been a material, social and mental journey that changed my mind, my thoughts and my belief, and way of being in the world. The physical and social journey, during which I met many new and good friends, has taken me to various cities in Sweden, twice to Oslo, to San Francisco and around Australia, and back again to Stockholm.

I would like to acknowledge all the people who, during this journey, supported, inspired and challenged me. First, I want to thank the one who changed my world and my everyday life – thank you Sofia for being there.

Then I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my excellent supervisors for all their support and encouragement. Thank you Brita Hermelin and Bo Lenntorp for your unfailing belief and helpfulness, for critically and constructively commenting on and scrutinising everything that I have handed to you and for making every meeting both rewarding and challenging.

There are a few people who have directly helped me in the process of completing the thesis, whom I would like to recognise; Gunnel Forsberg for commenting and reading the manuscript several times in the end and Eric Clark for critically discussing the work at the final seminar. I would also especially like to express my gratitude to Jonas Bylund for all the insightful and personal discussions and comments on everything.

Thanks also to all the others, who are too many to name but nonetheless as important, who have reflected on earlier versions, connected papers and various presentations that I have given at different seminars and other forms in Stockholm and elsewhere.

I hold my visit to Australia responsible for being able to finish the thesis the way I did, and on time. Thank you Phillip O’Neill for making the visit possible, and Pauline McGuirk and all others at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Newcastle, for making my stay very rewarding and enjoyable.

The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education made the visit abroad financially possible and The Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning sponsored the subsequent conference in San Francisco. A grant from Stiftelsen Carl Mannerfelt’s Fund and helpful proofreaders made it possible to write the book in English.
At the Department of Human Geography, Stockholm University, I would like to thank all the staff for their practical and everyday life support. I would also like to recognise the students at the different courses I have taught for rewarding discussions and provoking questions, and of course my own undergraduate friends. Furthermore, my thanks to all of my different roommates and the late night colleagues I have had during my time at the department, particularly my last roommate – you have been invaluable.

My family and friends are the most important people in my life and I would like to thank all of you, especially mom and dad and my sister for always being there. Almost all of my really good friends were gathered at the October party in 2005, and I’m very grateful for your friendship.

_Lukas Smas_
Gröndal, Stockholm
February, 2008
1. Introduction

Between buildings, through passages and over squares people are rushing off on their way home or to work. Others are carrying shopping bags and browsing for clothes, books, and various gadgets. Along city centre streets there are boutiques, department stores and malls offering and displaying the latest fashion and news items. In cafés, restaurants and other consumption spaces people are socialising and working, watching and being watched. Inside buildings there are workplaces and homes where goods and services are produced, traded and exchanged, commodities being used and discarded, mediated and enjoyed.

Consumption is a dominant activity in the contemporary city. It is important for everyday urban life and experience in the city, as well as for urban development and city formation.

Cities are critical nexuses in the global cultural economy with intensified flows and relationships in and between cities. In urban politics, planning and policy making consumption is viewed as a crucial element for urban development. City centres are often advertised and marketed as attractive places for amusement and leisure, as well as places for work and business, and places for living and being. Consumption has become an institution in the contemporary city regulating both everyday life and the formation of cities.

Commodities are transferred from different kinds of producers to consumers all around the city and the city is practically bursting with various types of transaction spaces. The constant flow of commodities, people and information in, through and between cities are mediated through infrastructures and technological communication systems. Different technological and infrastructural developments have enhanced the geographical mobility of people and commodities, as well as of capital and information in and between cities. It is a development facilitated by ongoing urbanisation and globalisation processes, and underlying organisational and institutional changes.

This book is concerned with understanding how consumption and urban everyday life in cities are interrelated, formed and reformed by each other. Within this broad theme the specific focus is on transaction spaces. The objective is to analyse configurations of commodity transaction situations and formations of consumer service spaces.
1.1 Consumption and the City

Transactions of commodities are crucial in the formation of cities and for the urban consumer society. Spaces and places form and are formed by transaction situations. Situated transaction projects are important in everyday life and in the wider consumption process. Transaction situations, where commodities are transferred from producers to consumers, are intersections between production and consumption.

Consumption is commonly defined as the exchange and usage of commodities to satisfy needs. It can, however, imply many things and has been conceptualised in various ways and from different perspectives. In economic terms it has often been conceived and conceptualised as the end of, or in contrast to, production (Marshall 1920: 67). It has also been defined in material terms as the usage of things more generally beyond the economic sphere (Douglas and Isherwood 1979: 57) and in relation to how people ‘make do’ (De Certeau 1984).

To consume is not only an economic or material project but also a cultural and social project as it is fundamental for our identity formation and social life, and provides meaning and satisfaction to the individual. Consumption can also be seen as ‘a process of objectification – that is, a use of goods and services in which object or activity becomes simultaneously a practice in the world and a form in which we construct our understandings of ourselves in the world’ (Miller 1995b: 30).

The word consumption derives from the Latin word *consumo* and the literary meaning relates to both usage as well as to devastation, annihilation and destruction (cf. SAOB, OED: consumption). But consumption can also be related to the Latin word *consummo* and implies summation as well as completion (Aléx 1994; Clarke 2003). To consume consequently means to use something and also to take part in a process where something is destroyed but also fulfilled. Consumption is a process where things are changed and exchanged, used and reused as well as destructed and completed. It seems accurate to consider consumption as a ‘creative destructive’ project (Clarke 2003: 24).

Everyday life consumption might be materially conceptualised as an economic and cultural project involving the creative destruction of commodities, situated in a societal and political context. The focus of this thesis is the material, social and economic elements and processes of commodity transaction projects, which is a crucial part of broader everyday life consumption.

Consumption is a transdisciplinary subject by nature and an issue for anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, philosophers, linguists and economists, as well as an important topic in business, gender, cultural, media and urban studies (cf. Lee 2000; Miller 2001, 1995a; Trentmann 2007). This thesis draws on a range of different perspectives but primarily on geography.
Consumption as an everyday life project involves a range of activities from purchasing groceries and shopping for clothes to getting a haircut and socialising over a cup of coffee in a café and watching the urban drama of the consumer society performed in the city streets.

During the last decades consumption has become an expanding and vital research area within geography (e.g., Jackson and Thrift 1995; Jayne 2006; Mansvelt 2005; Crewe 2000, 2001, 2003; Crewe and Lowe 1995; Goss 2004, 2006). Consumption is inherently a spatial project (Knox and Pinch 2000, 267) and indeed a geographical issue not only because it takes place and is situated in time and space, but also because consumption forms places (Sack 1988, 643) and because geography is crucial in ‘how consumers consume’ (Thrift 2000b, 698). The scope of consumption research is diverse and the focus in this exploration will be on the spatialities of urban consumption and more specifically on transaction spaces in cities.

The city is an important place for consumption and commodity transactions are fundamental parts of urban everyday life. Cities are places where consumption projects take place but cities are also consumed places. The connections between consumption, the urban and the city are manifested and interlinked in numerous different ways through how people consume:
Importantly, then, consumption can realistically be described as a bridge that links the individual to the urban environment. It is through consumption that people’s activities and everyday lives and the physical organisation of the city are bound together (as well as constituting political, economic and social practices and processes). (Jayne 2006: 12)

Cities are complex spatial formations intricately formed and reformed by people’s everyday life, different cultural and economic projects as well as social and political relationships. Mumford’s classical definition of cities is still a relevant initial conceptualisation of cities. It contains several interesting aspects of what cities are and about the urban life taking place in cities:

The city in its complete sense then is a geographical plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theater of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity. The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theater, that man’s more purposive activities are focused, and work out, through conflicting and cooperating personalities, events, groups, into more significant culminations. (Mumford 2000 [1937]: 94)

A city is a geographical and material phenomenon. It is a place where economic and cultural projects are performed and a place for political and social interaction. The city is a cultural and economic configuration where services and goods are traded and transferred as well as a social and political institution regulating and constraining economic and cultural activities. It is also an aesthetic symbol and cultural artefact. Cities are all of this and cannot be reduced to one or the other aspect.

The city is a material formation, simultaneously a process and result, something that is continuously formed. It is a ‘temporalized place’ which both Torsten Hägerstrand and Henri Lefebvre recognised (Crang 2000). A dynamic and unifying time-spatial perspective is fundamental in both of their works and this thesis draws particularly on Hägerstrand’s thinking and time-geographies as well as on Lefebvre’s work on cities, the production of spaces and everyday life.

The city can analytically be conceptualised as the theatre where urban dramas unfold, as suggested by Mumford. City formations such as built environments and infrastructures as well as parks and water systems can be analytically and conceptually distinguished from the culture, economics and politics of the social urban drama. It is a distinction between, on the one hand, the city as a spatial artefact and material formation, and on the other, the urban as a social reality that must be mentally constructed and reconstructed (Lefebvre 1983 [1968]). The urban drama is not only a metaphor, it is also a metonym that implies nearness and association as well as likeness and analogy.
Consumers and producers are the key actors in urban performance of commodity transactions where commodities and places are crucial properties in the city theatre.

However, this analytical simplification of the urban drama and city formation should not be seen as a reduction of the intricate and complex phenomenon but as an analytical way of entering the city and approaching the urban. It is not a definite or rigid conceptualisation but an analytical and initial simplification, which will be further developed in the following chapter that sets the framework for the thesis. It is a way forward.

Consumption is an everyday life project performed by consumers and producers (the actors) in intricate relationships between urban consumer society (the drama) and city formation (the theatre) (Fig. 2). Since this thesis has a consumer perspective the consumer is depicted at the left side as figures are usually read from left to right.

To consume is a creative destructive project of commodities that brings together and involves a range of different activities. An important situation in the consumption project is the transaction of commodities from producers to consumers. Transactions are socially and politically situated economic and cultural projects. Where and when, how and what is transferred between consumers and producers are vital in the formation of cities and in urban consumer society.

Consumers, acting together with producers, perform the transaction project. The producer can be a goods manufacturer, a service provider, an experience stager or a combination depending on the situation and the commodity in question. There are two key properties in the performance and these are the commodities that are being consumed and the spaces through which consumption takes place. The commodities are also fundamental in the formation of consumer service spaces and different places in the city. What would a café be without coffee, a fashion store without clothes, or a bookshop without books?

An overarching theory of consumption is probably not conceivable nor meaningful because of the diversity and abundance of commodities with different properties and meanings in different contexts, which can and needs
to be analysed from a range of different and complementary perspectives (Miller 1995b). The same can be argued of cities and urban everyday life (e.g., Bridge and Watson 2000). There is, however, a recognised need for broader and more inclusive perspectives on (urban) consumption. Research that incorporates material and immaterial elements of consumption, that conceptualise both cultural and economic dimensions, as well as both its social and political aspects simultaneously (see Ch. 2). The ambition with this explorative study is to contribute to such a perspective on, and conceptualisation of consumption, by geographically situating and questioning commodity transactions from a consumer perspective.

1.2 Questioning Transactions

What is being transferred and how is it done, where, when and by whom to whom? These are rather trivial but important questions. They are questions of exploring how transactions take place, how transactions consume and are consumed in time and space, and how transactions form spaces, produce and are produced by space.

These are critical questions in understanding how consumption and urban everyday life in cities are interrelated, formed and reformed by each other. They are also fundamental for formulating the thesis’ objective to analyse the configuration of commodity transaction situations and the formation of consumer service spaces.

The thesis’ explorative analysis has more specifically been guided by three research questions. The interrelated research questions are all questions that focus on the dynamic and practical question of ‘how’, rather than on the structural question ‘why’ (Flyvbjerg 2001: 118, 136f). The first question is methodological and conceptual, and guides the two following more practically oriented questions.

1. How can transactions be geographically situated and conceptualised from a consumption perspective?
2. How are different situations of commodity transactions configured and constrained in time and space?
3. How are consumer service spaces for commodity transactions formed in and part of city formation?

The thesis is outlined in accordance with these three research questions. It is an explorative approach that reaches from the more abstract and conceptual to the more concrete and practical.

The theoretical conceptualisations inform the analysis of more practical examples while examples simultaneously concretise, illustrate and problematise the conceptualisations. Figures, photographs and sketches are used
to summarise and illustrate conceptualisations and in order to concretise and problematise the conceptualisations. The figures are thus dynamic analytical tools and not statements.

The disposition of the text reflects the research project rather well but the text is, by necessity, structured in a linear fashion while the research has been an iterative project. Chapters three to five address the three research questions respectively. The chapters can be seen as separate but, like the research questions, they are intertwined and build on each other.

The second chapter, *Geographies of Urban Consumption*, sets the framework for the thesis by discussing geographies of urban consumption and the relationship between consumption, the urban and the city. Consumption is discussed and conceived as an economic and cultural everyday life project materially and bodily situated in socio-political contexts. The chapter also contains discussions on consumption as an institution in the urban consumer society and its importance for urban development and city formation. It furthermore provides an overview of consumption research in geography.

The third chapter, *Conceptualising Transaction Situations*, outlines a conceptualisation of transaction situations from a time-spatial perspective. Beginning with questioning what is being transferred, how, by whom to whom. Transactions are conceptualised as being between social interaction and economic exchange. The thesis focuses on the material, social and economic elements and processes of commodity transaction situations.

The key element is that what is being transferred is primarily a value – a value that has a material basis as well as social and mental significance. The chapter discusses and brings together time-geographies with the spatial production of spaces, and is a continuation of the methodology introduced later in this chapter. In the following two chapters the outlined time-spatial conceptualisation is used to analyse different configurations of commodity transaction situations and formation of consumer service spaces – two different perspectives based on commodity respectively place.

The fourth chapter, *Transaction Configurations in Practice*, is an analysis of different commodity transaction configurations. By focusing on the mobility of consumers and commodities in time-space, a limited number of theoretically possible transactions can be distinguished. What can be transferred depends on the properties of the commodity, and the synchronisation and coordination of producer and consumer in time and space. The importance of technology and new practices as well as time-space flexibility and place is stressed in the analysis. The chapter is structured around three examples that concretise, illustrate, and problematise different configurations. The example commodities are books and texts, fashion clothing and a cup of coffee.

Understanding how the city is represented and planned and urban life is regulated and constrained is critical for both the accessibility to commodity transaction situations and the formation of consumer service spaces. Which
transaction projects are encouraged, which spaces for transactions are being produced, and do some transaction spaces dominate? In contemporary cities commodities are often provided by and supplied through what could be called consumer service spaces.

The fifth chapter, *Formation of Consumer Service Spaces*, explores how transactions are situated in and constituted by place and how consumer services spaces are formed and forms places. By necessity, the transaction situation must take place somewhere and most often it occurs in different kinds of public spaces such as shops, boutiques, restaurants, cafés, etc. The analysis of the formation of consumer service spaces is structured around property development projects, the historical trajectories of different transaction configurations and changing spatial formations in the Stockholm city centre.

A range of different actors and institutions, projects and processes, commodities and materialities forms consumer service spaces. Economic and social aspects are highlighted alongside material projects and historical processes. Changing spatial practices and intersections between different actors and processes, strategic representations of space and repositioned planning and policies as well as a differentiated tactical usage of these spaces are emphasised in the analysis.

The sixth chapter *Conclusions* summarises and discusses the findings of the thesis regarding three important aspects of how transaction spaces are configured and formed in relation to the city and urban consumer society. First, regarding the materiality of the transaction situation and its historical continuities and changes. Second, the capitalisation of transaction spaces and its entanglement in the local and global cultural economy is emphasised. Third, the distanciation and integration of transaction situations and places of everyday life tactics is stressed as important.

### 1.3 Methodological Outline

This explorative study has what can be called a philosophical method starting in the abstract with theoretical conceptualisations in order to arrive at concrete practices (Lefebvre 2004 [1992]). As an explorative study it does not strive for verification or falsification (cf. Lenntorp 1998) but to show the importance of situatededness and spatialities of transactions as well as more broadly show how transactions forms and are formed in everyday urban life and cities. It is a conceptual analysis. However, thinking conceptually is a material activity which engages with and draws on different examples (Latham and McCormack 2004).

It is a methodology that strives to put parts together that is often studied separately and brings things together in time and space. The transaction situation is used as a point of origin onto which parts are added successively through different examples. It is a centrifugal analysis starting from transac-
tion situations moving outwards by using different examples that are continuously connected to larger contexts (Highmore 2005). It is nevertheless necessary to make analytical divisions and categorisations. Different typologies and conceptualisations are used as a way of entering and coming to grips with the complexity of the everyday life urban drama in cites.

The everyday life of people is a common point of reference in both Hägerstrand’s and Lefebvre’s work. It is also a critical point of origin in this thesis on consumption as an everyday life project in cities that, as mentioned above, explicitly uses Hägerstrand’s and Lefebvre’s time-spatial perspectives. Lefebvre explains the notion of everyday as:

The everyday can therefore be defined as a set of functions which connect and join together systems that might appear to be distinct. Thus defined, the everyday is a *product*, the most general of products in an era where production engenders consumption, and where consumption is manipulated by producers: not by “workers,” but by the managers and owners of the means of production (intellectual, instrumental, scientific). The everyday is therefore the most universal and the most unique condition, the most social and the most individuated, the most obvious and the best hidden. A condition stipulated for the legibility of forms, ordained by means of functions, inscribed within structures, the everyday constitutes the platform upon which the bureaucratic society of controlled consumerism is erected. (Lefebvre 1987: 9)

The everyday is simultaneously simple and complex, both particular and general. It is the platform for all social life and is not reducible to leisure or free time activities outside of work although it is more associated with consumption than with production. Everyday life brings together, and is constituted by all different spheres of being in the world, the physical, the social and the mental.

A conceptualisation of the world as constituted by material, mental and social dimensions is recognised both by Lefebvre (1991) and Hägerstrand (1985a), although they depart from different perspectives. A three-fold separation of the world is not unique to either Hägerstrand or Lefebvre but can be found in many different strands of thoughts. In geography it is often associated with a relational perspective on space (Holt-Jensen 1999; Sack 1988). Lefebvre and Hägerstrand, however, both strived to synthesise the different realms and overcome the separations.

Hägerstrand argued that it is important to complete the specialisation and fragmentation of research and bring together the social, mental and physical in a unifying perspective and conceptual language. This does not imply an all-encompassing theory explaining the world but a way of completing the fragmented picture of knowledge. A perspective that complements and strives ‘to pay attention to the bridges and the traffic that crosses’ (Hägerstrand 1985a: 195) the physical, mental and social realm.
Lefebvre strove for something similar and argued that: ‘the aim is to discover or construct a theoretical unity between ‘fields’ which are apprehended separately’ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 11). The fields that Lefebvre was concerned with and wanted to unite were the physical, the mental and the social. A dynamic time-spatial perspective was for both these thinkers a way of bridging separations such as Lefebvre’s notion of the production of space and for Hägerstrand a time-geographical thinking.

The time-spatial perspective on commodity transaction situations outlined in chapter three is an attempt at weaving together threads of the mental, the physical and the social sphere. The argument is that through a time-spatial approach it is possible to integrate different material and immaterial elements, cultural and economic dimensions and social and political aspects into one analysis. By focusing on commodity transactions as everyday life projects the thesis is an attempt to deepen and widen the understanding of interdependent relationships between consumption, urban everyday life and formation of cities. In the words of Hägerstrand ‘to say something useful about at least a considerable amount of everything at the same time’ (1985a: 194).

Commodities have life paths and complex geographies related to a spatial division of labour where a range of actors and activities are part of creating the commodity during its trajectory from producers to consumers. The transfer of the commodity to the consumer is one moment in the life paths of commodities, which can be configured in various ways but are always constrained by time and space. A transaction does not occur in a vacuum (Hägerstrand 2000), but is a project performed and situated in time and space. The transaction is, in time-geographical terms, situated in pockets of local order (Hägerstrand 1985a), and the transaction of commodities are associated with different time-spatial constraints which regulates the accessibility and its characteristics (Hägerstrand 1970).

In contrast to the time-geographical perspectives, which emphasise the scarcity of time-space and struggle between realisations of different projects, Lefebvre’s focus was on the social production of space. Lefebvre’s work on space, cities and everyday life have been widely used and acclaimed in geography. It has especially contributed to thinking about relational and social spaces. In this thesis it is used particularly to highlight production of different spaces of transaction situations and formation of consumer services spaces, and to inform the conceptualisation of commodity transaction situations.

The analysis of different spatial formations draws particularly on Lefebvre’s (1991) dialectical perspective on the production of space. In particular, the spatial typology of spatial practices, representation of space and space of representation is used and interpreted in relation to producers’ strategic domination of space and consumers’ tactical appropriation of space that is mediated through places and different spatial practices.
The combination of Hägerstrand’s and Lefebvre’s approaches, as they are interpreted and used in this thesis, amounts to a time-spatial perspective that incorporates both the consumption and production in space, and the consumption and production of space. The strength of such an approach is that time, space and everyday life are used as points of origin, but with different and complimentary angles.

By using transactions as an analytical unit it becomes possible to question traditional transactions and the changes and continuities related to consumption and commodities. A focus on the commodity situation rather than on the producer or the consumer makes it possible to move beyond the dichotomy between economy and culture, and integrate social and political aspects as well as material and immaterial properties. Additionally, it helps to identify intersections and changes in configurations and formations since the transaction can be regarded as a constant or invariance. Transactions can be seen as invariance or constant. Invariance enables a deciphering of changes from continuities.

In practice different examples are used to concretise, illustrate, and problematise conceptualisations and typologies. Different examples are used to integrate both culture and economic dimensions as well as social and political issues. The examples are all connected and have gradually been selected based on their richness of information and of their contrasting differences as well as interrelationships. The examples are used to compare and contrast different transaction configurations and consumer service spaces.

The examples are primarily from Stockholm city, but they are also used to illustrate and problematise broader changes. Stockholm is simultaneously an example of a place in itself, which is situated in the global cultural economy. In the different examples various kinds of materials are employed from multiple sources. The material for the examples comes from observations and written sources. Consequently, the methodology is developed alongside the project, and methodological issues are found in different parts of the book, but primarily in the third chapter.
2. Geographies of Urban Consumption

Urbanism and consumerism are two characteristics of contemporary society. The transformation of society over the last decades of the 20th century implied a general shift in emphasis from production to consumption (e.g., Appadurai 1996; Baudrillard 1998; Bauman 1998, 2007; Castells 1996, 1997, 1998; Harvey 1989b; Lash and Urry 1994; Lefebvre 1991 [1974]). Furthermore, contemporary society is characterised, constituted by and dependent on increased mobility of people and objects, capital and information, as well as on the interconnectivity of the world and the formation of a global cultural economy.

This chapter outlines the grand issues related to urban consumption. It puts the thesis and analysis of the configuration of commodity transaction situations and formation of consumer service spaces into a societal and research perspective. The city is simultaneously a place for consumption and a place that is consumed and the city is experienced through consumption. Consumption has become an increasingly important issue in urban planning and policy-making.

The chapter first outlines some of the important changes and characteristics of contemporary urban society where consumerism has become increasingly important as an institution in society. The epithet urban consumer society is therefore warranted. The conceptualisation of consumption as an everyday life project in the urban consumer society performed at the city theatre is scrutinised and developed. The relationship between city formation and urban life is discussed and nuanced. Consumption is also related to the increased mobility of people and things, capital and information as well as mobility in relation to lifestyles.

Second, city formation and urban development are discussed and put into the context of globalisation and the formation of a global cultural economy. There are general tendencies towards neoliberalisation in increasingly global urban politics in which consumption, consumer services and other place specific attributes are perceived as crucial for urban development and city formation.

Third, the chapter briefly reviews urban consumption as a research topic within geography and distinguishes critical research questions in relation to the objective of project. There are broadly two strands in consumption geography, economic and social analysis, and two main study objects: consumption places and commodity chains. It is argued that there is a need to over-
come these separations and for a more inclusive analysis of intersections and connections, which could be achieved through focusing on transaction situations from a consumer perspective. Additionally, there is a need for an analysis that takes the material and economic as well as the social elements of transactions seriously.

2.1 Urban Consumer Society

The urban fabric has spread beyond traditional city limits, and urban society has reached beyond the historical city. The historical development of European cities can roughly be described in four phases: the ancient political city, the feudal merchant city, the industrial city, and now the fourth phase – the urban society. Lefebvre (2003 [1970]) describes the historical development of cities along an axis from one to a hundred, from an agrarian society to a completely urbanised society, i.e., a development from different city formations to a completely urban society.

The critical transition from an agrarian dominated society to an urban society occurred with the development of the industrial city, which became a city characterised by production and consumption, both consumption in the city and of the city. The post-industrial or post-modern city (although Lefebvre never used those terms), is also characterised as a politicised layer of knowledge and information, although not replacing or diminishing the importance of consumption (Lefebvre 2005 [1981]).

In the beginning of the 21st century most people lived under urban conditions (Sieverts 2003), and urbanisation is still an accelerating process (Castells 2002: 368). Urban everyday life had its origin in cities but has expanded beyond its city origins, and the urban is no longer reducible to cities. According to Lefebvre, urbanisation can be regarded as a complex process of ‘implosion-explosion’ that involves:

… the tremendous concentration (of people, activities, wealth, goods, objects, instruments, means and thought) of urban reality and the immense explosion, the projection of numerous, disjunct fragments (peripheries, suburbs, vacation homes, satellite towns) into space. (2003 [1970]: 14)

The conceptualisation of urbanisation as a process of implosion-explosion suggests that the city can be analytically separated from the urban (as discussed above). However, everyday life without a materiality is inconceivable, which means that any distinction between the urban and the city should be taken carefully (Lefebvre 1983 [1968]: 69). The conceptualisation of the urban proposed by Lefebvre is broad and closely related to the notion of the social. The seemingly contradictory process of implosion-explosion has con-
sequently made it increasingly difficult to draw a distinctive line around the city and it is even more difficult to demarcate the urban.

Is urban life something specific to cities? Is rural life something different from urban life? Has society been completely urbanised as Lefebvre predicted and could it be argued that, as suggested by Amin and Thrift ‘the city is everywhere and in everything’ (2002: 1)? Or have the processes of explosion and implosion resulted, as proposed by Sieverts (2003), in an urban landscape without cities – cities without cities? Perhaps, but it is different to live and work in the city centre of a capital city in comparison with living and working in a small rural town both regarding the material and social conditions of everyday urban life and in the experience of cities.

Any division between the rural and the urban can, however, be questioned, since there has always been a mutual interdependent relationship between cities and their surroundings. Already from the first formation of cities they have been ‘one of the indispensable foundations of not only the development of agriculture but also for the appearance of agricultural villages, rural life, pastoralism, large-scale irrigation systems, writing, class formation, and the state’ (Soja 2000: 28).

The urban landscape, metropolitan areas, city-regions and urban agglomerations resulting from this implosion-explosion process is characterised by, on the one hand, simultaneously spatial sprawl and concentration, and, on the other hand, by mobility and dependence on physical and virtual communication networks (Castells 2002: 375). Cities are not, and perhaps have never been, homogeneous or distinct entities but they are becoming increasingly fragmented and splintered (Graham and Marvin 2001). In densely populated regions cities are merging with other cities, and there are cities within cities but there are also non-city areas within urban agglomerations, and cities are being detached from cities.

However, cities are not independent material formations. They are, as has been noted, dependent on their surroundings and interconnected with other cities and towns. The city is not only a container where things happen but also an integral element in the changes of society. Cities are not and have never been independent entities but constantly dependent and situated in relation to the surrounding landscape and other cities and towns. This is especially evident when it comes to consumption.

Ever since the first city formations, consumption has been a vital part of cities and urban life, especially through the market as a place where goods and services, capital and information where exchanged. The market is an essential part of the city, and cities cannot exist without markets. As a generalised phenomenon ‘the market’ has its origin in cities and urban societies, as Braudel argued:

No town is without its market, and there can be no regional markets without towns. One hears a great deal about the role of cities in the development and
diversification of consumption but very little about the extremely important fact that even the humblest town-dweller must of necessity obtain his food supply through the market: the town in other words *generalizes* the market into a widespread phenomenon. (Braudel 2002 [1979]: 479ff. original emphasis)

The city is not only a place for consumption; the city is also a consumed place. The city is the primary context for consumption and consumption is a crucial link between the individual and her or his experience of the city (Miles and Paddison 1998). Miles and Miles conclude in *Consuming Cities* that consumption is omnipresent in society and pivotal in everyday life in contemporary cities, which are not merely cities for consumption or cities of consumption but consumed cities that are ‘defined by and through consumption’ (Miles and Miles 2002: 170).

Consumption has become institutionalised through the consumer society (Baudrillard 1998). Consumption is an everyday life project but it is ‘conducted in a setting of a *society* of consumers’ (Bauman 1998: 82). It is, according to Bauman (1998: 2007), a society where people are primarily defined as consumers and relate to each other and themselves as consumers. It is on the individual capacity as consumers that people are being valued. To maintain itself the consumer society ‘manages to render non-satisfaction permanent’ (Bauman 1998: 80). Baudrillard observed that humans in the consumer society are primarily surrounded by other commodities rather than by other people and that people now outlive the commodities and that the consumer society is characterised by the ‘universality of the news item’ (Baudrillard 1998: 25).

It should be noted that consumption, although increasingly important and dominant, is just one aspect of urban everyday life (Lefebvre 2003 [1970]). It is furthermore misleading to simply state that consumption is more important than production or the other way around (Hudson 2005: 9). Especially since consumption and production are not separate but rather ‘*one and the same process of expanded reproduction of productive forces and their control*’ (Baudrillard 1998: 82 original emphasis).

Since all societies need both producers and consumers, the consumer society is a shift of emphasis from production to consumption rather than a distinctive break (Bauman 1998: 24). One way to conceptualise this is to distinguish between consumption and consumerism (Glennie 1998), where consumerism is seen as an ‘attribute of society’ (Bauman 2007). Consumption is a situated practice and everyday life project while consumerism denotes consumption as an institution in society and the process that motivates and encourages consumption of particular commodities and to consume in particular ways.

The development of consumerism is fundamentally dependent on the ability of consumers to consume. We are all consumers in one way or the other.
To be a consumer is to enter into a role. Just as we are citizens, family members and workers, we are consumers. The word consumer is historically connected to consumption of commodities produced for sale. In contrast to customer and user it indicates ‘a more abstract figure in a more abstract market’ (Williams 1988 [1976]: 79).

There is little consensus on the characteristics of consumers and consumer practises, especially since one person can act differently in different situations, i.e., ‘the role the consumer will play in the act of consumption is a dialectical process’ between the consumer and means of consumption (Ritzer and Ovadia 2000: 48). How consumers consume is dependent on a range of different aspects such as age and gender, class and ethnicity as well as on social and geographical mobility of people and commodities.

Mobility is essential for urban everyday life and a prerequisite for consumption (Carlstein 1982). Consumption projects are dependent on consumer and commodity mobility, and much of the mobility in the urban society is a result of consumption. Thrift points out that the development of a consumerist society has ‘transformed consumption into a mode of being’ (1996: 269) but also that mobility has become the ‘primary activity of existence’ in the contemporary society (ibid.: 286). Immobility is a disaster for the individual but extreme individual mobility is problematic for any ordered society (Hägerstrand 1987).

In geographical terms mobility can be understood in a threefold way; first as an abstract but measurable empirical reality; second as ideas conveyed through representations that give mobility meaning; and third as an experienced practice: ‘a way of being in the world’ (Cresswell 2006: 3). (This conceptualisation of mobility can be related to Lefebvre’s spatiality (perceived, conceived and lived space, see below)). Consequently, mobility is simultaneously a function of time and space and a fundamental part of space and time (Cresswell 2006).

**Consumers and forms of consumption**

In many ways the city is the origin of consumer cultures and fundamental in the transition into a consumer society. Consumption is important in the construction of urban everyday life but simultaneously consumption controls and regulates it. In a contradictory manner consumption both enables and constrains urban everyday life, which Miles describes as ‘the consuming paradox’ (Miles 1998).

The transition into a consumerist society is often related to the development of modernism. A transition process that is often described in three stages: before or pre-modern consumption, modern consumption, and late or post-modern consumption (cf. Harvey 1989b; Glennie and Thrift 1992; Mansvelt 2005). When the transition to a consumerist society took place is contextually dependent and manifested differently in time and space. It is difficult to talk of a general shift because it has occurred and unfolded dif-
ferently at different times and in different places (Zukin and Maquire 2004). Any chronological or historical description of the development of consumption must therefore be place sensitive to avoid ‘one spaceless master narrative, and in terms of practices of shops, shopping, and consumer sites, where the situatedness of conduct is a key to how that conduct proceeds’ (Glennie and Thrift 1996: 41).

Consumers and especially shoppers have traditionally been conceived as female and passive although later accounts have acknowledged the active and male consumer. The recognition of the active consumer has ‘produced a more honest and gender-sensitive view’ of consumers and consumption (Oh and Arditi 2000: 87). Through a general increased recognition of and status given to consumption and shopping ‘the consumer has ceased to be seen as female’ (Bowlby 2000: 7), but shopping and shopping spaces are however still significantly gendered (Bradley 2007). The active and independent consumer should however not be over emphasised and it is perhaps more accurate to talk about reactive consumers and view the consumers practices as different forms of tactics as in accordance with de Certeau (1984), which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

The choice of the consumer is rhetorically free but is always constrained, by the underlying production system and inequalities in society (e.g., Baudrillard 1998). During the last century there has, in most parts of the world, been a general increase in the material conditions and the welfare of people, although the general inequalities in society are more or less unchanged (Beck 1998 [1986]). The increased social and physical mobility which this has resulted in have given the individual more control of her life and made her less bound by her origin which means that the increased mobility also has resulted in an individualization process (Beck 1998 [1986]: 129). The individualization has, argues Beck, made the individual dependent on market relations and exposed to external forces and standardisation. An interpretation of this is that individuals have been forced to create their own life and their own identity and belonging, i.e. lifestyles.

Lifestyles are closely connected to consumerism and urbanism. Consumption is crucial both as a mean and in the enactment of lifestyles (Shields 1992a). Lifestyle is about creating meaning and identity as well as a social form connected to the individuals’ possibilities to differentiate and position themselves through consumption.

Lifestyle as a social form is, moreover, intimately connected to the city. The city initially saw an unprecedented growth in consumerism as a mechanism of differentiation. Lifestyle itself is a response to the conditions to which this, in turn, gave rise; a ready means of coping with the impossible task of weighting all the options vying for attention. The transformation of the experience of the city life into a kaleidoscopic array of competing lifestyles faithfully reflects the dialectic dependency and choice characterizing consumerism, which in turn recalls the conditions of its birth. (Clarke 2003: 165f.)
Consumer lifestyles and consumer cultures are intimately connected to urban everyday life. In the dense population of cities forms of consumption and lifestyles are used to display and create identities, belonging or distinction from others.

It is problematic to discuss a consumer culture (or lifestyle) there are rather many different coexisting consumer cultures. Especially since 'culture is a fluid process of forming, expressing and enforcing identities' (Zukin 1995: 289). The cultures and forms of consumption have, however, on a general level changed during the last century. It is changes that can be related to city formation processes (Jayne 2006; Zukin 1998; Knox 1991). The transformations of consumer cultures are clearly manifested through various types of retailing and different consumption spaces and places.

Early forms of retailing, or so-called pre-modern forms of consumption are usually associated with small-scale boutiques, specialty stores and outdoor markets. The prices where not standardize and could be negotiated. Everyday trade and retailing was primarily local and regulated and controlled by guilds. It was difficult to shop around, especially, since much of merchandise where behind the counter and the storeowner and his assistance helped the consumer, and purchasing was more or less obligatory (Jayne 2006). This changed significantly with the development of modern forms of consumption and the construction of new retail spaces, such as first passages and department stores, and later supermarkets and malls.

The passages of which Benjamin (Benjamin 1992 [1927-39]) was fascinated developed in Paris during the early 19th century and are the vanguard of the department store. The glass and steel passages, made possible through new construction methods and materials, incorporated boutiques and stores as well as cafés and restaurants. The passages connected the streets of the urban flâneur, the man strolling around in the city, inhaling the atmosphere and gazing at the sights.

The department stores that developed during the 19th century characterized a shift in how consumers could consume and the experience of shopping in comparison with the early forms of consumption (Jayne 2006: 46). The departments store with a wide range and display of desirable commodities sold at fixed prices attracted consumers from all around the city and made it possible to browse around, feeling and looking at the commodities.

It has been argued that the department store liberated female consumption and through the departments store a female public sphere was created (Domosh and Seager 2001). It was however a liberation for primarily the middle class. It should not be interpreted that the city was bereft of women prior to the department store, because such a conceptualization would diminish and veil all the women how already worked in the city and at the streets (McRobbie 1997). Zola (2001 [1883]) elegantly described the dual roles of women in the department store where the women’s increased status was difficult to handle. Especially the role of sales women was tricky because on
The one hand they were often from the working class but on the other hand they worked with and served middle class women.

The development of the rational self-service supermarket store during the 20th century changed the shopping experience once again ‘the department store can be romanticized in the slow-motion time of a shopping that is no more, as opposed to a supermarket world that is brash, impersonal, routine’ (Bowlby 2000: 13). Further down the line with increased car ownership and suburbanization newer retail formats such as malls and out of town shopping centres was developed. Both the department store and the supermarket are in different contexts described as modern forms of consumption despite of their rather different characters.

Contemporary or post-modern forms of consumption are manifested in a range of different retail forms and consumption spaces. Spectacular theme parks, gigantic malls and other sites incorporating a range of activities, associated with pleasure and experience are commonly referred examples. There is also Internet stores with virtual shopping that has the potential to radically change how and where consumption takes place. Perhaps what characterizes post-modern consumption and retail spaces the most is on the one hand diversity and differentiation, on other blurring of boundaries and implosion of different types and forms of activities in time and spaces.

An increased diversification of lifestyles during the last thirty years has entailed and reinforced the significance of different consumption places related to new cultural expressions and recreational activities (Zukin 1998: 825). The differentiations of lifestyles have increased the importance of what and how to consume, but also where to consume. This is also connected to societal changes that started to blur the traditional boundaries between work and play, labour and leisure, consumption and production, which has been clearly separated since industrialisation both spatially and temporally (Pred 1981a). These development tendencies hardly apply for all societal groups but have had significance for geographies of consumption.

The novelties in consumer cultures and consumption formations should not be over emphasised since there are many contingencies as well as changes. Pre-modern and post-modern forms of consumption have more connection than is often acknowledge, and there might be more resemblance between these two forms than between modern standardised mass-consumption and differentiated and individualized post-modern consumption.

Glennie and Thrift (1992; 1996; Glennie 1998) stresses historical contextualisation and identified important continuities and resemblances between forms of consumption in the 18th century and the late 20th century. In both periods the density of urban centres played a significant role in the formation and communication of consumer practices and identities. The urban spaces of both periods are characterised by more flexibility and adaptability towards different consumer practices and more fluid social identities in comparison
with the mass-consumption era. A conclusion is that: ‘Urban environments are, and were, the preeminent generators of both new consumer practices and new forms of social integration’ (Glennie and Thrift 1992: 440).

Harvey (1989b) has however identified two significant changes concerning geographies of consumption regarding volatility and form of consumption, which extends beyond the modern mass-consumption era. Firstly, the accelerating pace of consumption provided by ‘mobilization of fashion in mass’ (Harvey 1989b: 285), which can be related to Bauman’s concepts of liquid life and liquid modernity. It ‘is a society in which conditions under which its members act change faster than it takes the ways of acting to consolidate into habits and routines. Liquidity of life and that of society feed and reinvigorate each other. Liquid life, just like liquid modern society, cannot keep its shape or stay on course for long’ (Bauman 2005: 1).

The second, and directly related development is the increasing consumption of different kinds of services ranging from business to personal service but also including recreational and entertainment services. It is a development that has had significant impact on the city formation and urban development. This is much in line with Lefebvre’s reasoning about the transition from consumption in space to the consumption of space, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter:

A moment comes when people in general leave the space of consumption, which coincides with the historical locations of capital accumulation, with the space of production, and with the space that is produced; this is the space of the market, the space of through which flows follow their paths, the space which the state controls – a space, therefore, that is strictly quantified. When people leave this space, they move towards the consumption of space (an unproductive form of consumption). This moment is the moment of departure – the moment of people’s holiday’s, formerly a contingent but now a necessary moment. When this moment arrives, ‘people’ demand a qualitative space. (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 352f.)

2.2 City Formation Processes

There is a range of different processes involved in city formation. On the one hand, cities can be seen as a result of everyday life and patterns of collective consumption (Castells 1978), on the other as a result of supply and demand, i.e., of production and consumption (Knox 1991). City formations (as consumption discussed above) can be understood processes of creative destruction. City formations and urban development are seemingly contradictory processes dependent on creation and destruction of the built environment. The built environment is a ‘geographically ordered, complex, composite commodity’ (Harvey 2006 [1982]).
Harvey (1978; 1989a) argues that urbanisation should be understood in relation to the developments of the capitalistic system and the interaction between economic and spatial constraints. The driving force in the capitalistic system is generation of profit and surplus value, which is generated through the circulation of capital. In short, money is, in the primary circuit of capital, used to purchase products that are refined through means of production and labour power and later sold to a higher price, which generates new money that can be used for buying new products or be invested in means of production or labour power. A possibility to accelerate capital accumulation is to overcoming time spatial barriers. Since ‘the circulation of capital is a geographical movement in time’ (Harvey 1989a: 15) the capitalistic systems works towards annihilation of space by time.

An inspection of the different moments and transitions within the circulation of capital indicates a geographical grounding of that process through the patterning of labor and commodity markets, of the spatial division of production and consumption (under sociotechnical conditions that are in part an adaptation to geographical variations), and of hierarchically organized systems of financial coordination. Capital flow presupposes tight temporal and spatial coordination in the midst of increasing separation and fragmentation. It is impossible to imagine such a material process without the production of some kind of urbanization as a “rational landscape” within which the accumulation of capital can proceed. Capital accumulation and the production of urbanization go hand in hand. (Harvey 1989a: 22)

The capitalistic system and the circulation of capital does, according to Harvey, result in apparently contradictory situations. The annihilation of space by time requires fixed investments. In order to overcome the spatial barriers it is necessary to invest in built environment and physical infrastructure such as communication networks, circulation nodes, means of production and facilities for labour power. The fixation of capital makes alternative investments impossible other than through destruction of them. These investments are also a result of the inability of the primary circulation process to accommodate all capital that is generated. Investments can be described as the second circuit of capital.

Lefebvre (2003 [1970]: 160) argued that the second circuit and fixed capital, that is real estate and fixed investments such as offices, housing and infrastructure is becoming increasingly important for generating surplus value when the mobility of capital is slowing down. Private property and the demand for interchangeable fragments, i.e. real estates, does however pulverise space (Lefebvre 1979). Production of surplus value through the second circuit is hence problematic and can have diverse impacts on the primary circuit (e.g., Gottdiener 1985). City formation and built environments are thus in contradictory manners a crucial element of capitalism.
Consumption spaces has, as predicted by Lefebvre, since the 1980’s become an increasingly important economic nexus and an ‘attractive location for the abstraction of surplus value and for capital accumulation’ (Marsden and Wrigley 1995: 1900). Zukin (1995) argues that in order to understand the contemporary city formation it is important to also consider the symbolic economy because of the increased importance of cultural industries and the service sector. Contemporary cities are to a large degree characterised by consumer and business services (Amin 2000), rather than by manufacturing industries (Glennie 1998, 927).

Culture has according to Zukin become the primary economic base of cities and she uses the concept of the symbolic economy to understand the formation of contemporary cities:

… the symbolic economy features two parallel production systems that are crucial to a city’s material life: the Production of space, with its synergy of capital investments and cultural meanings, and the production of symbols, which constructs both a currency of commercial exchange and a language of social identity. Every effort to rearrange space in the city is also an attempt at visual re-presentation. (Zukin 1995: 23f)

City formation and urban development cannot be appreciated independently from broader political and economic developments and must be put in the context of globalisation and the formation of global cultural economy in order to be understood. The temporal and historical development of cities is also highly significant because:

The spatial form of the city does not and will never correspond perfectly to the processes that constitute the city. Past trends continue, prior investments and social commitments slow the pace of spatial change, and the logic of capitalism (despite recent transformations) operates within property markets to reinforce the forms and relations of development. (Beauregard and Haila 2000: 36)

Cities are crucial places in the globalisation and the global cultural economy. Globalisation is in short a cultural and economic process of increased interconnectedness and interdependence across the world and over territorial borders, a process of qualitative shifts that have increased and deepened the integration and interconnectedness across traditional boundaries (e.g., Dicken 2003; Peck and Yeung 2003).

Globalisation ‘symbolizes the blurring of traditional territorial and social boundaries through the interpenetration of local and distant influences’ (Amin 1997: 123f). It is not a simple dualistic process of homogenisation or heterogenisation but rather an economic and cultural ‘complex, overlapping and disjunctive order’, which, according to Appadurai (1996), can be conceptualised as the new global cultural economy.
The new global cultural economy is fundamentally dependent on increased mobility, which has been facilitated through technological and infrastructural developments and changing institutional, organisational and territorial formations and arrangements. Castells emphasises the interconnectedness through characterising contemporary society as network society and through the concepts ‘spaces of flows’ and ‘spaces of places’. The intersection between these two is ‘a fundamental feature of urban life, and society at large, in the new technological paradigm, characteristic of the network society (Castells 2002: 381). The formation of the global cultural economy has been dependent on cities as production centres and as infrastructural nodes in networks.

The impact of consumption on cities cannot be doubted but ‘contextual analysis of the micro-expressions of consumer practices in everyday life’ (Miles 1998: 1008) is still very much unexplored. There are multiple functional linkages between consumption and the city, but two stand out as particularly important. Cities are sites for wealth accumulation and conversely as spaces for leisure, tourism and enjoyment. Cultural and social processes also form cities, and urban planning and people’s everyday life are crucial in the formation and what needs to be emphasised are:

… the multiple intersections between consumption and the (re) territorialisation of urban space, the sites through which consumption takes place, the impress of new waves of capital investment and the meanings – the pleasures, frustrations, anxieties and aspirations – such shifts have for individuals. (Miles and Paddison 1998: 822)

**Politics and urban development**

Over the last decades the urban has experienced a renaissance with politicians, planners, developers and architects as well as amongst people who want to live and work in vibrant and attractive cities (Latham 2003). The creation of consumption opportunities and spaces has, over the last two decades, been seen as critical for urban development. It is perhaps more evident in the contemporary city than before but it should be recognised that consumption has always been a vital part of cities (as argued above).

It is commonly argued that cities compete for capital investments and firm locations, attracting long-term residents as well as tourists and business travellers, and for different international events and happenings, as well as location of international organisations (e.g., Amin and Graham 1997; Brenner and Theodore 2002a; Glaeser and Gottlieb 2006; Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz 2001; Harvey 1989c; Hubbard and Hall 1998). Accordingly, the future development and economic growth of cities is highly dependent on cities’ place-based facilities such as a variety of both private and public consumer services and products in combination with efficient infrastructure and a
physically attractive urban landscape (Amin 2000; Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz 2001).

Urban development and cities cannot be understood only in economic terms as suggested by Zukin’s (1995) emphasis on the symbolic economy. Amin and Thrift criticise the notion of general proximity and clustering as constitutional for cities and urban development. They recognise that cities are generators of demand and that cities possess ‘the economic power of consumption and circulation’ (2002: 67) but question, for example, to what extent consumer spending actually stays in the city and benefits urban development. They argue instead that cities should be regarded as ‘distanciated economic networks’ where ‘the light sociology of urban institutions’ is more important than the proximity of trading partners (ibid. 76).

Furthermore, cities are not companies, or commodities, and there is not much empirical evidence of there being actual market competition between cities (Krugman 1994). If one city is prosperous it does not necessarily or automatically mean that another is not. On the contrary, cities are intimately interconnected through the global cultural economy, which often means that if economic development is good in one city it is also good in others. For example, if London’s economy is booming, New York probably has a similar development, or if Copenhagen’s economic development is in decline it is highly likely that Stockholm would follow suit.

The rhetorical and imaginary is a different story. Because of a number of success stories it is political suicide not to engage in the competition (Jessop, Peck, and Tickell 1999).

The emphasis on city competitiveness is directly related to globalisation and the new cultural economy, and to neoliberalisation and market-oriented policies. Globalisation is historically and rhetorically intertwined with neoliberalisation, but they are not interchangeable. Rhetorically, globalisation is often used as an excuse for implementing neoliberal politics while anti-globalists and anti-capitalists argue that neoliberalism is the cause of globalisation. However, neither globalisation nor neoliberalisation are end-states or uniform processes (Peck and Tickell 2003).

Neoliberalisation can be defined as ‘the mobilisation of state power in the contradictory extension and reproduction of market (-like) rule’ (Peck and Tickell 2003: 166 original emphasis). It is, however, a ‘multi-vocal and contradictory phenomena’ (Larner 2000) that plays out differently in different contexts, often in hybrid forms (McGuirk 2005). It is not a simple process of state withdrawal and deregulation but rather a process of re-regulation and changing forms of state intervention (Peck 2000).

Neoliberalism is, on a fundamental level, constructed upon the premise of commodification of all societal life (Brenner and Keil 2006). Whether neoliberalisation is conceived as a philosophy or ideology, political discourse or set of practices, it is fundamentally dependent on the notion of the free market as the ultimate judge of all actions in society: ‘the ultimate goal of neo-
liberalism is a universe where every action of every being is a market trans-
action conducted in competition with every other being and with every other
transaction’ (Treanor 2005).

Competitiveness between cities is encouraged through neoliberalisation.
Different place-marketing strategies such as spatial division of consumption,
which seeks to attract consumer capital through large-scale projects of aesthet-
ic refurbishment and upgrading of degenerated neighbourhoods, have been
commonly practised worldwide over the last decades. In an urban con-
sumer society with a dominant neoliberal discourse the market is given an
increased importance. Planning the city has become more and more like
running a business (Swyngedouw, Moulaert, and Rodriguez 2002), and the
increased privatisation is one of the most fundamental changes in planning
(Dear 2000).

It is perhaps possible to talk of ‘a global urban politics’ (Haila 1997,
1999a) or a ‘new urban politics’ (Hubbard and Hall 1998). Politics that strive
to place cities on the global map as important spatial nodes in the global
cultural economy. Almost two decades ago Harvey argued that urban plan-
ning shifted from a managerial approach to planning to a more entreprene-
rial emphasis. A shift connected to urban politics that focused on attracting
investments based on entrepreneurial forms of planning emphasising quality
of life and representing the city as ‘an innovative, existing, creative and safe
place to live or to visit, to play and consume in’ (Harvey 1989c: 9). That is a
type of planning based on:

… public-private partnerships focusing on investment and economic devel-
opment with the speculative construction of place rather than amelioration of
conditions within a particular territory as its immediate (though by no means
exclusive) political and economic goal. (Harvey 1989c: 8)

The shift has by now been more or less established worldwide and become a
global urban political phenomenon, global urban politics. It seems that ‘the
strategy of cities seeking to attract mobile capital and transnational compa-
ies, is the most suitable type of urban policy’ (Haila 1999b: 260), in the
global cultural economy with mobile capital flows and increased competition
between cities for investments and people.

According to Harvey (1989c) these developments are connected with the
shift from urban government to urban governance, and a shift from manage-
rial types of planning to more entrepreneurial forms. This had two paradoxi-
cal effects; first, by engaging in competitive activities cities have reinforced
the process of competition and second, by adopting the same strategies cities
have been made less innovative and reinforced the homogenisation of cities.

The value of these planning practices has been criticised since many of
them seem to be a zero-sum game of competition (Harvey 1989c), and caus-
ing physical and social fragmentation (Swyngedouw, Moulaert, and Rodri-
In particular, if they are primarily oriented towards consumption as Amin and Graham argue in accordance with Zukin (1995): ‘the consumption-based turn in contemporary urban policy does not provide the sort of ‘glue’ or commonality that produces virtuous spirals of growth and dynamism’ (Amin and Graham 1997: 421).

There has also been criticism related to the privatisation and commercialisation of public spaces that can increase the socio-spatial fragmentation and segregation of urban life since they are an important physical bridge between communities and individuals (Castells 2002: 383) and thus also critical for democratic cities and urban development. The importance of physical public spaces should not be overestimated or overemphasised since they mainly function as ‘spaces of tolerance and sociability, perhaps gathering points on particular occasions’ (Amin and Thrift 2002: 137).

These are all general global tendencies but it is important to recognise the different historical trajectories of cities and not neglect national variations and undervaluing the role of local institutions (Abu-Lughod 1999).

Behind these global processes and neoliberal practices there are people and organisations. The metaphor and metonym ‘cities as theatres for urban dramas’ emphasise that the city cannot speak for itself – it is spoken for, and represented by social and political subjects (Beauregard 1995: 60; Harvey 1989c). This means that city formations are formed by urban politics, and that urban politics are formed by city formations. It is recognising that city formations are socio-political projects and not something predetermined or uncontested.

The distinction between city formation and morphology on the one hand and urban social everyday life and politics on the other will also help in populating the city by questioning what is produced, by whom and for whom. The distinction does not mean that the city is just a neutral material object, rather the contrary. The materiality and formation of cities has immense importance for urban everyday life and politics. While the city cannot speak for itself it does suggest and constrain projects and everyday urban life. Different places and spaces in cities allow and encourage certain usages but constrain and repel other forms. And space is nothing natural but something contested as Massey vividly argues with reference to public space:

> All spaces are socially regulated in some way, if not by explicit rules (no ball games, no loitering) then by the potentially more competitive (more market-like?) regulation which exists in the absence of explicit (collective? public? democratic? autocratic?) controls. (Massey 2004, 152)
2.3 Geographies of Consumption

Consumption matters to geography. Consumption is fundamental to how geographies are made and experienced in contemporary society. From bodies to nation-states, globally and locally, via real and virtual space, consumption is constituted through places and spaces. Consumption is significant as a placemaking process as it is an integral (rather than incidental) part of everyday life, whether or not commodities are scarce or in abundance. Geographies are, in turn, integral to matters of consumption. Geographies of consumption are unevenly expressed in space and make a difference to how consumption practices, entities and experiences are constituted. (Mansvelt 2005: 29)

Geography of consumption is often described as ‘the study of the geography of consumption of commodities’ (Thrift 2000a: 108). Geographical studies has generally either focused on economic issues or been socio-culturally oriented (Jackson and Thrift 1995). Much of the geographical literature on consumption has been concerned with either economic issues of retail location and regulation or cultural issues regarding consumption places’ importance for construction of identity and meaning (Crewe 2000: 275).

The economic oriented strand that has primarily focused on issues of retailing and location has a long history. It was especially prominent during the 1950s and 1960s and the era of spatial analysis. The research was often practically oriented, and was closely connected to what was called market or applied geography. It was influenced by Christaller’s and Lösch’s notions of central-place theory and urban hierarchies (Berry 1967), as well as by land use systems, value and rent theories, and consumer behaviour models (Dawson 1980). Economic analysis of retailing is still an important part of consumption geography – especially in the context of globalisation and the emergence of transnational retail corporations (cf. Birkin, Clarke, and Clarke 2002; Wrigley 2000, 2002; Wrigley, Coe, and Currah 2005).

It was, however, first in the late 1980s and with the cultural turn that geography of consumption became really established (Goss 2004; Jackson and Thrift 1995). This second strand draws more on cultural and social analysis, and is more influenced by anthropological and social research as well as gender and cultural studies. The more cultural-sensitive research has emphasised that consumption and shopping are not only an economic or material activity but also a cultural and bodily practice important in the formation of identities and for creating meaning. As a result of the cultural turn, Pandora’s box was opened and economic perspectives can no longer completely avoid cultural issues (Thrift 2000b).

The conceptualisation of and the intersections between economy and culture have been extensively debated in economic geography. Thrift and Olds illustrated the intersections between economy and culture through the contemporary Christmas celebration which is as an example of ‘a cultural event
of immense economic significance – or an economic event of immense cultural significance’ (Thrift and Olds 1996: 311).

Culture and economy are constructed categories and are perhaps best viewed as powerful ideas and not ontological entities in themselves, ideas that ‘organize thought and practice’ (Castree 2004). It is important to recognize that there are not ‘any social activity that is purely economic, without a shred of cultural content’ (Shields 1999), but also there are differences between cultural and economic actions regarding goal orientation and their inner logic. Economic activities are always cultural while cultural activities do not always include economic aspects (Sayer 1997: 17). Whether or not economy and culture are ‘related-but-different, co-constitutive or seamlessly connected’ (Castree 2004: 208) is dependent on what meaning is ascribed to the concepts.

Consumption cannot be reduced only to the moment of exchange and traditional retailing, since consumption is not only an economic transaction but also very much a social, cultural and political one (Sayer 1997; Crewe and Lowe 1995). The abstract economic models of consumption are still very influential, despite the acknowledgement that consumption is both economic and cultural, and they not only form the understanding of economy but also how the economic system works (Crewe 2003: 358).

The increased attention to consumption and its ascribed significance is one of the factors behind the ‘new economic geography’ (Thrift and Olds 1996). By focusing on identity and discourse, embodiment and performativity, the so-called cultural turn has been criticized for neglecting the political and socioeconomic inequalities and the uneven spatial development of and accessibility to spaces of consumption (Martin and Sunley 2001: 156).

During the 1990s both economic and culture issues began to be taken seriously in the new retail geography, which moved away from only focusing on location issues (Lowe and Wrigley 2000, 640). Geographic research on consumption also started to pay attention to regulation and public intervention in the formation of consumer practices and consumption, and especially retail spaces (e.g., Marsden and Wrigley 1995).

Retailing can be seen as a link between production and consumption. It is an important part of understanding the larger geographies of consumption (Crewe and Lowe 1995). Consumption and retailing form places by bringing together culture and economy. Consumer preferences and the property market have significant impact on the formation of consumption and retail spaces. To understand retail spaces it is critical to recognize both the needs for capital to exploit new spaces and new consumer preferences (Hankins 2002: 43) i.e., both economic and cultural processes.

Out-of-town shopping centres and suburban malls are, nevertheless, debatable subjects, often in negative terms, both within academia and in the public debate. It is usually argued that they increase traffic, car dependency and pollution, but also that they are aesthetically unattractive, unfriendly and
unsocial places. They are also associated with urban sprawl and the development of edge cities and have been criticised for hollowing out the inner city and the traditional retail areas.

The criticism of these kinds of out-of-town shopping centres and suburban malls is as much rooted in cultural and moral issues as in actual ecological, economic and social costs (Jackson 1999b; Williams 1995). The pervasiveness of out-of-town centres and shopping is their convenience and accessibility (Guy 1998). However, often there is an ambivalence from the shoppers towards shopping malls, consumers might not like them but they are convenient to shop in (Jackson 1999b). From the perspective of the individual consumer the inner city might also be as inaccessible as the suburban shopping mall, depending on where he or she lives and on the communication routes.

The focus in this thesis is, however, on the formation of commodity transactions configurations in general and consumer service spaces in the city centre and not directly on location issues or out-of-town establishments. Interestingly, inner city retailing and consumption, except as part of gentrification processes (Jackson and Thrift 1995: 209), has been a rather underdeveloped area of geographical research although researchers have begun to rediscover the inner-city areas (Lowe and Wrigley 2000: 644). This renewed interest is partly a cause of changes within the retail industry and in the city centre and, as Jameson argues, shopping malls are not only suburban phenomena:

The older city centre – blighted by suburbs and the new supermarkets, and then the malls themselves – now, with postmodernity and gentrification, catches up: not only by housing new malls within itself, but by becoming a virtual mall in its own right. Indeed something fundamental begins to happen to it. (Jameson 2003: 70)

Since the 1990s, geography of consumption has expanded and been established as a vital and thriving research area in geography. Its scope and breadth widened significantly and ‘encompass a wide diversity of subjects: leisure, tourism, work, shopping, information technology, retailing, advertising, urban, rural, industrial and agricultural geographies; and studies of gender, ageing, ethnicity and sexuality’ (Mansvelt 2005: 11).

In her overview Mansvelt (2005) identifies three overarching themes of geographies of consumption; spatialities, socialities and subjectivities of consumption. First is spatialities of consumption, which has focused on different spaces of consumption, both visible and spectacular spaces such as malls and department stores, branding and advertising landscapes but also more mundane, alternative and ephemeral spaces such as markets and car boot sales, home and virtual spaces. Second, socialities of consumption where socio-spatial relations with commodity chains and exchange systems, commercial and commodity cultures, and social relationships through con-
sumption practices such as shopping and eating, purchasing and using commodities. Third, subjectivities of consumption, research that has stressed that people are consuming subjects with bodies and identities.

Traditionally consumption has often been perceived as unproductive and feminine activity belonging to the private sphere of home in contrast to the masculine labour of production (Gregson 2000). Consumption has often been conceptually connected with culture while production with economy within geography (Crang and Malbon 1996: 708). Gender perspectives have been important in acknowledging consumption as a crucial part of everyday life, both economically and culturally, as well as alternative consumption practices and consumption places.

Gender perspectives have been particularly important in analysis of shopping, shoppers and shopping spaces, which usually are conceived as feminine activities. It has been stressed that shopping is a bodily practiced and situated activity (Entwistle 2000) and that ‘shopping is a fundamentally spatial practice in which co-presence of other shoppers as well as commodities is central’ (Crang and Malbon 1996: 710). Shopping is an emotional activity and the practices of individual shopping are often based on previous experiences and situations (Williams et al. 2001). Pred, for example, emphasises ‘the situated practices’ of consumption, and that consumption is not only about shopping and purchasing (Pred 1996).

Consumption connections and intersections
In reviews of geographies of consumption studies of sites, places and spaces are commonly distinguished from studies of chains, circuits and networks of commodities (e.g., Crewe 2000; Goss 2006; Hudson 2005; Jackson and Thrift 1995; Kneale and Dwyer 2004; Mansvelt 2005; Wrigley and Lowe 2002).

The street, the mall, the store and the home are a common typology of important sites in geographical research on consumption. It is spaces that ‘lie at the heart of everyday experiences of consumption’, and clearly articulates the intersections between retail geographies and ‘the urban’ (Lowe and Wrigley 2000: 644f.). All the categories in this typology are usually referred to as consumption spaces or places but only the mall and the store are directly related to retailing in the statistical and empirical sense. The street and the home cannot be reduced only to retailing.

Hudson (2005: 145) distinguishes between spaces of consumption and spaces of retailing, sales and exchange, where the former analytically includes cultural aspects whilst the latter focuses on economic activities. However, it is increasingly difficult to separate between retail and consumption spaces and perhaps more importantly between different sites of consumption since they are becoming highly interconnected and interwoven with each other. This is especially true in practice since retail spaces and thus also consumption spaces constantly are reconfigured, (re) manipulated and contested.
in order to sell commodities (Hudson 2005: 145; Wrigley and Lowe 2002: 171).

On a smaller scale places are ‘promoted and sold not simply as centres of economic growth, but also as culturally rich places in which to live and work, and the quality and quantity of consumption opportunities are critical elements in generating such place myths’ (Crewe and Lowe 1995: 181). It is thus important to recognise the role of consumption as a powerful and pervasive place-building process mainly because it draws on both the social and the mental as well as on the physical spheres of the world (Sack 1988). Crewe and Lowe (1995: 181) argued that the meaning and practice of places have as much to do with consumer preferences and the property market as with the planners’ and retailers’ visions.

Micro-geographies of consumption aside from the dominant places are much less researched and understood. The main focus has been on formal spaces of consumption although alternative spaces have become increasingly recognised such as ‘spaces of conviviality (streets, coffee shops, restaurants, clubs) and more intense spaces of tactility (other bars, clubs, spectacles)’ (Crang and Malbon 1996: 709). Geographical studies on consumption has been placed in and studied as part of networks or commodity chains; and other consumption phenomena such as e-commerce and second-hand retailing have been explored (for short overviews Crewe 2000, 2001, 2003; Goss 2004, 2006).

Commodity chain analysis has been used in various ways in geography. Harvey (1989b) argued, for example, that unveiling hidden geographies of capitalist production through questioning the origin of commodities and underlying production process should be a primary geographical concern. Commodities has often been either vertically or horizontally analysed, although the spatiality of commodity chains has been stressed (e.g., Leslie and Reimer 1999). Vertical analysis is often structured around a commodity chain and horizontal analysis on a specific topic such as gender and sexuality, media and advertising.

Fine (1995) argued for a new economic approach to consumption, from a horizontal to a vertical analysis of consumption, or rather consumer commodities. Rather than generalisation of explanatory factors across different kinds of particular commodities the focus of the analysis should instead be the differentiation between commodities. But it is also important to analyse both multiple places and consumption chains (Jackson & Thrift 1995). That is, to investigate how consumption differs and creates differences between places, and the uneven geographical development of consumption linked to different geographical scales. In other words the critical geographical question is the spatial arrangement of consumption, consumer and commodities.

Glennie and Thrift agreed with Fine’s critique but emphasised the need for integration of the vertical and horizontal approached where the networks between the consumers are important. That is, the situations where com-
modities are transferred from producers to consumers, i.e., ‘the place and
time of the consumer’s (and the social relations in which they are imbedded)
encounter with a consumer good’ (Glennie and Thrift 1993: 605).

It has frequently been pointed out that research on consumption needs to
transcend dualisms (e.g., Miller 1995b; Jackson 1999a, 2002; Kneale and
Dwyer 2004); between culture and economy, symbolic and utilitarian, mate-
rial and immaterial, global and local, and consumption and production. Explor-
ing the links between consumption and production has been helpful in
transcending traditional notions of economy and culture (e.g., Jackson et al.
2000). Consumption and production are related ‘through distribution and
consumer consciousness’ a relationship that is manifested differently in dif-
ferent places, and Pratt argues that:

… production/consumption dualisms are unhelpful; rather, it would be more
useful to explore the constitution of products situated in and across places
and social networks. (Pratt 2004: 124)

Crewe and Lowe argue for an approach that ‘simultaneously considers the
cultural and economic strands of retailing and consumption, recognising the
need to understand how sociocultural processes intersect with material-
economic processes in shaping consumption’ (Crewe and Lowe 1995: 1878).
Furthermore, that it is important to understand the production of consump-
tion, new urban landscapes of consumption and the significance of different
scalar levels. It has been suggested that ‘a careful grounded analysis of con-
sumer transactions in different contexts can begin to make sense of shop-
ing’ (Williams et al. 2001: 217).

Against this background this thesis argues that transactions conceptual-
ised as situated and performed projects in the consumption-production pro-
cess can be helpful in transcending dualities such as culture and economy and
recognise the consumer as an active and bodily human being.

There is, furthermore, still a ‘need to analyse both the connections and
disconnections, the blurrings and disjunctures, that shape the circuit of com-
modity culture in which we engage as both producers and consumers’
(Crang and Malbon 1996: 708). How consumers consume and what the con-
sumers do have received little attention (Latham 2003). Consumers have
often been perceived as passive objects rather than active subjects, ‘spoken
for rather than spoken to’ (Thrift 2000b: 696).

A focus on performing consumption ensures that consumers are not posi-
tioned as passive spectators but as embodied actors engaging with the con-
suming world as both audiences and performers at the same time (and, of
course, one can perform for oneself as well as for others). (Crang and Malbon
1996: 710)
A consumer perspective thus implies a focus on the ability of the consumer, not to speak for or to the consumer but rather alongside the consumer. Taking the consumer’s point of view means approaching consumption from the consumer’s perspective and the time-spatial constraints and possibilities of the consumption in specific transaction situations.

By focusing on transactions it is possible to incorporate activities and visualise an economic landscape that is not accounted for in the dominating capitalistic economy. A more diversified economy, to use J-K Gibson-Graham’s (Gibson-Graham 2006) vocabulary, that appreciates the myriad of different kinds of transactions, both market and alternative market transaction as well as non-market transactions, and even more importantly, in the context of consumption, both economic and cultural processes.

It could be argued that transaction spaces are more or less equivalent to retail spaces. Retail spaces are, however, a more limited concept since it usually does not explicitly include restaurants, bars and cafés or consumer services such as dry-cleaners, hairdressers and beauty parlours, nor does it include consumer oriented financial or distribution services, which are highly important for any transaction and especially for e-commerce and other distanciated transactions. Furthermore, spaces of retailing have an economic connotation while the larger, more inclusive concept of spaces of consumption, is rather vague.

The concept of consumer service space is not inherent in these limitations since it refers to the interaction juncture between consumers and producers, and as such has the ability to include all consumer transactions. What seem to have emerged in many cities are new types of consumer service spaces oriented towards and facilitating the needs for both business professional services as well as towards everyday life consumers. Transaction spaces that can be classified neither as purely retail or consumption spaces nor workspaces for that matter.
3. Conceptualising Transaction Situations

This chapter outlines a conceptualisation of transaction situations. The chapter directly addresses the methodological research question of how transactions can be geographically situated and conceptualised from a consumer perspective.

The theoretical thinking is primarily inspired by the Swedish geographer Torsten Hägerstrand (1916-2004) and time-geographical perspectives, and by the French social theorist Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) and the social production of space. Two rather different strands of thought that are not always compatible in their totality, hence the word inspired, but not without communalities. The argument is that they complement each other in emphasising the consumption respectively the production of space, both accessibility to and power struggles over space.

Initial key questions are what is being transferred and how the transaction project is performed and constrained in and constituted by time and space? Transactions do not occur in a vacuum but in particular situations and they are embedded in specific societal contexts. The chapter firstly discuss the term transaction, the contextual embeddedness of transactions and the properties of commodities. It is stressed that transactions as material, social and economical projects both transfer and create values and commodities.

Secondly, transactions are through a time-geographical perspective situated in time and space. It is argued that projects and situations, constraints and trajectories as well as diorama and pockets of local order are useful time-geographical concept for analysing commodity transactions. Transactions are projects situated in pockets of local order in which entities must be bundled together, coordinated and situated in time and space.

Thirdly, the chapter shifts focus from the consumption (and production) in space to the production (and consumption) of space and of particular places. Transactions are not only situated time and space they are also part in the production and creation of spaces and places. To analyse and appreciate this Lefebvre’s spatial thinking is used and particularly the conceptualisation of space in three moments of spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces. This is furthermore connected to the consumer tactics, producer strategies and practiced places.

Finally the question of how the outlined conceptualisation of commodity transactions situations can be put into to practice is addressed, that is the methodological issue of researching transactions in everyday urban life.
## 3.1 Transacting Commodities

The word transaction, from the Latin *transigere*, is twofold and includes both the prefix *trans-* and the suffix *-action*. It involves both a transfer of something and an action by somebody. Transactions are always situations in between, that is, more or less fleeting moments of encounter and bundling in time and space. Through transactions something is being actively transferred or moved between two entities, an act involving at least two people or things that affect each other in some way. The literal meaning of the word is broad and implies both different forms of social interaction, and economic arrangements and business deals (cf. OED: transaction).

Transactions should not only be regarded as something economic, which is common since transactions are often associated with economics, business studies and transaction cost analysis (Coase 1937, 2000; Williamson 1981; Dietrich 1994). Transaction as a theoretical concept is used in many different strands of the social sciences and it has even been argued that it is perhaps the smallest common denominator in social sciences (Kuhn 1965). In social psychology, for example, transactions are a fundamental ‘unit of social action’ and conceptualised from an individual and activity oriented perspective as anything that happens between individuals (Berne 1972: 20). Transactions have also been used in more philosophical terms where the implication of transcedence has been particularly emphasised (e.g., Dewey and Bentley 1946a, 1946b).

The following conceptualisation of transactions takes the literal everyday double meaning of the word seriously. It is stressed that transactions are geographically and materially, as well as economically and socially, situated projects. From this perspective transactions can be regarded as something in between what Simmel considered the broader concept of human interaction and the narrower concept of (economic) exchange (Simmel 1971 [1907]).

Transactions can thus imply a range of different projects from monetary exchange and shopping, to social donations and gift giving, to consuming places and buildings, as well as to individual and social experiences. Transactions are a vital element in larger consumption projects of everyday life, which involves a range of different practices around change and exchange, use and reuse, construction and destruction, creation and recreation. Consumption cannot be reduced to transactions, even if a transaction is considered as being both an economic and social project involving a transfer of something between at least two entities, but it can be an analytical starting point in the study of spatialities of consumption.

Transactions are contextually embedded. In accordance with the conceptualisation of the city as a theatre for the urban consumer society, a principal outline of the embeddedness of the transaction can be sketched as pictured in Figure 3 (cf. Lenntorp 2005 figure of layers). Transactions are constituted of both mental, social and physical elements and processes.
The transaction project is embedded in and constituted by physical, mental and social elements and processes. On the one hand by urban everyday life; values, ideas, culture, different societal institutions, organisational arrangements and socio-economic relations, on the other hand by city formation; its infrastructure and technological systems, the built environment and artefacts, as well as the natural conditions and biological beings.

The transaction with its performers and properties is situated in the centre, since it incorporates both cultural and economic aspects, political and social relationships as well as physical and mental dimensions. The different parts of the figure can be analytically separated from each other but they are interdependent and mutually constitutive, just as the city as a theatre can be analytically separated from the urban consumer society (cf. Fig. 2). This is a principle sketch and a methodologically guiding scheme of possible constraints. Figure 3 also helps clarify how and where the concept of transactions has been used. How each level enables and constrains the transaction is dependent on the situation, but before situating the transaction each layer justifies some initial comments.

A transaction project fundamentally consists of three entities: (1) something that can be transferred, (2) to somebody from (3) someone else. In the
urban consumer society the entities can appropriately be conceptualised as product, consumer and producer.

In relation to the political and economic system of the urban consumer society the producer is most often a service provider. It is possible to schematically distinguish between producers after their primary activity and the properties of the products they produce: goods manufacturers, services providers and experience stagers (Pine and Gilmore 1998). The term producer is initially and purposefully loose and vague since it is dependent on the properties of the commodity and the specific configuration of the transaction situation.

The general development from a manufacturer-based economy to a service based economy, and arguably now towards an experience based economy, has changed the primary content of the product. Lash and Urry argued that ‘what is increasingly being produced are not material objects, but signs’ (Lash and Urry 1994: 4). This should not be interpreted as a decline in the amount of material products but rather as a shift of focus or primary source of profit. In the manufactured-based economy oriented towards selling refined and processed goods and the primary source of profit was tangible goods. In a service-based economy the profit margins lie in providing and supplying intangible services rather than manufacturing tangible goods (cf. Ch. 2).

In a more experience oriented economy fungible, memorable and personal experience are being commodified: ‘An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event’ (Pine and Gilmore 1998). Charging admission and entrance fees are critical for selling experiences and movies, theatres and theme parks are typical examples of experience commodities. For retailers to charge an entrance fee to the store would be to go beyond the service economy and enter into the experience economy.

**The contextual embeddedness of transactions**

The concept of transactions is frequently associated with economics and conceptualized in economic terms of costs. The Nobel Laureate Coase (1937; 2000) used the notion of transactions to explain the function and organisation of firms. Firms primarily exist because they reduce the ‘costs for market transactions’ – a conceptualisation that has been renamed transactions costs. Firms are being established and expand as long as it is more costly to transfer commodities through markets than organise the transaction through a firm. Furthermore, Coase (2000) argues that markets are institutions and that they exist to facilitate exchange. The function of markets is to reduce transaction costs; without transaction costs markets have no function.

In the capitalist economy the firm is the primary producer of products and commodities that are transferred over the market. The ultimate goal of any
capitalist firm is to generate profit, but business transactions are not only about cost reduction but also about risk avoidance. A key strategic question for firms and corporations is whether to organise transactions internally or externalise them.

Consumer transactions, i.e., the transfer of goods to users, services to clients and experiences to guests, are done through market relations. This can be organised in different ways through different retail and distribution channels, which will be further explored in chapter four. The transactions are thus constitutive of the firm and other enterprises and embedded in organisations and other arrangements. These rational and neo-classical economic conceptualisations do not, however, give much account to the social relationships of transactions.

Economic transactions are socially embedded, which have been emphasised in socio-economical and institutional perspectives. Granovetter used the concept of embeddedness to emphasise that transactions are embedded in social networks and relationships with concrete people and that embeddedness is crucial for realising and understanding transactions (Granovetter 1985). Transactions and the notion of embeddedness have also been used as the unit of analysis for understanding ‘the conditions under which consumers engage in exchanges with persons to whom they are linked by nonmarket relations’ (DiMaggio and Louch 1998: 620). The greater the risk in transactions the more likely it is done with someone to whom the consumer has personal ties, while the more frequent the transactions are ‘the less common are within-network exchanges’ (ibid. 634). The more uncertain and risky the transaction, the more important is the social embeddedness.

Furthermore, transactions are politically embedded in different governance and ideological systems, embedded in different cognitive systems of meaning as well as culturally embedded in ideological and normative beliefs (Martin 2000). They are embedded in social and political institutions. It is perhaps in the context of the economic institutional perspective that the concept of transactions has been most frequently used and transactions have been a key concept in institutional economics. It might even be argued that transactions are the primary unit of analysis in institutional economics (Stein 2002: 726).

Institutions can, in general terms, be described as an organised element in society (Williams 1988 [1976]). They coordinate human action and ‘operate as “channelling” frames of reference for the orientation of human action, whether its intervention is in the physical and social world’ (Werlen 1992 [1988]: 34). Generally, institutions are durable and viscous organisational arrangements that structure human action; more specific examples are the church, the school and academia, and institutions should thus not be confused with single organisations (Liedman 1997). Institutions, however, are not organisations although the line between the two is often difficult to draw.
In economic terminology it is common to distinguish between institutional arrangements and institutional environments. Institutional environments are informal norms and customs such as consumer cultures and corporate behaviour, as well as formal legislation and regulations, whilst institutional arrangements refers to organisational forms such as markets and governmental bodies ‘which arise as a consequence of, and whose constitution and operation are governed by, the institutional environment’ (Martin 2000: 79f.). The institutional arrangements are thus closely related to different organisational forms.

Social and political institutions manifest and materialise the values, ideas and cultures through formal laws and regulations, but also through informal norms and customs that constrain transactions. Values, ideas and ideologies about the world and society constrain the transaction. A good deal of ideologies and values in the western world were formed around dichotomies (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]) such as economy and culture, public and private. This relates to how society at large should be organised and what and how is socially, morally and ethically possible to transfer. What is considered as belonging to the public sphere and, respectively, the private sphere of life? Which transactions should be conducted through market-like relationships and which transactions should be regulated or even banned by different institutions? Any distinctions between economy and culture, and between public and private are problematic since transactions are both a cultural and economic project performed both in public and private situations (as discussed in Ch 2.).

Geographers have emphasised the spatial embeddedness of transaction and the notion of transaction costs have been used in various ways. Embeddedness is, however, a slippery term and there are different forms of embeddedness, for example, societal, network and territorial embeddedness (cf. Hess 2004). Transactions have been particularly important in regional economics and research on industrial districts and innovative milieus (Taylor and Asheim 2001). The focus in economic geography has predominantly been on firms and producers and on transactions within and between firms. Commodity and consumer transactions have been partly recognised in relation to urban development (Marshall and Wood 1995) and the cultural economy of cities (Scott 1996, 1997).

The emphasis on the producer and business transactions in economic perspectives has tended to neglect both the consumer and alternative transaction configurations. Feminist geographers have used transactions to criticise traditional notions and understandings of ‘the economy’ (e.g., Cameron and Gibson-Graham 2003; Gibson-Graham 2006). Gibson-Graham uses the term in their construction of ‘a language of economic diversity’ to highlight that not all transactions are performed through the market and the existence of both non-market (e.g., gift-giving and indigenous exchange, state allocation and appropriation, theft and poaching etc.) and alternative market transac-
tions (e.g., sales of public goods and fair trade markets, alternative credit and barter, underground and informal markets) (Gibson-Graham 2006: 60f). They also stress that even within the formal market exchange there is a diversity of transactions that are more or less regulated.

The materiality of transactions and the consumer as a bodily human being and the socio-cultural aspect of transactions are often left out in traditional economic accounts of transactions (the left side and the lower part of figure 2). The realisation of a transaction is dependent on someone engaging in the transaction. Someone – the consumer – has to find it meaningful to acquire the commodity that is being transferred. The consumer has to find it worthwhile to engage in the transaction and recognise the value of the transfer. A transaction is performed ‘because each party gains something from it, and that is why he engages with it’ (Berne 1972: 20). What is being transferred has to be a transferable value that can be moved or at least affect the consumer engaging in the transaction, and the consumer has to be someone who can value the transaction.

The consumer must be able to perform, appreciate and accommodate the transfer. The skills, knowledge and creativity of the consumer as well as her or his possibilities to utilise material resources is also fundamental for engaging in and performing transactions. It is, however, not just the willingness, the body or the skills of the consumer that constrain transactions, it is also a question of the resources the consumer has at her or his disposal. Resources in the form of monetary and other material amenities such as car and computer availability and in the form of information and supporting social structures such as personal networks and families.

In relation to consumption as an everyday life project the consumer is a living and breathing person with a human body. In other circumstances the consumer might be an organisation, a system or a machine. The transaction concept has, for example, been used in relation to real estate spaces and the impact of technology (cf. Dixon 2005). Furthermore, transactions can be performed both between humans, between humans and nonhumans (i.e., things, objects, systems), as well as between humans and the environment (i.e., landscapes, places, buildings) (cf. Paassen 1976), or, which is more common, a combination of all.

In consumer transactions the producer or producers might not always be directly physically involved in the transaction. Product transactions do not require direct involvement of producers in the form of individuals; for example, there are transactions between consumers and machines, consumers and systems, consumers and environments. Making a money withdrawal from an ATM is a typical example of a transaction that does not directly involve another human being but a machine and, of course, money in the form of paper currency. ‘The producer’ with which the consumer interacts in this transaction configuration is the ATM machine. In this conceptualisation of transactions the producer is the entity with which the consumer interacts,
whether the producer is an individual or a business, a machine or a system is dependent on the situation of the transaction.

Artefacts and infrastructures in the form of the built environments, technological systems, gadgets and utilities constrain and enable transactions. Infrastructure for moving people and things around has had an enormous impact on the possibilities of engaging in transactions and to consume more broadly. Technological innovations have developed new forms of transactions but also generated new commodities. Technological innovations are transforming the usage and exchange of commodities as well as how they are understood and valued, which has implications for both the transferring of the commodities and regarding the property-rights to the commodities.

Biological and natural conditions are unavoidable constraints for any project even if it is performed in the midst of the city centre. It is impossible to break the laws of nature, although science constantly pushes the boundaries of what is possible. The embodiment of consumers (and producers) is crucial for transactions. The biological body is, for example, indivisible and cannot be at two different locations at once. Humans are biological beings, which means that we have biological needs like having to eat and drink, sleep and rest. People are also restrained by the return principle, in time-geographical terms by prisms (e.g., Lenntorp 1978). This means that consumers need to return home or to another more or less stable place to rest. There are fundamental differences between consumers, commodities and producers in this regard.

When analysing transactions it is thus important to recognise both humans and other entities and their contextual embeddedness. There are a range of different types of constraints and possibilities for performing transactions. How each of the elements and processes illustrated in figure 2 constrains and enables transactions projects depends on the specific situation. Hence, it is crucial to situate the transaction projects in time and space. Time-geography emphasises that all the crucial material entities involved in a project must be taken into account and situated in time and space in a spatial analysis of projects (Hägerstrand 1974, 1984, 1991).

The population involved in a transaction project is not limited to humans but also incorporates non-humans such as things and objects. A project population is constituted both by living organisms and constructed artefacts such as tools and machines (Hägerstrand 1974). Although things and objects are important and active elements in the transaction, this does not mean that things and objects have the same characteristics or properties as humans since they do not consciously act, engage in transactions or initiate goal oriented projects. Products might, however, suggest and encourage certain usages, similar to how the city constrains and enables urban everyday life. To narrow the scope a bit, the focus from hereon will be on commodity transactions situations.
Commodity values and properties

Commodities and commodification are associated with economy, money and exchange. Commodification is generally described as a process that inscribes an exchange value to goods and services that previously only had a use value (Jackson 1999a; Sack 1988). Commodity values are generally discussed in terms of a distinction between their use values and exchange values, and increasingly their sign value. Although it is common to distinguish between exchange and economic values in contrast to cultural and symbolic values, commodities can have all of these values at the same time, and also use values referring to the functionality and utility of the commodity.

The commodification thesis stipulates that market exchange is increasingly dominating the economy and society, i.e., the production of commodities is done by firms for profit maximisation. This is, however, a one sided view of the economy and of economic development which does not appreciate other forms of activities outside what is commonly perceived as the economy (Williams 2002). Nor does it account for the creativity involved in production processes, the potentiality of commodities and that commodities can be decommodified. Commodification is not, as Kopytoff argues, a simple and always straightforward process. He also offers a working definition of the commodity:

A commodity is a thing that has use value and that can be exchanged in a discrete transaction for a counterpart, the very fact of exchange indicating that the counterpart has, in the immediate context, an equivalent value. The counterpart is by the same token also a commodity at the time of the exchange. The exchange can be direct or it can be achieved indirectly by the way of money, one of those functions is as a means of exchange. Hence, anything that can be bought for money is at that point a commodity, whatever the fate that is reserved for it after the transaction has been made (it may, thereafter, be decommodified). (Kopytoff 1986: 68f)

In contemporary society and political economic systems, the exchange of a commodity almost always precedes the usage of it, because people are dependent on others to produce the commodities for them. Perhaps commodification is more appropriately understood as a process were more and more transactions are done through the market.

The commodification thesis implies that it is possible to detach the exchange of a product, whether it is a good or a service, from its usage. In geographical terms this implies a separation of the exchange and the use of commodities in time and space and, consequently, the production of the commodity from its consumption. Use value is thus related to the consumers’ usage of commodities while exchange value is related to the acquisition of commodities. Exchange value separates production from consumption. From a geographic point of view the spatialities of commodities and values are particularly interesting. Money and other technological mediators such as
different technological and communication systems have increased the possibility of separating production from consumption in time and space through spatial divisions of labour (Harvey 1989b).

Commodities are products of labour – they are produced by someone. Things and matter become commodities through labour and through exchange. In Marxist terms, a commodity is considered ‘as a material embodiment of use value, exchange value and value (Harvey 2006 [1982]: 1). Use value is clearly distinguished from exchange value. Use value is related to the utility and quality of a product, i.e., its internal properties, while exchange value emerges in its quantitative proportion and the use values exchangeability for other use values.

According to Marxism, it is through exchange value that products enter into commodities and become concrete abstractions while use value is something intrinsic in the product and something concrete. The conclusion is that exchange values cannot exist without use values but use values may exist without exchange values. Commodities are concrete abstractions. Lefebvre extends this further and explains that every product and object is simultaneously always abstract and concrete:

> It is concrete in having a given substance, and still concrete when it becomes a part of our activity, by resisting or obeying it, however. It is abstract by virtue of its definite, measurable contours, and also because it can enter into a social existence, be an object amongst other similar objects and become the bearer of a whole series of new relations additional to its substantiality. (Lefebvre 1968 [1939]: 119)

Baudrillard (1988) criticised the distinction that exchange values are abstract and general, while use values are always concrete and specific, and independent of the market. According to Baudrillard, it is impossible to separate a commodity’s exchange value from its use value since the exchange value is based on its use value and vice versa. In the consumer society use value is also abstract because it is based on an artificial system of human needs that are not primarily natural but dependent on social and historical processes (cf. Ch. 2). In the urban consumer society consumption is not based on biological or natural needs but on wants that have become needs.

The problem or mystery then does not lie in the exchange value, as Marx argued, ‘but value in the case of use value is enveloped in total mystery, for it is grounded anthropologically in the (self-) “evidence” of a naturalness, an unsurpassable original reference’ (Baudrillard 1988: 72). Baudrillard took the discussion even further as he moved beyond Marx and emphasised that symbolic exchange is the key to understanding the political economic system.

Symbolic exchange should not be conflated with the sign values which more or less all commodities potentially possess (Clarke and Doel 2004).
The sign value (or symbolical value) of commodity is closely related to conspicuous consumption (e.g., Veblen 2000 [1925]) and how we distinguish ourselves through consumption (e.g., Bourdieu 1989). Commodities are used as social communication tools for displaying status and belonging but commodities are also important for identity formation and meaning creation.

In a system of symbolic exchange the signifier and signified have similar mutually interdependent functional relationships such as exchange value and use value (Baudrillard 1988). Baudrillard argued that consumption has similarities with language and that if consumption means anything at all it ‘means an activity consisting of the systematic manipulation of signs’ (Baudrillard 1996 [1968]: 200 original emphasis).

A further development of this conceptualisation of consumption and the emphasis on the system of symbolic exchange leads to the notion of simulation and simulacra, and the concept of hyperreality (Baudrillard 1983). In hyperreality, traditional categories or opposites are blurred and imploded into and on top of each other. Consequently, it is impossible and irrelevant to distinguish between what is real and what is not, between signifier and signified, simulation and simulacra.

The radical critique put forward by Baudrillard is insightful, and in many ways to the point, but drawn to its extreme conclusion it becomes almost absurd (Lefebvre 2005 [1981]: 137). The term implosion, however, articulates how previously separate activities and the boundaries separating them have imploded. Geographically there is an implosion of activities in time and space causing ‘disintegration or disappearance of boundaries so that formerly differentiated entities collapse in on each other’ (Ritzer 2005: 116).

Regarding the commodity, Lefebvre points out that sex, labour and information are three commodities with a particular and exceptional role in contemporary society; sex because it is ‘the product that sells other products’, labour because ‘it produces all the other commodities’ and information because ‘it is what makes possible all other exchanges’ (Lefebvre 2005 [1981]: 55). However, sex, labour and information are not always or rarely produced solely for exchange, which questions the notion, that commodities have a specific and general value, i.e., only an exchange value. The three products also highlight that almost anything potentially might have an exchange value.

The value of a commodity is not determined a priori but rather when it is put into practice, that is when it is used in some way. From a consumer perspective a rock, for example, does not have any particular or specific value other than the intrinsic value of being a rock in the world.

A rock can nevertheless be used in different ways as part of a building or as an ornament, to sit on or hide behind, it can be reshaped into a pillar or ground down to pebbles, it can be sold or exchanged for another rock or for something else. That is, a rock has no particular value a priori, but has many different potential values depending on how it is used. It could be that the
rock is a diamond that is considered an exclusive item with significant exchange value and symbolic value both because of its exclusivity and as a sign symbolising affluence, and because it is commonly used for gift giving and an important symbol in affectionate relationships.

The symbolic and sign value is thus something socially constructed, attributed to and projected through the commodity.

Significance is added to, and not discovered within, the actuality of things. It exists in relations among, not the substance of, the objects which act as signifiers. Commodities are soulless and, because of this, superficial difference among them can be seized upon as means of representing other, and possibly more significant differences. (Ferguson 1992: 37)

Thus, commodities have different ‘statuses’ of values related to their usage, exchangeability and symbolic significations (Gottdiener 2000: 27).

Exchange might furthermore be seen as a form of usage of products. Exchanging the commodity is one form of usage, making it into a symbol is another or consequential usage. Simmel argued ‘that exchange is just as productive, as creative of values, as is so called production’ and ‘that value is determined by exchange just as the converse is true’ (1971 [1907]: 47). This implies that ‘commerce is often the source not the opponent of value’ (Miller 2000: 82), and that commodification is not a simple one-way process or end-state of attributing exchange values to things that previously only held use values.

Inspired by Simmel’s thinking on value, Appadurai (1986) argues that the commodity is a phase and a particular context in the social life-path of a thing and that value in a broad conceptualisation is produced through transactions and dependent on the commodity situation:

\[ \ldots \text{the commodity situation in the social life of any “thing” can be defined as the situation in which its exchangeability (past, present, or future) for some other thing is its socially relevant feature. Further, the commodity situation, defined this way, can be disaggregated into: (1) the commodity phase of the social life of anything; (2) the commodity candidacy of any thing; and (3) the commodity context in which anything may be placed.} \ (\text{Appadurai 1986: 13 original emphasis}) \]

Consequently, transactions are not static one way or one-dimensional movements or exchanges of commodities, although the material transaction of the commodity, theoretically, by default always is transferred from producer to consumer. In other terms – the properties of a commodity have the potential of transferring different kinds of values. The different kinds of values might coexist in a commodity and/or in a transaction but might also be separate.
Property seems overall to be a useful term in relation to commodity transactions, especially since what is being transferred does not have to be a tangible good but can also be an intangible service or memorable experience. The term property has at least three different literary meanings. First, it can mean virtue, quality or an attribute belonging to an individual, group or thing, and implies the ‘effect an object has on another object or on the senses’. Second, and more commonly, it refers to ‘something owned or possessed; specifically, a piece of real estate’, i.e., referring to ownership and the exclusive and legal rights to enjoy and dispose of something. Third, it also means ‘an artefact or object used in a play or motion picture’ (OED: property).

The realisation and performance, as well as the character and accessibility of transactions, depend on the properties of the commodity, but are also related to the property rights to the commodity and the commodity as a property, i.e., as a mediating artefact in the performance of transaction projects. The commodity is a crucial property in the urban drama of consumption where the property rights, both in terms of ownership of the commodity, and accessibility to the commodity situation related to power over time and space, and more specifically real estate issues, is crucial. The commodity also has properties, qualities and attributes in itself that are related to its value.

What is being transferred through commodity transactions is values. But values are also created through the transactions situation (Appadurai 1986; Miller 2000; Simmel 1971 [1907]), which implies that the situation might have value in itself. Where commodities are transacted is significant, and space and time are increasingly becoming commodities in themselves.

The consumption of space or place is, however, fundamentally different from consumption of more ordinary commodities such as coffee, clothes and books, because of their properties. The commodity, the ‘thing’ of value that is being transferred and the situations through which the transaction takes place, creates values, or more correctly, has the potential to create different values. Since commodity transactions both transfer and create values its is imperative that they are situated in time and space.

Lefebvre focused on the spatialities of commodities and recognised the commodity as a concrete abstraction. Moreover, he emphasised that the commodity is a social ‘thing’. He argued that in a society dominated by exchange (cf. commodification thesis) ‘the commodity prevails over everything’ and even time and space become commodities of exchange (Lefebvre 2004 [1992]: 6). However, the commodity is still ‘a thing, it is in space, it occupies a location’ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 341 original emphasis), and it is situated in global networks and commodity chains. Commodities are locally situated and globally connected and it is both formed and forms space in a dialectical relationship.
The space of commodity may thus be defined as a homogeneity made up of specificities. This is a paradox new to our present discussion: we are no longer concerned with the representation of space or with a representational space, but rather with practice. Exchange with its circulatory systems and networks may occupy space worldwide, but consumption occurs only in this or that particular space. Use value constitutes the only real wealth, and this fact helps to restore its ill-appreciated importance. The paradigmatic (or ‘significant’) opposition between exchange and use, between global networks and the determination locations of production and consumption, is transformed here into a dialectical contradiction, and in the process becomes spatial. Space thus understood is both abstract and concrete in character: abstract inasmuch as it has no existence save by virtue of the exchange-ability of all its component parts, and concrete inasmuch as it is socially real and as such localised. This is a space, therefore, that is homogeneous yet at the same time broken up into fragments. (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 341f original emphasis)

The citation articulates that practice and the use value is vital for understanding consumption, and space. De Certeau is making similar claims by emphasising and conceptualising consumption as ‘making do’ (De Certeau 1984). Lefebvre also distinctively points out that transferring commodities are related to both local and global processes. It is through this apparently contradictory homogeneity that transaction situations are involved in the production of space (see further below).

3.2 Situating Transactions in Time-Space

Space (and time) is simultaneously conceptualised as absolute, relative and relational, because these are essentially different frameworks or perspectives on space that generate different questions and different answers that complement and contrast each other (Harvey 2006: 125). Inspired by Marx and Lefebvre, Harvey connects, for example, use value with absolute space, exchange values with relative space and values with relational space (Harvey 2006 [1982]). An integrative analysis thus calls for all three spatial perspectives.

Whether or not space is an ontological independently existing reality or totality is, according to Hägerstrand, beside the point, since space is comprehensible first when it is materialised, i.e., filled and stuffed with ‘quanta’ (1991: 135). Lefebvre’s arguments are similar; time and space, and energy, cannot be ‘conflated nor separated’, and in isolation from each other and from content they are just empty abstractions (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 12). Following Lefebvre’s reasoning Soja clarifies that: ‘Space itself might be primordially given, but the organization, use and meaning of space is a social translation, transformation and experience’. (Soja 1980: 210)
Time and space are mutually constitutive, but Lefebvre and Hägerstrand also emphasise that time-space is finite and that there is a scarcity of space (Hägerstrand 1991; Lefebvre 1991 [1974]). The scarcity of space implies that there are conflicts over accessibility to and the usage of space. Furthermore, any act or event takes time and place in order to be fulfilled. Space is thus not only a finite resource but different projects compete over the accessibility to space and time in order to be realised, i.e., there is a packing problem of how to organise and regulate space.

All projects are situated in time and space, and space and time fundamentally constrain any practical transaction project. According to Hägerstrand, geography is ‘the study of the power-struggle of entities’ and events’ accessibility to space and time’ (Hägerstrand 1985b: 7 translation). Time-geography consequently reflects this view through key concepts such as entities and constraints, project and trajectory, diorama and pockets of local order that all, in different ways, illustrate, problematise and concretise, the situatedness and thereness of acts and events, things and people, and the power struggle over accessibility to time and space.

Time-geography can be said to focus on the consumption of and in space, while Lefebvre’s primary interest was in the social production of space and its underling processes. As mentioned in the introduction both, however, used a similar analytical separation of time-space into different realms – the physical, the mental and the social. A distinction that has already been used and indicated above in the conceptualisation of the consumption as an urban drama in the city (Fig. 2) and in the contextual embeddedness of transactions (Fig. 3), and less explicitly in the discussion of commodity values.

**Time-geographical constraints**

Time-geography is first and foremost a perspective or worldview and not a theory of explanation (e.g., Hägerstrand 1985a, 1991; Lenntorp 1999). It is a humanistic perspective where human individuals in time and space are the primary objects of study (Pred 1977). It is based on a few fundamental assumptions about the being in the world (e.g., Hägerstrand 1974, 1991; Hägerstrand and Lenntorp 1974). The human body is indivisible; the body cannot be in two different places at the same time. Human life is lived continuously in time-space; life cannot be paused and restarted but most constantly be lived along the direction of time, i.e. the past cannot be bodily revisited.

The time-geographical assumptions are closely related to human existentialism. Humans are doomed to freedom in that people constantly have to make choices, even not making a choice is a choice, and that people are defined by their acts’ and are consequently responsible for their actions (Sartre 2002 [1946]). Following these assumptions the human life can be notated or represented as a (life-) path or trajectory through space and time. The human body is constantly on the move through an ever changing time-space, or
‘landscapes of courses’ (Borén 2005). Hägerstrand, however, stressed that people, and things, cannot and should not be reduced to trajectories in time and space, but by living and being in time and space they cannot avoid leaving time-spatial trajectories behind (Hägerstrand 1982: 324; cf. De Certeau 1984).

Time-geography has been criticised for being a too scientific and materialistic approach (and sometimes for not being materialistic enough (Gren 2001; Schwanen 2007)), for reducing the individual (to a line) and at the same time being individualistic, for not offering explanations or problematising social relationships and notions of power, and for simplifying space and time (cf. Hallin 1988).

Some criticism derives from misunderstandings and can be related to the fact that time-geography in part was developed as an empirical research program of measurable quantities (Hägerstrand 1991). The time-geographical map or notation apparatus which is a diagrammatic tool for describing the four-dimensional time-space in three dimensions has been particularly criticised, and misinterpreted (e.g., Giddens 1985). However, time-geography cannot be reduced to these representations.

The time-geographical perspective and concept has been used in a range of different disciplines and in studying various issues. It has, for example, been used in studies of everyday life (e.g., Ellegård 1999; Åquist 2003), and technology and infrastructure studies (e.g., Kwan 2002; Miller 1999, 2003, 2005). The perspective has consequently been developed and refined in various ways and it is perhaps more accurate to discuss time-geographies rather than a time-geography (Gren 2001; Lenntorp 2004).

Although time-geography has been criticised by feminist and gender scholars, especially for its representation of (male) bodies and its conceptualisation of (masculine) space (e.g., Rose 1993), it has been extensively utilised and developed through gender perspectives (e.g., Jarvis 2005; Kwan 1999, 2000; Friberg 1990). The emphasis on time-spatial constraints for everyday life, and especially the concept of bundling constraints, seems to be a particularly fruitful concept and important area in, for example, changing work/home and gender relationships (cf. McDowell 2006).

Time-geography focuses on different constraints for everyday human endeavours and societies. Hägerstrand (1970) identified three fundamental sets of societal and time-spatial constraints – capacity, coupling and authority constraints – which are, with a slight modification, applicable to commodity transactions. All commodity transactions and associated populations are influenced both by internal and external conditions and factors, and constrained by material and immaterial elements and processes (cf. contextual embeddedness).

In the context of transactions capacity constraints refers to the internal properties and resources of the entities in the transaction. Coupling or bundling constraints refers to the material problems of coordinating and syn-
chronising (spacing and timing) the existences involved in time and space. Authority constraints refer to external immaterial relationships governing and regulating the transaction. The constraints are related to being and living in the world, the material spatial practices of the transaction, and how it is regulated in society (cf. Lefebvre’s triadic spatial typology below and Fig. 2.).

However, as noted above, time-geography has been critiqued for not offering any explanatory theory. Although explanations were not a primary intention of the perspective, this lack is not the least evident when capacity and authority constraints are discussed. Authority constraints denotes, for example, the involvement of power over space and time regarding the accessibility to a domain, which Hägerstrand describes as ‘a time-space entity within, which things and events are under control of a given individual or a given group’ (Hägerstrand 1970: 16).

The time-geographical perspective does not explicitly offer any social explanations of how these time-spaces are controlled or the power-relations that produce them (Harvey 1989b: 211f.). Similar criticism can be argued in relation to capacity constraints. Although time-geography does not explain many how and why questions it does offer ‘a sound basis for asking these types of indispensable questions’ (Lenntorp 2003).

Nevertheless, time-geography provides descriptive and analytical tools but it furthermore, as Pred argued, provides a flexible research language and philosophical perspective that can be used to understand the dialectical relationships between the individual and society (Pred 1981b). Thrift emphasises that time-geography focuses on ‘the congruencies and disparities of meeting and encountering, that is, on the situated dependence of life’, and thus it cannot be regarded as individualistic perspective, rather the contrary (Thrift 1996: 9 original emphasis). From this Thrift goes on and places Hägerstrand amongst philosophers like Heidegger and Wittgenstein, and social theorist’s like Bourdieu and de Certeau, who all emphasise the bodily situatedness of human action.

The time-geographical perspective is usable as a framework for deduction (Hägerstrand 1978: 214) but time-geography can also be described as the study of possibilities (Jackson and Thrift 1995). It has also been recognised, although seldom explicitly utilised, as being a helpful perspective in analysing spatialities of consumption. The argument is that it might be useful because it provides tools and a language to visualise ‘the simultaneities and conjunctures of the interaction of people and commodities’ and because it ‘stresses social situatedness’ of consumption projects (Jackson and Thrift 1995: 218). To understand how commodity transaction situations are configured and consumer service spaces are practically formed the perspective does, however, need to be complemented. In this thesis time-geography is complemented with Lefebvre’s work on the social production of social space.
The emphasis on situations and constraints of everyday life is a common denominator in many of the conceptualisations and developments of different time-geographies. This thesis is another application of time-geographical thought that uses the perspective and a few of its key concepts to analyse commodity transactions as situated projects and the bundling of the paths of commodities, consumers and producers.

Situation is a key concept both in time-geography and in existentialism. In existentialist terms a situation can be conceptualised as the sum of the material and mental conditions within a specific time-period that defines a totality (Sartre 2002 [1946]). Lefebvre, who was sceptical of early non-Marxist existentialism and situationalism (cf. Poster 1975; Soja 1980), proposed a theory of moments and preferred the concept of moment to that of situation, partly because moments produce situations (Lefebvre 2002 [1961]) and partly because he saw more (political) potential in moments in comparison to how the Situationalists used the concept (Gromark 2000: 237).

The distinction between moment and situation is, however, imprecise and as the Situationalists argued: ‘What you call “moments”, we call “situations”, but we are taking it further than you. We accept as “moments” everything that has occurred in the course of history; love, poetry, thought. We want to create new moments.’ (the Situationalists cited by Lefebvre 1997: 72). The emphasis on moments can also be related to the fact that Lefebvre was not a geographer; the term situation might have a more static connotation than moment but it more clearly implies a spatial dimension than the latter (Merrifield 1993: 421; cf. Elden 2001: 13).

Projects and time-spatial pockets
Transactions are embedded everyday life projects situated in socio-economic contexts and materially constituted. But what is a project and how is it related to situations, and in what manner are projects situated in time and space? Projects and situations are fundamental concepts in time-geographical thinking. In time-geographical terms, a commodity transaction is a project, or a partial project, in the wider project of consumption, realised in particular situations. In the article Diorama, Path and Project, Hägerstrand outlines the relationship between projects and situations, and how they are situated in relation to the surrounding societal landscape – the diorama (Hägerstrand 1982).

The time-geographical conceptualisation of projects is purposefully, and almost provocatively (Crang 2001), broad and can thus be applied to a range of activities needed to be performed to reach a goal (Hägerstrand 1982). A project can be seemingly mundane and simple such as buying food, preparing a meal and having dinner or more intricate and complex such as running a business, building a house or planning a city quarter. Living might itself be seen as a life-long project. A range of different activities and practises often need to be performed and resources utilised to achieve a project.
Projects are thus goal-oriented activities. They are imagined before eventually realised, many or perhaps most planned projects are however, never realised only imagined. Hägerstrand (1982; 1984) analytically distinguishes between the intentionality and realisation of projects. A project has two sides: on the one hand the logical structure, the intention with the project and its underlying meaning and on the other its practical realisation that turns out differently depending on the situation (Hägerstrand 1982). Time-geography primarily focuses on the realisation of projects as they, in principle, are observable, and on the time-spatial constraints of acts’ and events’.

The realisation of projects is, however, not a straight forward process from X to Y; projects are negotiated and moulded on the path from imagination to realisation, and the outcome is often slightly different than intended, which implies both creativity and innovation (Bylund 2006). In order to realise a project people and things need to be bundled together, synchronised in time and coordinated in space as the project takes both time, in the meaning of duration and order as well as place in the meaning of room to realise (Hägerstrand 1973: 78). All projects include people and resources, time and space (Parkes and Thrift 1980: 248).

In other words transaction projects are situated practices. Consequently, transaction projects are always realised in specific situations that require synchronisation in time and coordination in space of commodities, consumers and producers, thus the emphasis on transaction situations. Hägerstrand stressed that something has to be ‘there’ for a project to be defined and realised and that a situation is always presented ‘from the vantage point of somebody or something’ (Hägerstrand 1982: 325). The relationship between projects and situations was explained as:

The situation is undetermined until a project defines it. On the other hand, whether an initiator of a project can bring it to a desired end will depend on what events the subsequent situations permit from moment to moment. (Hägerstrand 1982: 325)

The concept of time-spatial paths (life-paths and trajectories) is used to connect projects and situations and to emphasise the continuity and path dependency of projects (Hägerstrand 1982). Projects are bundles of different life paths (Hägerstrand 1985a). They are rooted in earlier situations and the life-paths of people and things connect different situations with each other. However, the world is corporeal and not only constituted by situations after situations but simultaneously situation next to situation, ‘things next to things and at the same time event next to event and event after event’ (Hägerstrand 1991: 139 translation).

Natural events are often distinguished from human acts but Hägerstrand argued that events and acts should not be separated from each other because events cause and condition acts and vice versa (Hägerstrand 1994). In the
context of corporeality, and in relation to transactions of commodities, this implies, as Sartre argued, that humans are mediated through things just as things are mediated through humans (Sartre cited in Hägerstrand 1994: 152).

Furthermore, the transaction situation is situated in a grander situation. A situation does not only follow another situation but is also situated in relation to other situations. Situations are not independent entities; they are rooted in the historical past and anchored to the present surroundings – in the diorama. Instead of using the term landscape, Hägerstrand preferred the concept diorama to conceptualise the living landscape and account for everything in the part of the world under consideration, from small organisms and gadgets, to ecosystems and cities, and of course human bodies. According to Hägerstrand, the diorama ‘leaves us with no sharp landscape and society’ (Hägerstrand 1982: 326). Here similarities can be drawn with Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of social space and society, and the urban fabric, which are also more or less overlapping.

The term diorama is primarily used because it emphasises the ‘thereness’ of existences. The concept should be interpreted metonymically, and not metaphorically, and it indicates the contextuality, the nearness and thereness of people and objects, acts and events. That means it should not be misinterpreted as a static arrangement of existences as in museums, since a metonymy in contrast to a metaphor stresses contiguity rather than similarity (Asplund 1983). The time-geographical language is over all very much a metonymical language and Hägerstrand often used musical conceptualisations to emphasise both the thereness and nearness but also the dynamicality and fluidity of the world. That space is an ever changing and continuous process is a fundamental principle in time-geography as has been noted above. The dynamic spatial and metonymical thinking with reference to music is also a similarity between Hägerstrand and Lefebvre.

Three decades ago Hägerstrand argued that transactions are closely related to city and urban life, and that:

… transactions require for the most part nearness in space. Movement can be allowed to take only a limited amount of time. Transacting populations are predominantly populations that live fairly close together as in a city or a village. This is a circumstance that adds a further dimension to the budgeting process. Demand and supply must be catered for rather locally all the time. This gives rise to a complicated mixture of cooperation and competition. (Hägerstrand 1978: 223)

The explosion of the urban and development of new technological communications and infrastructures has changed but not eradicated the conditions of nearness. As a paradoxical result of the time-space compression, the transaction situation has become more flexible, which means that many transactions can be extended and separated both in time and space. In an increasingly
interconnected global cultural economy, proximity in the form of direct physical nearness might be diminishing but it is, however, still necessary for the consumer to reach the commodity even if the producer of the commodity is physically distant. The thereness is albeit still important.

The transaction project cannot escape the tyranny of place, meaning room and location, i.e., transactions of commodities always occur at some particular location or interconnected locations in the case of, for example, virtual transactions. The material accessibility to the commodity transaction situation is still critical for the realisation of the project. However, the material constraints of projects are often overlooked, especially in the sense that: ‘Material entities occupy room in exclusive ways’ (Hägerstrand 1985a: 202 original emphasis). Bundling constraints emphasise the importance of coordination and proximity of individuals and things, i.e., where, when and for how long an individual consumer needs to be bundled together with other people and things in order to complete the transaction.

In other words, the realisation and the practical fulfilment of commodity transactions requires a pocket of local order. Transaction projects need ‘a section in time-space that is well ordered to serve their function and that it can also be controlled such that this order may be maintained and respected’ (Lenntorp 2004: 225). The concept of pocket of local order implies in general terms an underlying dialectical relationship between projects or actions on the one hand and the time-spatial pockets on the other. ‘The human pockets of local order are a superstructure directly added on nature and not possible to maintain without that base’ (Hägerstrand 1985a: 208). Pockets of local order must be arranged so that the activities occurring within them are protected from external interference. But they must simultaneously be penetrable for the entities engaging in the activities and the resource needed to complete the project for which the pocket is set up (Lenntorp 1998).

The concept of pocket of local order is scale insensitive since, in principle, it can be applied on all scalar levels from the scale of the home via cities and nations to global orders (Lenntorp 1998: 79). Smaller pockets of local order are ‘embedded’ in larger pockets of local order (Hägerstrand 1982).

The home is an example of a pocket of local order. Many different people might be living in a home at the same time, but to be able to function some kind of order needs to be established (Ellegård and Vilhelmson 2004). The city can, in similar fashion, be conceptualised as a pocket of local order that has to be planned and regulated in order to accommodate the population and their everyday life, etc. The insensitivity to scale is especially significant for analysing city formations and urban everyday life since the city is a spatial nexus of contemporary process such as globalisation and neoliberalisation (Brenner and Theodore 2002b). In the contemporary city all scales tumble down upon and within each other, which means that the analysis of urban process has to be able to acknowledge several scalar levels (Brenner 1999: 447).
Pockets of local order, or envelopes of space-time (Crang 2001), resemble and can be compared to Lefebvre’s concept of space envelopes:

The analysis of space envelopes may be expected to take markets (local, national and hence also worldwide) as its starting-point, and eventually to link up with the theory of networks and flows. And the theory of use-value, so badly obscured and misapprehended since Marx, will be restored and returned, complete with its complexities, to its former standing. (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 351)

A pocket of local order can thus also be understood as a specific type or slice of lived (social) space arranged and regulated for the realisation of specific commodity transactions. Local pockets of order are consequently simultaneously producing and products of social spaces. Spatially possible transaction situations are limited by time-space as a finite resource, but transaction situations simultaneously constitute time-space and are a crucial part in the production of space.

3.3 Representations and Spatial Practices

Space is not only consumed it is also produced. Transactions are situated in space and time but they are also part in the formation of space and time, and of particular places. Commodity transactions are performed through spatial practice in everyday life; formed and reformed on the one hand by how they are conceived and spatially represented, on the other by how they are perceived and represented through space.

Lefebvre’s (Lefebvre 1979, 1991 [1974]) overarching argument was that social space is a socially produced social product. Social space is simultaneously a product and a production process, both a thing and a process, both abstract and concrete (cf. citation above in relation to commodity values). Space is not only material or physical nor mental or symbolic; it is simultaneously and inherently social. Space is material and mental and social, not either/or. Social space incorporates social action and subjects that are situated in space. Furthermore, social relationships exist through and in space, which means that spatiality underpins all social relationships (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 404).

Space is a mental and material construct. This provides us with a third term between the poles of conception and perception, the notion of the lived. Lefebvre argues that human space and human time lie half in nature, and half in abstraction. Socially lived space and time, socially produced, depends on physical and mental constructs. (Elden 2004: 189f.)
The third moment of space and a triadic conceptualisation of space outlined in the introductory chapter of *The production of Space* (1991 [1974]) is a critique of the futile theoretical and philosophical treatment and conceptualisation of space in dualistic terms. To overcome the unfruitful binaries and dualities such as mental and material space, object and subject, Lefebvre introduced a third term and the notion of social space. A dialectical perspective Lefebvre stressed implies the usage of three terms, not just two (Lefebvre 1991 [1974], 1968 [1939], 2004 [1992]).

In Lefebvre’s work there is a range of different spatial conceptualisations and typologies of space. Absolute and natural space, abstract space and capitalist space, contradictory space and differential space, world space and lived space, bureaucratic space and socialist space and natural space just to mention a few (e.g., Lefebvre 1979). There are thus different moments of (social) spaces and space is simultaneously used in concrete and abstract terms. It is also a concept and an analytical category (cf. Werlen 1992 [1988]), and it is consequently possible to distinguish between different transaction spaces.

The triadic conceptualisation of space is, thus also, a practical framework for the analysis of the social production of space used to expose ‘the actual production of space by bringing various kinds of spaces and modalities of their genesis together within a single theory’ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 16). It could therefore be argued, as Liggett (1995: 255) does, that the triads are frameworks for analysing ‘space as an activity’ and should not be regarded as constituted of ‘mutually exclusive categories’.

**A dialectical spatial typology**

The critical and fundamental triad in Lefebvre’s work on the social production of space is the ‘perceived-conceived-lived triad (in spatial terms: spatial practice, representations of space, representational spaces)’ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 40). The triad is most concisely explained with reference to the body and the heart: ‘The ‘heart’ as lived is strangely different from the heart as thought and perceived’ (ibid. original emphasis).

The translation of the three concepts from French to English (and Swedish) is problematic in many ways. In English, for example, the term perceived space has a passive connotation not intended by Lefebvre in using the original French term *Escape perçu* (Rogers 2002). It has also been questioned whether the term representational spaces, which is used in the English translation of *The Production of Space*, is appropriate or if it is more correct to use spaces of representations. The latter is arguably the more felicitous and seems to have become the more commonly used translation (Elden 2004). Spaces of representations will therefore be used from here on.

The distinctions among the three moments of space are neither definite nor precise, but Lefebvre initially presents and summarises the triad as follows:
1. **Spatial practices**, which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society’s relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance.

2. **Representations of space**, which are tied to the relations of production and the ‘order’ which those relationships impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations.

3. **Representational spaces**, embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces). (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 33 original emphasis)

The three epistemological moments should be interpreted as an initial and analytical typology of spaces, ‘a dialectical simplification, fluid and alive, and each moment messily blurs into other moments in the real life contexts’ (Merrifield 2000: 173). There are multiple dialectical relationships in Lefebvre’s triads (Franzén 2003: 54), not only between, for example, spatial practices in relation to representations of space and space of representation, but also simultaneously among all three moments.

Another complication with the triads is that the perceived-conceived-live triad is not exactly overlapping with spatial practice-representations of space-spaces of representation. There is a slight shift or distortion between these two triads. This has had significant complications for the interpretation, which will be discussed more in a moment.

The triads, furthermore, partially overlap and relate to the notions of material, mental and social space, but here there is not even a direct or simple correlation, because all three spatial moments ‘includes the relation between physical and social space in the constitution of imaginary geographies that are also real’ (Liggett 1995: 247). The material, mental and social can be seen as a starting point from which the former triads are derived (Elden 2004). There are thus three triads that are more or less related and overlapping but not totally or with exactitude.

To make it even more confusing there are also a historical dimension, since the triads are historically dependent and situated (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 46). In different ways they are part of the ongoing societal production of space: from absolute to abstract to contradictory to differential space (Dear 2000: 48). A process through which representations of space dominate everyday spaces of representation (Gregory 1994). The three by three conceptualisations and their relationship to the historical production of space are not mutually exclusive but rather very much intertwined and an open-ended
typology. The triads have consequently been interpreted and used rather differently by different scholars and in different contexts.

The following interpretation and application draws on parts of different scholars and focuses primarily on the analytical usage of the typology. In practice the triadic conceptualisation of space can be relatively forthright (Allen and Pryke 1994: 455) and here will specifically be used to analyse the configurations and formation of spaces and places for transaction situations (cf. Franzén 2003). Spatial practices and representations of space are the two spatial moments that individually are relatively forthright, although their relationship to spaces of representations are more difficult as is the third term in itself. The relationships between spatial practices, lived space and representational space are especially confusing.

Spatial practices are closely related to how space is perceived and material space. In short, it is the spatial moment that is ‘generated and used’ (Elden 2004: 190). It has coherence and secures production and reproduction as well as manifests the contradictions of everyday life. ‘The spatial practices of a society secretes that society’s space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it.’ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 38)

It refers to the spatial organisation of consumption and production, material buildings and infrastructure, movements and flows of people and things, information and capital, the spaces that materially mediate transactions and interaction (Harvey 1989b; Simonsen 2001). Spatial practices both structure everyday life (Merrifield 1993: 524) and are ‘created in dialectical relationships between everyday and institutional practices’ (Simonsen 1991: 427).

Representations of space are the dominant spaces of any society, the discourse of space, and closely related to how space is conceived, as well as with mental space. It is the conceptualised space, ‘the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers’ (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]: 38). The conceptualisations are manifested through different representations as symbols, codes, texts, images and narratives. There is not just one coherent representation of space but many and often conflicting representations of space. The representations are manifested in maps and plans, imagines and symbols, and in policies and guidelines, regulations and permits. It is materialised in and through different spatial practices.

Representations of spaces are the dominating spaces associated with the abstract spaces of capitalism and exchange value; use value on the other hand can be associated with the spaces of representation (Gregory 1994). Representations of spaces are, according to Soja, cool and distant spaces of the mind, while spaces of representations are hot and passionate spaces of the body (Soja 1996).

Spaces of representation are perhaps individually the most problematic and ‘elusive’ term in the triad (Merrifield 2000). Spaces of representations could be understood as the lived and experienced spaces of everyday life.
Lefebvre argued that it is ‘the space of “inhabitants” and “user’s”’ and ‘the dominated space – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate’ (1991 [1974]: 39). It refers to how users and inhabitants make symbolic use of space and how space is experienced (Merrifield 1993). In opposition to representations of space, spaces of representation are associated with festivals, carnivals, and art, and it is the oppositional spaces of the urban revolution (cf. Lefebvre 1983 [1968], 2003 [1970]).

Spaces of representation are, however, also the third term introduced by Lefebvre to transcend the dualism between mental and material space, and can thus be associated with the lived and social. It is also close to Soja’s concept thirddspace and ‘thirding-as-othering’ (1996; 1999), and he argues that lived space and spaces of representations:

… encompasses both the “perceived space” of material practices and the “conceived space” of symbolic representations and epistemology, not as a simple either-or dichotomy but rather as a radically open “both and also” expansion (Soja 1999: 74).

It is the spatial moment through and where ‘new meanings or possibilities for spatial practices’ can be imagined (Harvey 1989b). It ‘involves the complex symbolism connected with the spatiality of social life, the place and its symbolic value, the rhythms of everyday life, feminine and masculine’ (Simonsen 1991: 427; 2001: 49). Representations of spaces are the space where people represent themselves, where everyday life is fully lived out.

The ‘performance’ and ‘enactment’ of everyday life are, however, according to, for example, Shields (Shields 1992b), related to spatial practices. This conceptualisation of spaces of representations is rather straightforward and connected with the lived, but it becomes strangely similar to the spatial practices. Lefebvre is, as Merrifield argues: ‘vague about the precise manner in which spatial practices mediate between the conceived and the lived, about how spatial practices keep representations of space and representational space together, yet apart’ (Merrifield 2000: 175).

Representations of space and spaces of representations can be interpreted as the outcome of spatial practices (Bylund 2006: 45). Or, alternatively, representations of space and spaces of representation can be regarded as two forms of social space that are circumscribed and shaped by spatial practices (Allen and Pryke 1994). In Lefebvre’s dialectical reasoning this apparent contradiction is only logical. Spatial practices are simultaneously cause and effect, both formed by and former of representations of space and spaces of representations.

Spatial practices are both medium and outcome (Rogers 2002). Space or spatiality is causative and ‘has a mediating effect because it represents the contingent juxtaposition of social and economical forces, forms of social
organisation, and constraints of the natural world and so on’ (Shields 1992b: 57). The relationships among the three terms are ‘dialectically rather than causally determined’ (Aubert-Gamet 1997: 31), and are not primarily of any hierarchal order (Harvey 2006).

Representations of space are, however, the dominating space of any society and spaces of representation the dominated spaces. The domination and appropriation of space is another dialectical tension in Lefebvre’s spatial dialectics, where power-relationships are particularly articulated (Allen and Pryke 1994; Aubert-Gamet 1997). Domination is connected to exchange value and appropriation to use value (Lefebvre 1979), and can be related to de Certeau’s (1984) concepts of strategies and tactics, and his conceptualisation of place as practiced space.

Furthermore, the concept of lived (social) space is closely related to the concept of place (Entrikin and Berdoulay 2005; Cresswell 2004; Simonsen 1991). Places are continuously formed and reformed between domination through tactical representations of space and by peoples’ everyday life appropriation through tactics of spaces of representations.

**Places of strategies and tactics**

Place is a word we use in all manner of contexts in theoretical expositions and in everyday life. Within geographical theory and philosophy has come to signify meaningful segments of space – locations imbued with meaning and power. A place is a centre of meaning – we become attached to it, we fight over it and exclude people from it – we experiences (Cresswell 2006: 3).

The relationships between space and place are contested and tensional both conceptually and practically. Place is often considered more stable and intimate than space and the relationship between place and space is often respectively related to and intertwined with local and global as different scales. Global space is distant, abstract and unfamiliar while local place is near, concrete and familiar. But the global is not just something out there – it has local origins and local consequences. Massey argues that place is not only a social product but also that space as well is ‘concrete, grounded, real, lived etc. etc.’ (Massey 2004: 185).

Another problem with associating place with the local (and space with the global) is that it implies that places are of a certain limited scale. Places, however, also exist within other places. For example, the city can be considered as a place but the city also consists of different places such as urban quarters, neighbourhoods, and homes. The home is another example of the tension between places and spaces. Homes can be said to become places when they are named and appropriate. However, the home is not just limited to the apartment or house but can also be extended to the street and the
neighbourhood, and perhaps, in different ways, to cities and countries. Thus, there are different types of places and the naming of place is a powerful tool in the formation process, to stabilise the unstable, a way of delimiting and regulating spaces (Tuan 1991).

The notion of social space, especially lived space, is, as noted, closely related to place. A perhaps oversimplified but useful interpretation is that once lived space can be named it might be regarded as a place, which means that a place is a special case of lived space, i.e., space plus meaning (Franzén 1997, 2003). In this interpretation, places are the concrete manifestation of lived space: ‘a place is a localized culture, a specific combination of the social and the cultural, at the intersection of spatial practices and representations of space’ (Franzén 1997: 187).

Lefebvre’s conceptualisation of place, especially in relation to space is, however, rather inconsistent and indecisive (Unwin 2000), but in general place refers to a moment of space ‘where everyday life is situated’ (Merrifield 1993). Or the constitution and configuration of place is a part or moment in the production of space. Place is ‘the ongoing matrix and record of social processes’ (Shields 1999: 308).

According to Merrifield (1993) this conceptualisation of space and place is closely related, although reversed, to de Certeau’s (1984: 117) conceptualisation, ‘space is a practiced place’. This interesting and insightful conceptualisation turns much of the geographical discussion on space and place on its head (Cresswell 2004), which warrants a more extensive citation of de Certeau’s perspective on the relationship between space and place:

A place (lieu) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (place). The law of the “proper” rules in the place: the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its own “proper” and distinct location, a location it defines. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.

A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities. On this view, in relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts. In contradiction to the place, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a “proper”. (De Certeau 1984: 117 original emphasis)
Here space is described as something dynamic with direction while places are configurations and locations. Spaces are the performances of acting while places order and stabilise space. De Certeau’s conceptualisation of the relationship between space and place transcends different spatial perspectives and incorporates absolute and relative as well as relational perspectives on space. It can therefore be argued that it also brings together Hägerstrand’s and Lefebvre’s spatial thinking. Different perspectives on place are not mutually exclusive; place can be seen as a location in time-space, more philosophically as the sense of place, but also space as a locale or context for interaction.

From a time-geographical perspective it could be argued that places are becoming through space (Pred 1984). In a continuously changing diorama it is not only people and objects that move through time and space but also places. Places have historical trajectories and are continuously formed and reformed. They appear and disappear, are produced and consumed. These transformations are on a different time-scale – they move according to a different rhythm than people, objects and information.

In relation to Lefebvre’s spatial typologies, places can be seen as the somewhat stable location where the formation of spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation take place, but also where they dialectically interact. A place is a location in space where the different moments of space come together, which simultaneously forms the place. This perspective on space and place could also be used to emphasise that consumption and commodities create places, and that places are simultaneously used for the selling commodities.

Tactics and strategies in de Certeau’s conceptualisation can, furthermore, be used to clarify Lefebvre’s spatial typologies. Tactics can be connected to spaces of representation and strategies to representations of space. Strategies are used in the dominant production of space and involve ‘the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that become possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated’ (De Certeau 1984: 35f). In order for the strategies to be exercised and implemented space has to be delimited and fragmented into proper, delimited and stabilised places. Tactics on the other hand are ‘an art of the weak’ (ibid. 37), and related to space of representations. It is about how users of spaces make do in everyday life, how they creatively negotiate and appropriate places, how space is practice place.

The dominant representations of space are not the only ones producing an abstract space. In an economic political system increasingly occupied with symbolic exchange, the dominating forces strive to produce places, i.e., stable, governable and order places with an appropriate image. It means that they strive to ascribe certain symbolic meanings into the representations of space in order to commodify places.
Spaces are formed and reformed by producers’ domination of spaces through strategic representations of space and by consumers’ appropriation of spaces through tactical spaces of representation. The strategies and tactics are manifested in various spatial practices and materialised through and in places. (The figure is partly inspired by Gregory’s illustration of the eye of power (1994: 401).)

Places are, however, utopian commodities, because when the strategic representations of space are materialised through different spatial practices they change in relation to how they are appropriated by consumers through tactical spaces of representation manifested in various spatial practices (Fig. 4.)

In Lefebvre’s terminology lived spaces are constantly and dialectically practiced places between perceived and conceived space. They are formed, on the one hand, by how capitalists as well as planners, bureaucrats and politicians strategically dominate spaces through their representations of space. On the other hand they are simultaneously formed by the tactical spaces of representation through which the users and inhabitants creatively practice place.

The different strategies and tactics are manifested through spatial practices that form and reform material places. Producers strategically strive to produce places through representations of spaces while the users tactically create and appropriate places through spaces of representation. The lived space and practiced place are consequently formed between producers and consumers; between the production of spaces of representations and the creation of spaces of representation.
3.4 Exploration Through Examples

So far this chapter has outlined a conceptual framework of commodity transactions as economic and social everyday life projects materially and bodily situated in time and space and contextually embedded in society. The argument is that transactions as situated everyday projects are an appropriate starting point for recognising and analysing the formation of spaces and places, as well as the consumption in and of spaces and places. Furthermore and consequently, transaction situations are a way to understand the relationships between city formation and urban everyday life.

Theoretically the conceptualisation of commodity transaction situations can be seen as a concept unifying time-geography and Hägerstrand’s project of integrating different elements, often held separate with Lefebvre’s triadic conceptualisation of social space and the interaction of space, time and everyday life.

The practical and methodological question following the conceptual outline becomes how to ‘grasp a moving but determinate complexity (determination not entailing determinism)’ (Lefebvre 2004 [1992]: 12). Ultimately the ‘thing’ to grasp is the complexity of lived space and everyday life situations; the actors and commodities, projects and process involved in configuring commodity transaction situations and in forming consumer service spaces. Analysing situated transactions as lived spatial projects requires a multiple methodological approach. As Soja argues: ‘Making theoretical and practical sense of lived spaces requires a multiplicity of approaches to knowledge formation, a kind of nomadic practice that builds few permanent structures or inviolable “schools” of knowing’ (Soja 1999: 74).

The outlined theory has the transaction as its primary study object, i.e., a relationship and not an ordinary stable or material object. To go further the methodology must be put into practice. To grasp the relationship something has to be put into it. There has to be something there apart from the mere relationship to study. The transaction is always a transaction of something from someone to somebody and always situated in a time and space. It could thus be useful to first take hold of the thing being transferred or more particularly a commodity, and second the context of the transaction situation that is a particular place where transactions occur.

The analysis could be done in various ways, but by drawing on Lefebvre and Hägerstrand, it is logical to use different examples and observations combined with and complemented by written sources and historical material, as well as emphasising planning and everyday life since they often used similar methods and took a particular interest in these issues. Fundamentally bundling constraints and pockets of local order as well as Lefebvre’s triadic conceptualisation is used in this thesis to structure the material, indicate and establish relationships. Whilst the focus is on the recent developments and relationships it is important to recognise and situate the commodity transac-
tion situation in its historical context. The analysis can be seen as writing of contemporary history where observations are a crucial part.

**Observing situations and rhythms**

Only one’s own experience is able to provide the kind of intimate detail which can bring the study of project and situation into any real depth. (Hägerstrand 1982: 338)

Here observation is used broadly and involves observation of something, be it an event, relationship, place, situation, representation or other form of visualisation. Observations of transaction situations involve depicting entities and processes involved in and constraining the transaction project in time and space. In the analysis and particularly in the different forms of transaction configurations (Ch. 4) there is an element of what could be called thought experiments.

In thought experiments abstract thinking and imaginary devices are used to investigate ‘nature’ and concrete phenomena, although there is no common and general definition of thought experiments (Häggqvist 2003). Thought experiments can be conceptualised as knowledge creation ‘by means of non-argumentative, non-platonic guided contemplation of a particular scenario’ (Gendler 1998: 420). Although thought experiments are usually presented in narrative forms they cannot be reduced to either trivial anecdotes or pedagogical examples.

Thought experiments are a rather unusual method in social sciences but it has been used within in time-geographically inspired studies. Pred’s (1990) analysis of a harbour worker’s daily life-paths in 19th century Stockholm can, for example, be seen as a form of thought experiment. The harbour worker is a fictional figure but his daily life-paths are constructed on the basis of historical records. The thought experiments here, about different commodity transaction configurations, are similar but primarily based on and related to contemporary observations and documentation.

To understand spaces (for consumption) it is, however, critical to ‘engage practically and actively with the situated and everyday practices through which the built environments are used. In this regard, ethnography provides one way to explore how the environments produce and are produced by the social practices performed within them.’ (Lees 2001: 56) The more practical observations of the city and of urban life are inspired by Lefebvre’s observations and rhythm analysis (i.e., Lefebvre 2003 [1970], 2004 [1992]), De Certeau’s walking in the city and viewing it from above (i.e., De Certeau 1984, 1985), as well as Zukin’s analysis of New York and shopping (i.e., Zukin 1995, 2004).

In the chapter ‘seen from a window’ in *Rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre (2004 [1992]) outlines how observations of the rhythms of the city might be done.
The rhythmanalyst must ‘arrive at the concrete through experience’ and Lefebvre goes on and argues: ‘In order to grasp the fleeting object, which is not exactly an object, it is therefore necessary to situate oneself simultaneously inside and outside’ (Lefebvre 2004 [1992]: 27). The balcony, which he uses as an observation point, seems to be a practical way of emerging in the rhythms and at the same time be a distant observer.

There are all kinds of different rhythms in play simultaneously in the urban drama of consumption, and Lefebvre argues that it is important to utilise all senses and not only rely on the visual. In his analysis Lefebvre primarily focuses on daily rhythms that clash with each other. However, the rhythms of the city are not to be reduced to, for example, the daily rhythms of the shopper. If rhythms are interpreted metaphorically and metonymically the rhythms of the city also involve the constant evolution of the city and the historical trajectories of places. Lefebvre is, however, not particularly specific about what to observe.

When doing ethnographically inspired analysis of buildings and places more generally, Grufford (Grufford 2003) emphasises five important and useful methodological questions. The first question is what is being studied and how can it be described in terms of size and form, localisation and function. In this context it is important to take the surrounding buildings and supporting infrastructure and technology into account. The second question is when and relates to the historical context and trajectory of the building or place, i.e., the development, redevelopment and refurbishment of the building. The historical has significance for the what, where and how of the building.

The third and forth question is closely related and inquires about the architectural design and style of the building respectively about the maker of the building, where the architect is seen as a primary actor. However, it is important to also recognise the property developers and capital investors as their roles are increasingly important in a society dominated by exchange (Lefebvre 2004 [1992]: 55). The fifth critical question relates to the building as an important component of places and layers of meaning:

Architecture is made up of flows of materials and of money, but also of flows of ideas and creativity. This connects a building to a series of debates – some local, some national and even global – and a good interpretation will seek to draw out these connections. In any historical research it is also important to bear in mind that buildings may make new connections and thus acquire new meaning as the years pass by. (Grufford 2003: 240)

Spaces and situations do not only need to be observed, the observations must also be described and analysed, and time-spatially contextualised, i.e., situated in a larger situation. Description and narration is in itself an analytical instrument. For example, Zola’s classic novel Au Bonheur Des Dames from
1883 is a story about a department store and a young woman’s struggle but also a descriptive analysis about urban life and retail developments in the 19th century Paris, and, furthermore, about societal changes and developments. The classic novel is still of current interest both regarding the practical issues and the spatialities of consumption, but also of methodological interest (Bryson, Warf, and Daniels 2004: 177). This emphasis that narratives and descriptions have their specific research value and that they cannot be reduced to something ad hoc but are a fundamental part of knowledge creation (cf. Flyvbjerg 2001).

In this research project photography has been a crucial part in the observations. Photographs are important part in communicating the observations but photography is also a tool for recording and documenting. Photography is used both as a way of communicating place and as a ‘place interactive method’ (cf. Cele 2006). Photographs cannot fully reflect the fluidity of places as practiced spaces but, in combination with narrations, they offer snapshots of lived spaces. The observations in this research projects were done continuously and irregularly during the whole research project (2003-2007). The narrations of and the observations do not refer to just one instance but are summaries of what was observed, although the photographs are instances.

As noted above, in practical research Lefebvre’s triad has been used in different ways by different scholars, department stores and malls can, for example, be depicted as spaces of representation while advertising and other media might be seen as representations of space (Jackson and Thrift 1995: 218). Representations of space can, also, be interpreted as planning maps (perception) and spaces of representation as editorial cartoons (imagination), while spatial practices are the lived material world (experience) (McCann 1999). Another practical example is Allen and Pryke’s study of London’s financial district where they apply both the triad and the historical development from concrete to abstract space, in which representation of space was understood as coding of space that could be deciphered historically (Allen and Pryke 1994: 459).

In Lefebvre’s terminology documents are used for the analysis of representations of space but also for strategic spatial practices, while observations have been used for investigating spaces of representation and tactical spatial practices.

The discussed interpretation of Lefebvre’s spatial typology has been used both to structure and analyse observations, documents as well as practices. In spatial terms, space as practiced place is formed in a dialectical relationship between representations of space strategically produced by planners, bureaucrats and dominating capital actors and tactical spaces of representations creatively constituted and reconstituted by everyday life actors and actions.

Written sources and historical material have been used to situate the transaction projects and the observations and photographs in a larger context. The
The historical perspective has also been used to distinguish continuities from changes. It has included recognition of the historical trajectory of places and the path dependency of the entities involved in the transaction and how time and space constrain the transaction situation.

Documents of different types are used in many different studies and can imply a range of different source material. In this research project documents refer to research literature as well as written narrations about consumption, city formation and everyday urban life. The research project has been based on literature and other forms of written documentations. Since the project has aimed at integrating different elements, aspects and dimensions of consumption, other research has constituted important material not only as framework or background but also, in a more direct way, as part of the examples themselves.

Documents also refer to archival material and websites as well as planning and policy documents utilised to inquire about the production of space and the formation of consumer service spaces (cf. Ch. 5). Websites has provided information about producers and their strategies but has also been interpreted and analysed as representations of space. Planning and policy documents include visionary and comprehensive political policies as well as detailed plans and building permits. They also include different types of informational documentations on which these plans and polices are based such as statistical surveys and investigations.

In accordance with Lefebvre’s conceptualisation, policymaking can be distinguished from planning; the first is based on intention, on visions, and the second on concrete spatial actions. This means policy making is one form of representation of space while planning can be seen as spatial practices – the concrete result.

In researching and analysing commodity transaction situations there are a number of possible methodologies. However, the focus of this thesis is primarily on practices and realisations of project and not on meaning and intention. The emphasis is on how transactions are performed and in what situation, and how transactions as a crucial part of urban everyday life consumption forms and is formed by the city.

Because, as has been sketched out, a number of different factors have to be incorporated in an analysis different examples illustrating, concretising and problematising the different aspects seems to be a suitable initial approach. The explorative analysis is, as mentioned, primarily based on two sources of information documents and observations; that is, two of the three most commonly used resources in case study research (Flyvbjerg 2001; Gummesson 2003; Merriam 1994).

**Researching examples and projects**

Another aspect of the methodology is that different examples are used to illustrate, concretise and problematise transaction situations. Examples are
used in everyday life to describe, illustrate or prove a thing or entity, a condition or relationship. Scientifically, examples are often used to create new knowledge or question established theories and methodologies. Examples can be of both theoretical and empirical character but are often a combination.

The function of examples is to understand, and understand something through something else (Ramírez 2003/04). Examples constitute the core in case studies, which can be described as exhaustive analysis of individual examples (Flyvbjerg 2001: 66). In case studies the object of primary interest is the case while examples might be said to have a broader application. Examples can be used for their own sake but might also be used to illustrate, concretise and problematise something else, something more general. The difference between examples and cases is a shift in emphasis rather than a fundamental shift in research method.

Examples and case studies can be descriptive, explanatory and exploratory, as well as used to illustrate, concretise and problematise. Flyvbjerg argues that case study research is an important methodology in social science and Lenntorp sees it as particularly suitable for geography and studies of pockets of local order, especially since it does not by default strive for verification or falsification (Lenntorp 1998: 82). Case study research has often been used in studies of cities but has been criticised for being too specific and uncritical in relation to general theories, and that case study research need to call pay more attention to philosophical and theoretical questions: and a more ‘concretised abstract discussion’ (Castree 2005: 544).

Examples can be used in a range of different ways and is, as case study research in general, a wide concept and does not specify a certain method by definition. A general characteristic of case study research is that it strives for a comprehensive and exhaustive analysis of an often contemporary and complex entity or phenomenon where questions of how and why are central (cf. Flyvbjerg 2001; Gummesson 2003; Merriam 1994).

Case study research has often been criticised for generating piecemeal knowledge, which is not possible to generalise. Another criticism is that case study research is often perceived as more suitable initially in research and preliminary studies since it is argued that they are more suitable for generating theories than for testing them. Furthermore, it is often argued that case studies have a tendency to confirm preconceived notions and statements. Flyvbjerg (2001), however, argues that these criticisms are based on five critical misunderstandings of case study research and knowledge. Concrete, contextual and practical knowledge, which is usually generated by case studies, is (1) at least as important as more general and theoretical knowledge. The misconception is directly related to the strong Platonian tradition within science that premieres general and theoretical knowledge. Concrete, contextual and practical knowledge is nevertheless crucially important in social sciences with a focus on human action (and transactions)
sciences with a focus on human action (and transactions) where there are no predetermined universals or theories.

It is (2) also wrong to claim that it is impossible to generalise or abstract from case studies. On the contrary many scientific breakthroughs and generalisations have been based on individual examples. This is not the least evident within natural sciences. Galileo’s thought experiments were, for example, based on carefully selected cases. Newton’s, Einstein’s and Bohr’s research was based on cases and examples. Flyvbjerg argues, however, that generalisations within social science are overrated while the ‘power of the good example’ (2001: 77) is underrated.

Accordingly, it is (3) incorrect to argue that examples are only useful for generating hypotheses while other methodologies are more suitable to test and verify them. Case study research is, by definition, neither deductive nor inductive, nor does it by default generate or test theories. Qualitative case studies nevertheless often emanate from inductive reasoning (Merriam 1994). Examples can both generate and test hypotheses but are not limited to these research activities. A strength with case study research is, on the contrary, that the examples often falsify and criticise preconceived notions and established theories (Flyvbjerg 2001: 84), i.e., if the established theory or notions are not correct in the researched example it is not a sound general theory.

The criticism that (4) case study research suffers from an internal bias and tends only to confirm the researcher’s preconceptions is also a misinterpretation. Experience, however, indicates otherwise ‘that the case study contains a greater bias towards falsification of preconceived notions than towards verification’ (ibid. 84). That it is (5) difficult to summarise case study research into general statements is correct but has more to do with the complexity of entities and phenomena studied than with the methodology, and a good narration is, according to Flyvbjerg, often the answer in itself (ibid. 86).

The selection and delimitation of the examples (or cases) is crucial. There is a general overconfidence in multiple examples over single examples linked to the general criticism of the lack in case study research of overarching statements. Even this is, in large part, a misconception because even a single example contains multiple dimensions since theory and empiricism are intertwined in many different ways (ibid. 82).

The character of an example (or a case) varies significantly (Gummesson 2003: 116), and is, as other methods, highly dependent on research questions, subject of study and traditions in academia. A case can, for example, contain an individual or group of individuals, a specific type of interaction or relationship, one or more organisations or institutions, alternatively focus on one or more places, or one or more commodities. However, a common feature is the emphasis on context and the focus on situations.

Random sampling or information oriented samples are the two general principles of selecting examples (Flyvbjerg 2001: 77ff). Random sample
selection can be either totally random or stratified and is commonly used when the objective is to generalise different types of populations. An informative selection is, on the contrary, based on assumptions of the amount of information the example can provide, i.e., information maximisation.

Informative examples can be extreme or diverting examples with unusual information; multiple examples selected on the basis of their discrepancy; critical examples, which allow deductive reasoning (i.e., if this is incorrect in this example it could also be the same in other cases); or paradigmatic examples, that is ‘cases that highlight more general characteristics of the society in question’ (Flyvbjerg 2001: 80). The informative oriented selections are, however, not mutually exclusive and an example can simultaneously be extreme, critical and paradigmatic.

If the objective is to use examples to concretise, illustrate and problematise, as in this study, extreme, critical and/or paradigmatic examples are particularly useful since they often contain more information than the average or ordinary example (Flyvbjerg 2001: 78). Whether or not an example is extreme, critical, or especially paradigmatic is difficult to determine a priori, and dependent on the intuition of the researcher.

It is not possible consistently, or frequently, to determine in advance whether or not a given case is paradigmatic. Besides the strategic choice of case, the execution of the case study will certainly play a role, as will the reaction to the study by the research community, the group studied and, possibly, the broader public. The value of the case study will depend on the validity claims which the researchers can place on their study, and the status these claims obtain in dialogue with other validity claims in the discourse to which the study is a contribution, both in the scientific discipline concerned and, possibly, in the public sphere. Like other good craftsmen, all that researchers can do is use their experience and intuition to access whether they believe a given case is interesting in a paradigmatic context, and whether they can provide collectively acceptable reasons for the choice of the case. (Flyvbjerg 2001: 81)

The selection of examples in this research project is based on their contrasting and comparative information. The examples are either related to specific commodities or particular places. The three primary commodity examples are retail fashion clothes, text and books as artefacts, a cup of coffee and their associated spaces. The selection of the three rather ordinary commodities is mainly based on the contrasting information they provide. The examples more specifically related to places are Stockholm city, particularly the city centre and different places in the city centre. Two property development projects have been used as temporal points and they were selected because of their historical trajectories and direct proximity, and because they directly relate to the three commodities.
4. Transaction Configurations in Practice

In the previous chapter it was stressed that a commodity transaction situation is comprised of three fundamental entities – a consumer, a producer and a commodity. To realise a transaction these entities must be connected, or bundled together in time and space. Time and space are unavoidable constraints for any spatial organisation, and for configuring transactions it is a question of synchronising and coordinating commodities, consumers and producers in time and space, i.e., bundling them together in pockets of local order.

This chapter focuses on how different transaction situations are configured and constrained. A time-spatial typology of archetypical configurations of transactions situations is constructed to analyse different configurations and organisations of commodity transactions. This is then used as a framework for analysing three different commodities – clothes, books and coffee – and the different types of transaction configurations and spaces related to them. In relation to the three example commodities, which are used as referent points for analysing transactions, fashion retailing and shopping spaces, bookstores and mediating technology respectively, cafés and coffee-chains are incorporated in the analysis.

The configurations of transaction situations are analysed from a consumer perspective but with a focus on the intersections between consumption and production. In this context it means that the transaction situation is viewed from the consumer’s point of view, or standpoint. How can the consumer get in contact or be bundled together with the commodity, under which circumstances can the transaction situation be accessed? How can the commodity be appropriated, can it be transported and consumed later? These questions are directly related to the organisation and configuration of the transaction situation of which the producer or provider is a vital part.

Having a consumer perspective thus means analysing the transaction situation through the eye of the consumer not a narrow focus on the consumer. It implies incorporation of the organisation and strategies of producers as well as mediating technologies and infrastructures. The object of study is still the transaction situation and the transaction of commodities, but in order to study this relationship it is vital to also incorporate producer strategies, different spatial practices in relation to different commodities as well as consumer tactics in the analysis.
4.1 Configuring Transactions

If the movements of the three entities – consumer, commodity and producer – in time and space are considered, there are a large but limited number of possible configurations. If only the movements of the consumer and the commodity are taken into account there are, theoretically, four different archetypes of transaction situations (see Fig. 5 below). The consumer can move to the commodity, the commodity can be moved to the consumer, or both of them might move to the transaction situation; alternatively none of them has to move. Adding time, and the facts that transaction situations have different durations and that the commodity has different constraints associated with it makes it a bit more complex.

The commodity can either be both transported and consumed separate from the transaction situation, or it might not be possible to transport it and consume it later – or there might be a combination of both depending on the situation. This is connected to whether the usage of the commodity can be time-spatially separated from the exchange of the commodity, use value from exchange value. Since by default the commodity moves from the producer to the consumer, it is however possible, from a consumer perspective, to organise the transaction into a time-spatial typology of four different archetypical configurations depending on the division of movement and labour, i.e., who has to do most of the work and movement in relation to the transaction.

The fundamental time-spatial questions for consumers are whether or not they have to move to the site of the transaction, and whether or not the commodity can be consumed later in time and space. It is a question regarding activities for the consumer, i.e., what kind of effort has to be put into the project and resources used to achieve the transaction. In other words it regards the division of labour between the consumer and the producer. From a consumer perspective, home is essential, i.e., the place that is used as the starting point or anchor for everyday life. Does the consumer have to move away from home or not?

A consumer transaction is usually organised and commodities are provided by the service industry. The organisation of the service producer, as well as the transaction situation, is dependent on, and constrained by, the properties of the commodities they produce or provide. The possibility of transferring and mediating a book is different from transferring and drinking a cup of coffee, which is different from transferring and shopping for clothes. Key questions are: what is transferred, is it a material and tangible good or an intangible service, or a memorable experience and how is the transaction organised.

The consumer oriented typology of transaction configurations is also used to overcome the distinction between goods and services as well as for questioning standard classifications of producer and consumer activities. Statisti-
cal and standardised definitions of services are problematic in practise, especially when they do not focus on what a service is but rather on what a good is not (Hermelin and Rusten 2007).

In the increasingly entangled and service oriented global cultural economy it is difficult to define the producer of even the most basic commodity. This is partly related to new organisational forms and institutional arrangement as well as to the production of new types of commodities and technological development. Is the producer the inventor or the designer, the craftsman or the manufacturer, the transnational corporation or the local entrepreneur?

**Service products and service work**

The service industry is a very heterogeneous industry that involves a range of different firms, activities and products. Services is often used broadly and has been applied to almost anything but goods manufacturing and extraction of resources (Sayer and Walker 1992). Services include various industrial sectors from business and finance, retail and wholesale, distribution and transportation, as well as to personal and educational services.

It includes a range of different workers from real estate agents and business consultants, teachers and doctors, cleaners and security guards, restaurant and retail workers. A general distinction is usually drawn between producer services and consumer services, i.e., business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C). The later is often associated with retailing, health care, education, etc. The former with advanced business and financial services. The focus here will be on consumer services, although the proposed conceptualisation of transactions situations is applicable on producer services as well.

Sayer and Walker argued that the shift towards the service economy could be understood as ‘a widening and deepening of the social and technical divisions of labor’ (Sayer and Walker 1992: 56). That is an increased specialisation and extension of the production process, where a range of different stages are involved in the production process before, during and after the manufacturing of commodities. Through different strategies and organisational forms such as out-sourcing, vertical integration and networks, the core activities of firms are changing and increasingly fluid.

Various service workers and labour efforts are involved in commodities’ time-spatial life paths. Before the transaction, during the production process, there are, for example, research and development teams, as well as designers, art directors and marketing people. The distribution of commodities involves transport services, warehouses and retailers and other more or less sophisticated logistical systems. After the transaction the commodity might require maintenance, repair and support services.

In geographical terms services have been classified in relation to transactions according to the need for physical contacts between and movements of
users and providers of services (Marshall and Wood 1995: 220). From a producer perspective four dominant transaction configurations have been distinguished: (1) low movement of provider and users, (2) high movement of users and low movement of provider of services, (3) low movement of user and high temporary movement of provider, (4) low movement of user and high permanent movement of provider.

In practice the different configurations are not exclusive and one type of service can be provided through different configurations. Business services can be on a relatively permanent basis and be of type 3 or 4 depending on duration; and banking can be classified into type 1 or 4 depending on whether it is wholesale or retail banking. This classification has many similarities to the consumer oriented transaction typology proposed here, although with emphasis on the producers’ activities. This typology does not, however, explicitly recognise the symbolic properties of the commodity and the entanglement of goods and services.

Services are often conceptualised as the antipode of goods and service work is represented in contrast to manufacturing work. Service products are often defined as intangible products that cannot be transported or stocked in contrast to manufactured goods (Hermelin 1997). Services are, consequently, produced in direct interaction between service consumers and producers. The transaction situation is thus crucial for services, but to define services is problematic in many ways, and there are significant differences between service work and service products, i.e., between the activity and the outcome.

There are at least two characteristics that distinguish intangible services from tangible goods (Bryson, Warf, and Daniels 2004). First, services stipulate a change of the individuals involved in the transaction. The changes can be reversible or irreversible but cannot be transferred further. Second, it implies that the consumption and production of services takes place in the transaction situation, and that the consumer is an active part in the production as well as in the consumption of services.

This does not mean, however, that transactions of services are dependent on direct physical proximity since services can be provided from a distance through information and communication technologies and because much of the output of service firms is in the form of material products such as written documents and computer files (Hermelin and Rusten 2007).

Media oriented and craft oriented industries are illustrative examples of the difficulty of defining services. Craft oriented businesses include such producers as tailors, watchmakers and shoe makers who both produce and repair clothes; watches and shoes are difficult to categorise since they both produce tangible objects and provide services for their customers. Many media oriented businesses produce services such as TV-shows, music and films as well as goods DVDs, CDs, etc. The technological development that has made it possible to digitalise commodities has blurred the distinction

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even more. Is a computer program something tangible or intangible? Software is, furthermore, deeply entangled with physical commodities. A software program is more or less useless without a computer except for having an exchange value.

Both these rather different industries are often associated with the increasingly important cultural economy, the cultural industry and cultural commodities. The cultural economy involves a diverse range of sectors and involves ‘different kinds of technologies, transactional arrangements, employment profiles, products and so on’ but the output of the cultural economy is ‘susceptible – actually or potentially – to a sort of convergence on place-specific product design contours and cultural content’ (Scott 1997: 333).

Following the increased importance of differentiation and lifestyle through consumption, the demand for so called cultural products (Scott 1997) or symbolic forms (Scott 2001) has increased. Cultural commodities are, for example, traditional tangible goods such as handcrafted jewellery, clothes and furniture or intangible commodities that involve direct personal contacts or information such as tourist attractions, theatre and advertisement; or they can be of a hybrid nature such as music, books and movies.

The communality of cultural commodities lies in their symbolic form ‘i.e. as artefacts whose physic gratification to the consumer is high relative to utilitarian purpose’ (Scott 1997: 324). There are tendencies that these types of commodities become increasingly specialised and individually customised and with less of an orientation towards standardisation and mass consumption (ibid). It is not only about purchasing new commodities but also about how the commodities are produced, mediated and packaged. Many of the cultural commodities are consumed in close proximity to where they are produced (Scott 2001: 16).

The increased importance of cultural commodities makes the classic distinction between tangible goods and intangible services problematic. It also questions the traditional infrastructure for consumption and the usage of categories such as retail, wholesale and service firms that are constructed on notions of functional separations between producers, distributors and consumers.

For example, retail has mainly functioned as a middle hand between producers and consumers. This categorisation is, on the one hand challenged by producers distributing and selling their commodities directly to the consumer and, on the other by alternative distribution channels such as e-commerce and the Internet. Retail stores, however, do not only sell and distribute products – they are also places for transactions, and retailers produce both services and experiences around the commodity and the transaction. They provide space for the transaction.

Services might not be tangible but service work is fundamentally material since services are produced by someone, a service provider or supplier, and
consumed by another human being. Social interaction is a part of what is consumed in providing services and services thus produce meaning. Allen and du Gay argue that ‘the very act of servicing is both “cultural” and “economic” at one and the same time. Put another way, the identity of contemporary service work is irreducibly “hybrid”.’ (Allen and Du Gay 1994) Service work is a hybrid activity because it incorporates both economic and cultural activities.

Services are located in time and space and service work is very much a material practice because it involves material commodities (Pettinger 2006). Retailing is, for example, very much about handling and displaying material goods. Restaurants and cafés are another example often considered as part of the service sector where material aspects are crucial. The meal made by the chef is definitely a tangible good. The classic distinction between goods and services is also problematic since it is primarily based on the producer; it does not recognise the consumer as an active part in production or the hybrid character of services.

Instead of distinguishing services as the antithesis of goods that are tangible products that can be stored and transported, which has been the norm, Bryson et al. argue that the key question is: ‘what does production or consumption of a service involve for the supplier or the user? This spans both the tangible and intangible aspects of a service in that it may arise from goods only, a service only or combined goods/service activity.’ (Bryson, Warf, and Daniels 2004: 32)

Focusing on transactions as situated material, economic and social projects, is one possible way of addressing these questions. To transcend the constructed divisions between material and immaterial, tangible and intangible, goods and services and incorporating both economic and social issues in the analysis. The notion of transactions has (as mentioned in Ch. 3) been used in different ways in economic analysis to overcome these unfruitful categories and classify economic activities differently (e.g., Gibson-Graham 2006).

**Consumer transactions configurations**

From a consumer perspective there are four configuration archetypes of transaction situations in time-space. The configurations are essentially based on whether the consumer moves to the commodity or whether the commodity is moved to the consumer, and if the commodity can be consumed separate from the transaction situation. The archetypical configurations can thus be typologically illustrated in a time-geographical notation. The vertical scale in Figure 5 represents time and the horizontal scale represents space.
The four archetypical configurations of commodity transaction situations are in four segments although the boundaries between them are not absolute but gliding. The consumer (the thick lines) is either moving to the transaction situation or he or she remains in place. Consequently, the producer (the thin lines) either facilitates the space for the transaction or moves the commodity to the consumer. The commodity (the grey lines) can either be moved from the place of the transaction or must be consumed there and then.

In the two transaction configurations on the right side in Figure 5 the consumer has to move away from home to the transaction situation, whilst in the two on the left she or he must not move. The top two configurations in the typology are related to the transferring of goods while the bottom two are related to services. Although such a distinction is problematic because goods
and services are often entangled and most configurations involve both to
different extents as discussed above.

This typology of archetypical time-spatial transactions configurations
should not be regarded as absolute. The transaction configurations are more
or less flexible in time and space, since most commodities can be used dif-
ferently and have different constraints associated with them, and because the
technological development constantly pushes the boundaries of possible
transaction configurations.

1. In the first transaction configuration the consumer has to move to the
time-spatial pocket of the situation to engage in the transaction. The
commodity can then be transported from the transaction situation and be
used and consumed at a different moment in time and space. These types
of transaction configurations include, for example, going to the market
for groceries, shopping for clothes in stores and books in bookshops. But
it also includes projects such as going to the dry-cleaner with clothes or
having a suit fitted at the tailor as well as going by the restaurant for
take-away. In this configuration the consumer does much work; not only
does he or she have to move to and from the transaction situation, but
they also have to transport the commodity from and sometimes even to
the transaction situation, as in the latter examples. The accessibility to
these transactions is also a temporal question since they can be set up on
more or less regular bases, such as temporary fairs, seasonal markets and
auctions, and stores have different opening hours. However, apart from
providing the commodity, the producer has to provide space for the
transaction. The producer might be more or less involved in the produc-
tion and manufacturing process of the commodity. Examples of transac-
tion configurations when the producer is highly involved in the produc-
tion processes are craftsman stores such as bakeries but also direct sales
at the factory (not to be mistaken with factory outlet villages that are
spatially separated from the factory). Or the producer might only be a
distribution channel for the commodity, which is more or less what tradi-
tional retailing has been about.

2. In the second transaction configuration the consumer has to move to the
time-spatial pocket of the situation in order to engage in the transaction.
The commodity has to be consumed there and then, at that time-spatial
pocket. Eating in restaurants and cafés, going to the cinema and theatre,
visiting museums and galleries and other kinds of so-called entertain-
ment and leisure activities are typical for this configuration. Much of the
activities associated with tourism are also of this configuration type, i.e.,
visiting foreign places, staying at hotels and other resorts. Other types of
projects are going to the beauty parlour and hairdresser. These transac-
tions configurations are often highly socially embedded and the transac-
tion situation in itself is a vital part of the project and the overall consumption experience. The spacing of the transaction is thus even more critical for this transaction configuration in comparison with the first one, since where the transaction takes place is a crucial element. Timing is also essential, apart from being more or less temporal as the one above, there is also another type of timing constraint; a restaurant can be revisited although the food or the atmosphere might not be the same as on the previous occasion. It can even be a one-time event such as the Millennium Celebration, which cannot be revisited other than through imagination. In this second type of configuration the producer has a more pronounced role in the production process of the commodity and has to cater to the facilities so that the consumer is able to consume the product there and then. A restaurant has to provide meals and dining facilities, a café both coffee and seating places, a cinema both movie and a theatre, etc. The producer thus has to make the place for the transaction attractive as well as the commodity worth pursuing.

3. In the third transaction situation configuration the commodity is moved to the consumer. The commodity can then be transported from the transaction situation and be used and consumed at a different moment in time and space. Ordering things via mail services and calling for food to be delivered as well as purchasing commodities from door-to-door salesmen are examples of this transaction configuration. Much of e-commerce shopping, downloading from the Internet and telephone ordering has this type of configuration if it includes a commodity that can be used at a later point in time and space. The constraints of this type of configuration are thus different from the two above. This type of configuration, from a consumer perspective, can offer more flexibility in time and space than the previous ones depending on the commodity and the organisation of delivery. For example, it is possible to make orders for commodities over the Internet any time but the delivery is still rather constrained unless they can be downloaded immediately, i.e., electronic information and media products such as electronic newspapers, downloadable files, software programs and games, music and videos. A question is whether the consumer has to wait and be home when the commodity is delivered or if the commodity is delivered anyway, or if the consumer has to go to the post office or the local convenience store to pick it up. Configurations like door-to-door purchasing and telemarketing services are somewhat of exceptions because the project is not planned and initiated by the consumer and the consumer does not control the timing of the project. In this archetype the producer does much of the work since the commodity has to be moved to the consumer.
4. In the fourth transaction situation configuration the commodity is moved to the consumer. The commodity has to be consumed there and then and that time-spatial pocket. This fourth configuration is highly associated with on the one hand information and activities such as watching live TV or radio shows, streaming videos over the Internet. In this configuration the consumer can only engage in the transaction at certain times, for example when the TV-show is aired, which means that there are significant temporal constraints. On the other hand this configuration archetype is associated with household services and maintenance such as cleaning, repairs, or home consulting etc. The producer has thus to move to the consumer to engage in the transaction and the consumer have to provide the space for the transaction. Related to this configuration is also self-sufficiency, self-provisioning and self-production, i.e., when the producer and the consumer are the same entity and where the consumer makes her or his own goods and services. However, total self-sufficiency is very rare. Even if the consumer does much of the work in producing the product there have most often been preceding transactions. If a person, for example, engages in the project of making a cup of coffee, the ingredients have usually been bought somewhere as well as the equipment for brewing and serving the coffee, or if a consumer makes his or her own clothes; fabrics, needle and thread are usually acquired through some form of prior transaction. Even if self-sufficiency is dependent upon the scale, i.e., more or less self-sufficient families, communities, regions or nations, in the contemporary society practically nobody is totally isolated from the surrounding world.

All four different archetypes can consequently be configured in at least two alternative ways, depending on the properties of the commodity. These eight variations of configurations can be linked to different service producers and businesses. This results in an alternative classification or at least a different perspective on consumer services and service producers. It can be illustrated by adding two diagonal lines to Figure 5 and by putting in different types of consumer service products and businesses in the eight triangles as illustrated by Figure 6 (see below).

In retailing and distribution, at the top, the focus is on providing commodities that are flexible in time and space. Retailing and distribution of commodities can be done either in stores and other retail spaces or through different network based delivery systems such as catalogues and Internet shopping. In both these configurations service producers have to provide infrastructure and other facilities, and in the latter case even move the commodity to the consumer.
The alternative classification of consumer service producers and businesses in the figure is possible by focusing on the time-spatial constraints for transaction configurations and if a consumer perspective is employed.

The media oriented services, at the right side, include both commodities that are normally classified as either goods or service products. These transactions are distinctively different because in these configurations does not require physical proximity. These commodities, whether they are in the form of providing music, games and other software for downloading or broadcasting TV and radio-shows is highly dependent on information communication technology (ICT).

The craft oriented services, at the left side are, from a consumer transactions perspective, in at least three ways genuinely different from both previous categories, although both media and craft oriented are often categorised
as cultural products and important in the cultural economy. Craft oriented services such as dry cleaners, beauty saloons and dry cleaners or restaurants, theatres and hotels, are not particularly dependent on ICT. The consumer is a very important and integral part of the transaction situation especially in the first case where the consumer has to bring something to the transaction. These configurations require a large degree of coordination and synchronisation and are rather inflexible in time and space, especially in the latter case where the commodity has to be consumed at the moment of the transaction.

The last and lower triangle, maintenance and care, is even more connected with specific places and the service is very much about cultivating places. It is the place itself that is consumed or an integral part of the consumption experience such as visiting gardens, tourist attractions and special events taking place or the home is the prerogative place.

In relation to consumer transaction situations, service producers have, from this consumer perspective, two main functions. The first function is as provider and/or producer of the commodity. It might be that it is the provider who has actually made and manufactured the product. But the service producer might also create additional value to and transform the commodity, providing necessary and complementary services in relation to the commodity.

The second function is as provider and/or producer of the situation, i.e., maintaining and regulating the pocket of local order through which transactions occur. This includes the provisioning of infrastructure for the transaction and distribution of commodities, both in the form of material infrastructures such as shops, stores, and other places for transactions or services such as on-line stores, mail-ordering services, and delivery systems. In this case the producer is the firm or actor who delivers the commodity to the consumer and functions as a provider.

**Infrastructure, technology and home**

Consumers generally have the possibility of either doing the work of moving to the transaction situation or have the transaction situation at hand. The commodity might be required to be consumed at the moment of the transaction situation, or it might be possible to store the commodity and consume it later. Or it might be a combination of both, which is often the case. Through the outlined conceptualisation of consumer transaction configurations the importance of technology and infrastructure, as well as the home as a fundamental place in consumers’ everyday life is emphasised.

Information communication technologies and infrastructure developments have a significant impact on configuring transaction situations as well as for urban everyday life and the city morphology (cf. Graham and Marvin 2001). Infrastructures and technology in the context of transaction situations help facilitate the transaction such as the distribution apparatus of commodities or the handling of the commodities, but innovation have also changed the prop-
erties of commodities and created new types of commodities and transactions possibilities.

There are many examples of inventions and developments of new retail mechanisms (Chung et al. 2001), related to different elements of the transaction. Paper money, credit, fixed prices and debit cards, ATM-machines have, for example, facilitated exchange. Other innovations such as counters, magazines, catalogues, mail order, telephones, TV, Internet, advertising, billboards, etc., have made communication around transactions easier. Elevators, escalators, highways, skywalks, self-service and vending machines have expedited movement and interaction.

The automobile is perhaps the most striking example of how both transactions and urban everyday life and the city morphology have been effected by technological inventions (e.g., Graham and Marvin 2001; Latham and McCormack 2004). Both where and how transactions are performed has changed significantly with the automobile. Drive-in diners, movies, banks and bottleshops are a direct effect of the automobile, and out-of-town shopping centres are almost unthinkable without it. The automobile has made it easier both to get to the place for the transaction and to bring the commodities back home. Automobiles are, of course, commodities in their own right, displayed at showrooms in the inner city and sold at car-dealers at the urban fringe.

The technological development has also made spatially distanciated transactions possible. Distanciated transactions are about reducing the movement around the transaction and making transactions more available across space, i.e., making it possible to engage in transactions from a distance. A movement towards the upper right corner in Figure 5 and 6 where the time-spatial constraints and the importance of a specific place is lesser. That transaction situations are spatially distanciated means that they are more connected and related through different kinds of technological and social networks supported by different infrastructures and institutions, rather than through direct spatial proximity and face-to-face human interaction (cf. Amin and Thrift 2002: 5, 76).

In distanciated everyday transactions the home and virtual consumption spaces (i.e., Internet) are especially important. The home has always had a key function as a place of reproduction and final consumption. From a consumer perspective the home is a key place, especially for the two configurations on the right side in Figure 5 where the home is not just the starting point but often the place for the transaction.

The home has become an increasingly important transaction space with the development of the Internet and TV-shopping alongside catalogue shopping, mail-ordering and door-to-door salesmen (Wrigley and Lowe 2002: 235). Furthermore, the home is itself a kind of commodity in the form of property (see Ch. 5 on property development). It is a commodity because it has a potential exchange value in the form of real estate and use values as a
private sphere for families for recovering and reproduction. It could be argued that the home has been invaded by commercial consumption through the media (Ritzer 2005) and that the home, because of changing work arrangements, is once again a consumption and production place (cf. Ch. 2 especially Pred 1981a).

It should be noted, however, that the home has always functioned as a place of work although unpaid and informal, as has been pointed out by feminists (Gregson 2000). The home also has significant symbolic values that are related to the relational location of the home and to its exterior architecture and interior design. Furniture and home decoration have increasingly come to be regarded as fashion items rather than from consumer durables, a process where ‘IKEA has played a central role’ (Leslie and Reimer 2003: 435). Even computers, which are rapidly becoming a necessary everyday gadget through which more and more transactions are configured, has become a fashion statement.

Technological developments have had significant impact on both the availability for consumers and the effectiveness of distribution for the producers. The distribution and retail sector can be seen as an infrastructure for transactions, since it often functions as a middle hand between consumers and producers. Crewe argues that what really have changed in the retail sector is on the one hand the technological development, on the other the scope and scale the retailers act on (Crewe 2003: 353f). Developments such as just-in-time systems, on-demand delivery, and sophisticated storage and distribution centrals have changed the retail sector significantly reducing the amount of stock, which essentially is fixed capital. Today warehouses are on the move; rolling on the highways in trucks, floating on the sea in container ships or flying through the air in cargo planes.

The development of e-commerce and virtual transactions has changed the retail industry and reconfigured consumer transactions significantly. Although it has not had the overall revolutionary or explosive development as was predicted during the dot Com phenomenon of the 1990s. The largest share of transactions over Internet are between businesses (B2B) and only approximately one-fifth of the transactions are between business and consumers (B2C) (Dicken 2003: 478). Some sectors have been affected more than others and it seems that the main factors have been the properties of the commodities and previous infrastructures within the particular sectors.

Certain commodities have been more suitable for e-commerce than others such as information based services (banking and travel agency and bookings) and commodities embedding information (magazines, books, CDs and DVDs), as well as pre-packaged goods (consumer electronics), while groceries and produce has been less favourable. It has primarily been commodities that are easily comparable and where the social interaction in the purchasing processes is insignificant (Wrigley 2000: 310).
Figure 7. Photograph of Apple store in central San Francisco, US

Apple stores offer experiences and learning around their products as well as selling them. The store design is elaborate and the exterior resembles their computers.

The list of commodities transacted through the Internet is, however, expanding but not in a linear way due to the introduction of new commodities and variations of old ones. However, it should be recognised that there are not only substituting effects of Internet or e-commerce, or new forms of transaction configurations, technological developments also bring ‘complementarity, amplification, synergism, and restructuring of the original activity’ (Couclelis 2004: 46). For example, the Internet has made it easier to browse around for new commodities and compare prices and product information, etc.

The logos and the brand is one strategy to cope with the challenges of the ICT and increased global competition (e.g., Klein 2000). Branding is fundamentally based on creating a demand for a particular commodity produced by a particular company (Poster 2004). Another business strategy is to use the setting of the product and placing commodities, which means create a consumption experience that is more or less uniquely associated with a particular place. This can, of course, be done to a relative extent, from theme parks and amusement areas to spectacularly designed fashion stores only found in major world cities and incorporating cafés in bookstores, and cinemas.
The placing can also be associated with events such as an author meeting in a bookstore or, in an extreme case such as the millennium celebration. These strategies are also connected with prolonging the transaction situation and increasing the service part of the commodity. Retail strategies that emphasise the experience of consumption and services related to leisure that cannot be transacted distantly and so called multi-channel retailing, i.e., having both traditional and virtual stores are today commonly used retail strategies (Ratcliffe, Stubbs, and Shepherd 2004: 454).

The same business can utilise different strategies and use more than one of the archetypical configurations, possibly all four of them. The computer and software company Apple Computer Inc., for example, has retail stores through which it sells its own products as well as products from other companies that fit their profile and complement their own product range, such as computer bags and external hard drives from other brands. The company uses the stores as strategic marketing tools and consumer interaction places where the consumer can experience and learn about the company’s products. The ‘Apple Store Experience’ makes ‘the consumer experience more visionary, valuable, meaningful, memorable, and enjoyable’ (Tsai 2005: 432).

Apple stores and premium resellers have turned into attractions in themselves where some people go to browse around and socialise, like visiting an art gallery. The company also has on-line stores and phone ordering through which it is possible to order and customise computers and other hardware, which is then delivered through delivery companies. Through the software platform I-Tunes music store it is also possible to download music and rent videos as well as watch trailers for coming movies. Apple thus has all transaction configurations in its repertoire although the commodities are a range of different types.

4.2 Transferring Books and Coffee

Coffee and books are two everyday commodities. Their properties are fundamentally different and they represent in this regard two extreme examples. Comparing and contrasting different possible transaction configurations, practices and spaces of consuming books and coffee illustrate both the material constraints as well as social and economic aspects of different transaction situations. Coffee is, like other food and beverages, not an item that can be reused and a cup of coffee has to be consumed rather quickly after it has been prepared. Books, on the other hand, can be reread and can be stored until the papers crumble.

Books are first used to illustrate the importance of the properties of commodities for the possible transaction configurations, problematised through differentiating between the book as a physical artefact and the text as information. Second, books and the different channels books are transacted
going out for a cup of coffee is an illustrative example of how the transaction is just as important as possessing or consuming a specific commodity. The transaction of coffee has strong social dimensions and its consumption function is as much about social interaction as it is about material possession, mental gratification and identity formation. It illustrates and exemplifies the social embeddedness of transactions.

Cafés and bookstores are important elements in cities and in urban life, and problematise the importance of the place of the transaction. It is places that are used in different ways by different people, blurring the boundaries between work and play, labour and leisure, workers and customers, i.e., between the different roles we enter and exit, re-enter and re-exit, in our everyday life. In different ways both commodities problematise the boundaries between economy and culture, consumption and production as well as between public and private.

**Life-paths of books and texts**

Books are often read and savoured in the secluded privacy of one’s home: passages so subtle and complex to be understood at first can be read over and over again so that, in time, they seem to express one’s own deepest feelings and thoughts. On the other hand, books have a certain permanence as physical objects. They are there on the shelf, potentially accessible to all who can read, and all who read the same book share the basic material furnishing and feeling-tone of a common world. (Tuan 1991: 690)

Books are an ordinary or everyday commodity to which most people have some and different relations. As assemblages of knowledge books have the ability to transfer information and extend and maintain networks through the text and the rhetoric of the book (Barnes 2002). In this case the focus is on books and texts as artefacts containing information. In Barthes’ terminology the focus is on the concrete work, which can be seen, held and placed, and not on the text, which can only be experienced through reading (Barthes 1977), and how they are mediated from producer to consumer.

Books are often perceived as special and often not as commodities at all but as items or artefacts with particular cultural values, knowledge and meaning (Wright 2005a). A book is both a source of information and a material thing. Even if it is possible to order books by ‘the yard’ for adorning the bookshelves, the primary function of books lies in the text, with its communicative power (Maclaran and Masterson 2006).

A book can be reread many times and more than one consumer can read it. If the text is considered it can be reproduced in numerous books, which
means that many can read it simultaneously, i.e., many consumers can consume it at the same time in different places. Texts are thus, in economic terms, a type of public good and its usage is not exclusive. Apart from being reproducible artefacts, books are also highly mobile (Barnes 2002). They are portable and can be read in the bath, in bed, on the beach or the train.

A book does not have a pre-given expiry date. It can, of course, become fragile and unreadable with time, and its content may be more or less relevant or interesting but it can hardly expire. The second hand market for books is significant, from bookcases to antique bookshops, and then there are bookcrossing (i.e., where you leave a book in a public space hoping someone else is going to pick it up and read it and then pass it on), and book clubs through which books circulate. Then there are public libraries that highlight that books have a special cultural status since few other commodities are publicly lent in similar fashion.

Shopping for books is often regarded differently from shopping for other commodities such as fashion clothing, although there are perhaps more similarities than differences (Featherstone 1998; Maclaran and Masterson 2006), especially if the book as a material entity (a particular form of transferring a text) is distinguished from the text as a source of information and knowledge. There are also similarities between collecting and purchasing books and shopping and fashion clothing; both activities ’display similar pathologies’ (Featherstone 1998: 918), the symbolic values of the commodities. Both books and clothes signal something, in a way saying how the consumer is, what interests she or he has, etc., and regarding their display.

Books are also collectables and as such the take and make place – anyone who has moved has probably experienced the literal weight of books. From a collector’s point of view rare books, such as the first copy of the first edition of a particular book, are something special having additional value – it is not only a text (Maclaran and Masterson 2006). Books are displayed even when they are not used, although primarily in the private sphere of the home – in bookshelves or personal libraries, on coffee tables and bedside (compared with clothes, which are often stowed away in wardrobes when not in use). Books are part of the making of the home into a meaningful place.

In many ways technological development has changed the book as an artefact, both in how it is perceived and how it is used, which has transformed the book industry. Personal computers and word processing have made it easier to write, produce and distribute books. The quantity of books being published today is enormous, approximately 1 million books are being published annually, which means that a new book is published every minute somewhere in the world (Brown 2006: 3). Add to that all the unpublished manuscripts and other written works such as articles in journals, newspapers and magazines, and comics, bookzines, and blogs.

Consumers are drenched in information and the tricky question becomes selecting and choosing, and gathering information about the books being
published. Fortunately there are book reviews, books about books and different guides to books that are regularly published and classified around different topics such as the best of, essential reads, etc. There are also symbolic listings of books, i.e., books you should have in your library if you want to portray yourself as such and such. Technology has also made it easier to find and search for books through both the Internet and different library and university databases. The separation between the book and the text’s life-paths has been emphasised through technology. Both the work and the text have their time-spatial life-paths, as described by Pred:

Hägerstrand would have been the first to acknowledge that every text has a life history. A biography traced out in time and space. As printed matter. As physical object coming to existence – on the ground, in place at a given moment – by the way of the path convergence of paper, ink, printing technology and printing-site labor. And then moving on. From press to warehouse. From warehouse to bookstore. Eventually circulating repeatedly between shelf desk and touching human hand. Until disregarded and discarded. Coming to an end. (Pred 2005: 331)

The life-paths of books and texts are individual and sometimes they coexist and sometimes they do not. The producer of a text is the author but the producer of a book is usually a publisher, and then there are also distributors, printers, etc., who are involved in the process of creating a book.

The text can be published through other means such as digitalisation and a book is a type of commodity that can be digitalised – converted into ones and zeros. It is commodities with these properties that have been most directly affected by the technological development of information communication technologies. ‘In the past decade each major industry has faced the threat to its existence from the digitalization of cultural objects and the transformation of consumer to creator/user’, the music industry being one who has been particularly challenged (Poster 2004: 418).

In more general terms a book can be categorised and compared with media products and/or cultural objects, commodities through which information and knowledge are transferred (right side in Fig 6). Information is, as Lefebvre (2005 [1981]) pointed out, a special commodity that enables and functions as a mediator for other transactions, i.e., it is critical to have knowledge and information both about the commodity and how it can be acquired and used for the fulfilment of transactions.

Because of the properties of media commodities technological developments have made new transaction situations possible, which has had implications for production and distribution and how the commodities are consumed. Poster argues that digitalisation does not only transforms the commodity but also ‘the subject position of the consumer’ and that these commodities are ‘inherently open to transformation’ (Poster 2004: 418). Commodities are transformed during their time-spatial trajectory from pro-
ducer to consumer, especially during the last movement from the transaction to the place of usage both physically and culturally (Poster 2004: 413).

Digitalisation of books into e-books or newspapers to e-papers, or magazines to e-magazines has, however, not been that successful (yet). They have not been attractive. An explanation for this might be that these developments have made the book into a commodity less flexible and more entangled with other commodities. To read an e-book it is necessary to have a computer and possibly be connected to the Internet, etc. There is ongoing research and development of new types of products that strive to create more readable formats than the usual computer screen and make them more mobile.

That the text can be transformed into, or has been transferred from, other commodities such as narrations, songs, audio and video recordings, make it possible to consume texts apart from reading them. They can be orally narrated or dramatised, made into movies or musicals and other forms of performances and entertainment. However, such transaction configurations are either dependent on the consumer being there and then, or constrained in time when aired through the TV or radio (see Fig. 5), if they are not recorded. Audio books, i.e., recorded books are an example that can be distributed through various formats such as CDs or MP3s, and thus through different transaction configurations. And it is these alternative modes of storytelling along with the gaming industry that is perceived as the biggest challenge for the book industry today (Brown 2006).

The audio book and other digital formats also illustrate that the process of digitalisation is more about re-materialising commodities than de-materialising them. Audio books are material in a different way than ordinary books; paper and cover have been transformed to media players and data files. Re-materialisation of commodities, for example, through digitalisation and innovations in bio-information, ‘does affect profoundly the dynamics of transmissibility, radically accelerating the speed with which such materials can be distributed and consumed’ (Parry 2004: 39). Consequently, technology generates new means of consumption and new organisational forms and, in the long run, eventually new institutional arrangements (cf. discussion around Fig. 3).

The book retailing industry is changing from within and through external pressures. Overall, as in many other industries, it has become increasingly competitive and in later years has been characterised by consolidation and larger and larger firms (Brown 2006). The distribution of books has changed because of developments within the book industry and challenged by other distribution channels, particularly on-line stores and other retailers selling books.

Books are sold and distributed in many forms, in dedicated bookstores, second-hand bookshops, through the Internet, by mail order and in book clubs. Libraries (public, private, corporate, research, etc.) are another form of distribution. In general and quantitative terms smaller independent book-
stores are declining in favour of larger international chains such as Barnes & Noble, Borders and Waterstone’s, and national ones such as the Swedish Akademibokhandeln, but:

_Pace_ Mark Twain, moreover, rumours of the independent bookshop’s imminent death are grossly exaggerated. They may not be able to compete with chains on price and product range, but diverse differentiation strategies are available to them – specialising in certain sectors, genres or market segments (travel, sci-fi, children’s, rarities, remainders, university textbooks, etc.), the provision of quality customer services (gift provision, expert books search facilities, organising local reading groups _et al._), taking the store to time-poor customers (exemplified by The Book People, which sells a wide range of titles in workplaces and to those who wouldn’t normally darken the doors of traditional bookshops), or indeed developing into ‘destination’ retail outlets (such as Foyle’s in London, Hodges Figgis in Dublin and City Lights in San Francisco). Doing a Borders and becoming a chain is yet another possibility – Borders began as a single-unit campus bookstore in Ann Arbor, Michigan – though this is much easier said than done. (Brown 2006: 6)

Although books are a commodity perfectly fit for e-commerce, being a commodity embedding information and easily comparable, ordinary bookstores seem to be less affected by e-commerce than, for example, the music stores and retail banking (Couclelis 2004: 44). In a Swedish context a contributing factor might be lowered taxes on books in 2002 to six percent and because of an overall increase in book sales during the last years (SvF 2006). Another factor might be the annual sales in February, which accounts for about 15 percent of the annual sales, and has become almost a seasonal cultural institution. Many of the larger bookstores also have on-line stores and mail-ordering services. The ordinary bookstores are, however, not only under pressure from online bookshops but also from other retailers who have started to sell more and more books.

Books are increasingly sold alongside other commodities in supermarkets, corner stores and kiosks. They often sell a limited range of best-selling books at low prices and specialising is a strategy bookstores use to deal with these challenges. Bookstores can be specialised on certain types of books; fiction, non-fiction, student bookshops, etc., or book formats such as folios, paperbacks or rare books. Pocketshop selling paperbacks is an example from Stockholm city.

The Pocketshop is a book chain with rather small stores that started in Stockholm in 1989 at the central station (cf. the Swedish coffee chains below), which now have expanded to the three other large cities and now has fourteen stores. The paperback format, which made books more affordable, is one of the largest transformations of the industry, alongside Gutenberg. Both are earlier examples of the effect of technological developments of commodities and production techniques.
Bookstores are not only distribution channels but also ‘a place in which meanings about books and literature are produced’ (Wright 2005a: 113 original emphasis). A strategy to meet the challenges of on-line stores and alternative distribution channels has been to make going to the bookstore into more of an educational and social experience. Handwritten recommendation notes are a selling and marketing strategy, but it is also a way for the workers in bookstores to ‘express their personal enthusiasms and expertise’ (ibid. 115).

Incorporating cafés in bookstores is another strategy of emphasising the bookstore as a place and not just a distribution node. The bookstore-coffee shop began as a retail strategy in the 1990s in the US at Borders and Barnes & Nobles (Wrigley and Lowe 2002: 213). Today these bookstore-coffee shops are evident in such cities as Dublin, London, Stockholm and Sydney. The concept is also a way of keeping the consumers in the store longer, which hopefully inclines them to buy more, and in some places large chain bookstores have become vital elements as anchors in malls (ibid. 214). Both these later strategies are used in Akadamibokhandeln in Stockholm city, but before pursuing this further a cup of coffee will be placed and ordered.

Ordering and placing coffee
A cup of coffee – ‘black as the Devil, hot as Hell, pure as an Angel, sweet as Love’ (Uribe 1954: 206) can be a real treat and it is an essential part of many people’s everyday life. Coffee is a commodity with different constraints than books, mainly because a hot cup of coffee has to be consumed more or less immediately after it has been made. Thus it intimately connects consumption and production.

In many ways coffee is an intriguing commodity. It is a global commodity traded on the world market according to international trade agreements, with a long commodity chain and it has economic significance both for individuals, companies and nations as well as for the global economy. ‘As a commodity, it determines the political, social and economic welfare of millions of people in a score of producing countries. Even more millions consider the drink indispensable to a satisfactory way of life’ (Uribe 1954: xi). The status of coffee as a commodity has shifted overtime. In Europe coffee was at first an exclusive commodity and drinking coffee was a sign of social status, but coffee has become an ordinary and for many indispensable everyday commodity (Ahlberger 1996; Domosh and Seager 2001).

Today there are over 25 million coffee producing families in over 60 countries around the world and it is consumed worldwide, amounting to over US $70 billion retail sales per year, according to the International Coffee Organization. Second to Finland, Sweden is the largest coffee consumption nation per capita in the world, but consumption of coffee has decreased since the 1990s globally, with some national differences, Sweden being one of the countries with the largest decrease (ICO 2004; cf. Grigg 2002).
rather a cup of coffee – is used here to problematise the inflexibility of transaction configurations and illustrates the social embeddedness of transactions situations as mentioned and the importance of place.

Coffee is a rather different commodity than books and clothes, with other transaction constraints and possible configurations. In the case of coffee the stage in the production-consumption processes is pivotal, i.e., which part of the commodity chain is considered. Coffee beans have distinctively different time-spatial constraints associated with them in comparison with a cup of coffee. As with many other groceries and foods, coffee has an expiry date and cannot be reused after consumption as can clothes or books. Consequently there is no second hand market for coffee. The commodity has to be consumed at a certain time after it has been produced and obtained. The time constraint is significantly different for coffee beans in comparison with ground coffee and there are even more restrictions for a cup of coffee, which has to be consumed more or less immediately after the transaction, and production.

A number of utensils are needed to make and consume coffee. In comparison with books, which do not require any extras, this constrains the transaction and coffee consumption even more. First, coffee is needed, and can be bought in different forms ranging from instant coffee to different kinds of ground coffee, to roasted or un-roasted coffee beans. In the latter cases a grinder and roasting equipment such as an oven are also needed. Then coffee must be made, for which other utensils are needed that can range from simple devices such as a coffee pan for boiling coffee or a ‘mocca brewer’ for the stove to sophisticated espresso machines that can steam milk for cappuccinos and pressure can be regulated to ensure the quality of the espresso.

Coffee also has to be served in something. A coffee connoisseur would argue that different kinds of coffee require different kinds of cups or glasses. Coffee is further more often consumed with something, sweets, bakery items or breads. The consumption of coffee has historically had a double effect on the market through stimulating consumption of household goods as well as coffee (Ahlberger 1996). Then there are also coffee tables and coffee table books, etc.

Further, there are a number of different kinds and ways of serving coffee. There are, first of all, different coffee beans such as Arabica and Robusta and blends, and different ways of roasting and grinding, which is partly dependent on how the coffee is going to be prepared and partly on individual taste. Second, there are several types of coffees such as different filtered coffees, regular black and café au lait; and various types of steam-pressured coffees such as espresso and different forms of espressos; cortado, macchiato, limone, vanilla, and espresso based blends like cappuccino, caffe latte and caffe mocha. Then there are coffee drinks such as cold frappino and
coffee with liquor such as Irish coffee. Third, depending on taste, coffee can be complemented with sugar, syrup or other toppings.

To order or make a cup of coffee is thus a project that involves several stages and decisions and the project requires some kind of skill and knowledge. The costumes and routines are geographically situated and vary from country to country, city to city and even between cafés. A final decision has to be made whether or not the coffee should be consumed there and then or if it is to go in a paper take-a-way cup, or be brought along in a thermos.

Coffee is socially a versatile drink. It can be consumed in many different situations, early in the morning as well as late in the evening, alone or together with others, during work or at home. Coffee is very much a social commodity, around which there are quite a few rituals. A personal ritual can be the morning coffee, which has to be taken before anything else can be done. Coffee breaks are important rituals at many workplaces, and a moment for socialisation with colleagues and the exchange of ideas. Inviting friends over for a cup of coffee and going to coffee parties is an example where the home becomes an important place for transactions. Coffee is one of the drinks for which special public spaces have been established – coffee houses, cafés and coffee shops. Tea and alcohol are two other drinks for which certain public spaces have been established, i.e., teahouses and tearooms and pubs and bars.

Coffee houses, cafés, coffee shops and other public locales for drinking coffee are a clearly visible characteristic of cities. Ever since coffee houses emerged in Europe in the 17th century they have played an important role in urban life. It was through contacts and trade relations with the Arabic countries that coffee was introduced to Europe. Italy and Venice, the United Kingdom and London, France and Paris, and Austria and Vienna were particularly important countries and cities in the development of a European coffee culture (e.g., Pendergrast 1999). The development of coffee cultures has been different from country to country and from place to place.

Coffee houses are often associated with public life and city culture, sometimes even with public debate and intellectual conversation. The famous coffee houses in Vienna are illustrative examples of this. They functioned as much as gathering and meeting places for intellectuals and artists as for drinking coffee. They were, however, often restricted public spaces, from which women and children were excluded (Domosh and Seager 2001: 74).

Other typical images of coffee establishments are Italian coffee bars and French cafés along boulevards with chairs facing the street, which is quite different from the coffee houses first developed in Vienna and London.

Cafés are meeting places but the encounters with other people are regulated by social norms and customs, most often some sort of excuse or recognition is needed to engage in a conversation with a stranger (Laurier and Philo 2006). The café and coffee house is also a place for viewing others and looking at the urban drama, but also a place to be looked at and represent
oneself. The latter function has become progressively pronounced with the development of coffee chains that exploded during the 1990s, and formed what might be referred to as the ‘latte revolution’ (Ponte 2002) or ‘the rise of yuppie coffees’ (Roseberry 1996).

Cafés have developed into a global industry with international coffee chains. Starbucks from Seattle, US, is perhaps the most critically discussed example, which has developed into a global ‘brandscape’ (Thompson and Arsel 2004). The so-called gourmet coffee shops or speciality coffee retailers that have developed over the last decades ‘emerged as a phenomenally successful new consumption practice’ (Lyons 2005: 15). New types of coffee consumption cultures and coffee places developed that are closely related to new consumption practices and that balance between making coffee into an exclusive commodity at the same time as making it even more accessible - massclusivity (cf. clothing and retail fashion below) (Smith 1996).

Starbucks has not yet been established in Sweden because of competition from primarily local firms, although the American coffee chain Tully's has one coffee shop in Stockholm. But the Starbuck concept is definitely well established in Swedish cities (Kjeldgaard and Ostberg 2007). Smith’s descriptive analysis of Starbuck’s can easily be translated or confused with a description of some of the many newly established coffee shops in Stockholm:

Store design and location are central to the company’s marketing strategy: each outlet is tastefully (and apparently uniformly) appointed in tones of earthy green and brown, brassy trim, and lots of glass, with coffee beans and paraphernalia on prominent display; stores typically are located in areas with high volumes of pedestrian traffic, frequently in the urban core or in fashionable shopping districts, utilizing but also helping to shape social interaction in the streetscapes and consumer cultures in urban settings. (Smith 1996: 504)

**Swedish coffee chains and a bookstore**

Swedish coffee consumption has historically been influenced by different continental European consumption cultures, and increasingly by an American or global coffee culture. Contemporary Swedish coffee culture can be seen as a juxtaposition of local consumption cultures, often with historical roots in the Viennese coffee houses, and a global consumption culture often associated with Starbucks and other contemporary global coffee chains (Kjeldgaard and Ostberg 2007).

Coffee cultures and cafés have strong historical ties to cities and market places. It seems that Swedish coffee cultures originated from the market place where people stood and drank their coffee (Ahlberger 1996: 97). An indicator that the new types of gourmet coffee shops are embedded in urban places is the origin, location and strategy of Swedish coffee chains that started to develop in the 1990s. They are detectable through observation of spatial practices in the cafés as spaces of representations, and through how
the coffee chains spatially represent themselves through their webpages. The Swedish coffee chains also illustrate different international linkages, apart from commodity chains, and how the coffee shops are related to the mobility of urban culture and spatially integrated with other types of transaction configurations.

The most obvious international linkage is perhaps the proliferate usage of English names such as Wayne’s Coffee, Coffeehouse by George, Coffee Cup and Espresso House. The usage of international language is not restricted to the names of the coffee chains but also used on the menu and when ordering coffee. The menu consists of a mix of international, often Italian and English, and Swedish words. To order ‘a tall latte’ is sometimes more appropriate than using the Swedish vocabulary.

The large range of different gourmet coffees with international names makes buying a cup of coffee a bit of a challenge for people not accustomed to the new practices. The customers are often expected to have some knowledge about the different types of coffees and beans that are being served. But the coffee shops also educate their consumers about the coffee through brochures, signs and displays, and the coffee maker often refereed to as the barista (Italian meaning ‘bartender’) also has a key role in this.

The barista often has to be able to perform a range of different tasks because the coffee chains are often small establishments. He or she must be able to take orders and payments, serve and prepare smaller dishes and lunches such as salads, filled ciabattas, and bagels with condiments as well as making caffe lattes, cappuccinos and espressos at the large coffee machines.

There is a wide and expanding range of different coffee chains as well as smaller and independent establishments in Sweden. Coffee House by George, Coffee Cup/Espresso House and Wayne’s Coffee have a particular position especially in Stockholm city, and are illustrative of the new types of coffee places.

Coffeehouse by George opened their first coffee shop in 1997 in the Passage (an indoor passageway with a few shops) at the corner of Regeringsgatan and Mäster Samuelsgatan in Stockholm city centre (see map in Fig. 12). Today they have almost 30 coffee shops in nine different cities in Sweden, although most of the cafés are located in Stockholm. A strategically central location and quality before quantity is emphasised along with three different concepts; taste – the unique experience of a well-made coffee and different digestives, feeling – the importance of the surroundings and interior design, and personality – a friendly and professional service staff. The interior of the coffee shop resembles Smith’s description, cited above, except for the colours, which in this case are red and blue (see Fig. 16).

Coffeehouse by George is often located within other stores, establishments or office complexes. There is, for example, a coffee shop on the second floor in the inner city mall SOUK at Drottninggatan, in Stockholm city.
centre. The new mall SOUK was opened in 2007 after the department store Debenhams closed down in 2006 due to lack of customers. The mall targets youths, which is a strategy in accordance with transforming this part of Drottninggatan into a trendier scene. Another type of location is the Coffee House by George within the passages between and under Hötorghusen. These places will be explored further in the next chapter.

The coffee chain Coffee Cup, which in 2006 merged with another Swedish coffee chain, Espresso House, that was first established in Lund in 1996, displays both similarities and differences. Coffee Cup also started their enterprise in Stockholm city during the 1990s. Before the merger they had a dozen coffee bars in Stockholm and a few establishments in Gothenburg. The target group is ‘vardagsnjutare’ (enjoyer’s of everyday life). The location strategy has been to be in places where there is a steady flow of people, which often means in and around communication nodes such as train stations, subway junctions and airports.

The locales have the character of coffee bars; most establishments have barstools as the only seating alternatives and are often smaller in size in comparison with Coffeehouse by George and Wayne’s Coffee. This has changed somewhat since the merger. The establishment in the middle of an inner city mall, where everything is open display and full transparency of the work from the surrounding bar stools, is an illustrative example (see Fig. 8). According to them they have nevertheless been able to create a friendly and relaxing place between work and home, with a frequent customer base through a mix of good quality coffee and merchandise, skilled and professional employees, and attractive interior design and atmosphere.

The outspoken policy of Wayne’s Coffee is that the coffee shops should function as a ‘third place’, between offices and homes, where people can read or just have a cup of coffee. The term ‘third place’ has been used to describe informal meeting and gathering places such as cafés and bars but also community centres and beauty parlours, places that are in between work and home, and their respective chores and responsibilities (e.g., Oldenburg 1989) (not to be confused with Soja’s (e.g., 1996; 1999) concept thir dspace). But cafés and coffee shops are not only spaces of leisure activities. They are, of course, entrepreneurial and business spaces and working spaces for the waitresses, baristas and others involved in the coffee making process (see Ch. 5). But they are also workplaces for many of the customers.

As mentioned above, the early coffee houses were places where intellectuals and artists met, wrote and read. Today they are also accompanied by office workers and corporate businessmen and women; professionals who use coffee shops as meeting places, often without bringing the computer, for less formal discussion without traditional hierarchies and for hiring and firing workers (Laurier 2004).
At the coffee bar inside the inner city mall the workings of the making and serving coffee and café food are displayed openly for consumers gathered around the bar.

The possibilities of working at different locations have been further facilitated by ICT-development. More or less the whole office can be stored on in notebook: documents and reports, calendar, contacts and e-mails along with personal items such as photos, music and movie clips. Staying in connection with colleagues can be arranged through mobile phones and many coffee shops have more wireless Internet services, or so called ‘hotspots’.

Several of the coffee chains, for example Wayne’s Coffee and Espresso House, offer different kinds of Internet connections free or for a fee. Apart from WiFi connections Starbuck’s has also audio listening spots and they are collaborating with Apple utilising their music software platform, iTunes. Doing business at the café is not something new and there are several examples from the 17th and 18th century of businesses that started their enterprises in coffee houses, such as the insurance company Lloyd’s of London and the London Stock Exchange (Pendergrast 1999: 13).
Figure 9. Photograph of Akademibokhandeln’s paperback department, Stockholm

The paperback department publicly displayed through a window wall in three floors with an abandoned wine bar of the flagship bookstore that has a separate entrance.

Wayne’s Coffee opened its first coffee shop in Stockholm city centre at Kungsgatan in 1994 (see map Fig. 12). The company has since expanded in Sweden as well as to Finland and Estonia, and has now almost 50 cafés. The coffee chain also uses shop-in-shop as a location and establishment policy. This means that coffee shops are established and located within other shops or establishments as the coffee shop inside the bookstore Akademibokhandeln. Another example is the Wayne’s Coffee located at the corner of Sveavägen and Hamngatan in the foyer of a bank directly adjacent to the ATMs outside the cashier and reception area. The other coffee chains also use similar location strategies.

The location of a Wayne’s Coffee in Akademibokhandeln is mutually beneficial to both businesses. The café attracts consumers to the bookstore and prolongs and enhances their shopping experience while the café benefits from the circulation of people browsing around and shopping for books. The bookstore also utilises a couple of other strategies discussed above, although it all ready is one of the largest retail chains of books in Sweden and has Internet store as well. For example, author meetings and other happenings are organised next to the café, which is strategically centrally placed. At the café people are allowed to read and browse magazines and books as well as work and eat.
The store was rebuilt and expanded in the early 2000s, with a separate department for paperbacks on several levels with a separate entrance (see Fig. 9). In the paperback department there was, in the beginning, a wine bar, which had to close down since there is no such thing as a wine bar in the Swedish legalisation. At different locations in the store small handwritten notes can be found with personal reading suggestions from the staff – complimentary service to the staffed help desks at each department. The notes also indicate the staffs’ personal interest in books, which is also evident in that the cashiers in between serving customers usually read.

4.3 Spatialities of Shopping for Clothes

Shopping for clothes is used primarily as an example of transactions as everyday life projects. To understand shopping it is not only vital to focus on the consumer and the commodity but also on the supply side and the producers as well as the shopping guides and other representations (Zukin 2004). Shopping for clothes illustrates and problematises the importance of different spaces and places for the transaction situation. There are distinct spatialities of the fashion retail sector regarding distribution networks and the location of shops within and between cities. There are also retail formats; boutiques, shops and departments stores that are contextual places for transactions where shoppers, commodities and sales people are all involved in forming places.

The intersections between production and consumption are crucial in the formation of fashion shopping (Entwistle 2000). The fashion retail sector illustrates and problematises the blurring boundaries between retailing and the production of commodities as well as how the changes in and organisation of the industry have implications for the transaction situation. The Swedish fashion retailer H&M is an illustrative example of an everyday brand and a firm that utilises retail space strategically as well as having different forms of transaction configurations.

Shopping is a project initiated by the consumer with a goal or purpose of acquiring, examining or researching commodities, or visiting, experiencing or browsing shops; more generally speaking it is a project of ‘pursuing value’ (Zukin 2004: 7). As a project shopping has two sides – its underlying intention and practical realisation (Hägerstrand 1982, 1984). Although the underlying meaning of shopping has relevance for why certain transactions are more frequent, the practical realisation of the project is of primary concern to understand how transaction situations are configured. The realisation of shopping projects turns out differently under different circumstances and is thus dependent on the practical and particular situation.

Shopping is an everyday life project, which, to a high degree, ‘shapes our daily paths through time and space’ (Zukin 2004: 2). It is a diversified pro-
ject as Featherstone describes it, in relation to the notion of the flâneur or flâneuse:

It is also clear there is a continuum of activities that can be included under the heading shopping: ranging from shopping for necessities, to shopping around (window shopping) to recreational shopping (spending time in the city, walking the streets taking in sights, moving in and out of department stores, shops and public spaces). (Featherstone 1998: 916)

Tactical clothing projects

Clothes are everyday items used by everyone. Clothes are not only consumed when they are purchased but also when they are worn and displayed. The range and prices of clothes are highly variable, from expansive luxury haute couture garments to cheap basic items. Even the same type of clothing such as a shirt, a pair of pants, or underwear can have very different prices depending on not so much the quality of it but of the label and the design of it, i.e., the branding. Clothes are a commodity that is easily transported and can be transacted in many ways; through retail stores of different forms, and ordered through different means; through catalogue shopping, via mail-ordering, TV-shopping and over the Internet (i.e., transacted through both of the upper transaction configurations in Fig. 5).

Shopping for clothes is a very personal project and a bodily practice. Tactility – touch and vision – is essential when shopping for clothes. To feel the fabric of the sweater, to see if the shirt fits, that the jeans are of the right size, the skirt has the right cut, the socks are the right colour, that the outfit matches, etc. Commodities are articulated through different spaces ranging from the intimate scale of the body to the global. Clothes are closely related to the body, while furniture, for example, is more connected to the home (Leslie and Reimer 1999). Furniture and home decorations are other types of commodities for which tactility is essential, but clothes are more intimate since they are ‘produced, promoted and worn by bodies’ (Entwistle 2000: 1).

Shopping for clothes and fashion is regarded as emotionally and psychologically different from shopping for household items and groceries (Bruzzi and Gibson 2000b: 2). Clothes are more often associated with shopping and choice, rather than just purchasing and necessity, and where looking is an essential part (Gregson, Crewe, and Brooks 2002). It is not only an aesthetic and emotional project but also about skill and learning. Zukin describes the hardship of looking for and finding ‘the perfect pair of leather pants’ that fit, are of the right price and good quality:

Our memories show that shopping is a lifelong learning process: learning about goods, learning about stores, and learning how to be “a choosing subject’. Shopping is not only – nor primarily – an activity of acquiring goods; it is a social encounter, a research operation, and both a moral and an aesthetic experience of acquiring values. (Zukin 2004: 61 original emphasis)
People have different relationships to clothes and to shopping. For some, clothes are just something functional that you wear and shopping might be seen as a necessary but unattractive project. For others, clothes and shopping are an essential part of everyday life and of themselves, signalling how they are, how and whom they want to be associated with, or not with. Shopping and consumption, as mentioned above, is also associated with lifestyle: we consume to become, and according to, who we are (Mansvelt 2005: 81f).

There are also very different tactics for shopping for clothes. Some have already made up their mind as to what they are going to shop for and where before they go shopping and just look for a particular piece, which is not always an easy project. Others spend their Saturday afternoon browsing around different shops to find something – anything – while some are satisfied with window shopping and being in the city strolling around.

Shopping in general and shopping for fashion and clothes in particular, both regarding production and consumption, is a gendered issue (McRobbie 1997; Dowling 1993). It is often argued that clothing, fashion and women are intertwined as indicated in the following interview answer by Barthes (2006: 88f): ‘In reality fashion is never functional, never utilitarian. If women bought dresses only when they needed them, if a society bought clothes only because of wear and tear, there wouldn’t be any fashion: the buying rhythm must be faster than that of clothing wearing out’. In the same interview Lefebvre points out that fashion should not be reduced only to clothing: ‘It is a general phenomenon’ (Lefebvre in Barthes 2006: 87), and it is a simplification to so bluntly associate women and shopping.

Shopping is nevertheless gendered but in more intricate ways. Even if fashion and shopping have increasingly become of interest to males, it is still perceived as a highly feminine activity (e.g., Bruzzi and Gibson 2000a). The increased male interest in shopping is evident not the least in lifestyle magazines for men (e.g., Stevenson, Jackson, and Brooks 2000) and in the development of new grooming aids for men. Masculinity and shopping has a long history, as the concept of the flâneur implies. Furthermore, shopping is definitely also a generational issue where age plays a significant role.

Fashion and clothes are very closely related and both are rhythmical in a linear and cyclical fashion. Clothes can be in fashion or out of fashion, and every season new collections are made and new trends displayed in fashion shows, in magazines and through commercials. There is a diversification of fashion, or more correctly fashions, since today fashions overlap each other and different trends exist correspondingly, associated with different lifestyles and cultures.

Overall there is an acceleration of fashion cycles not only relevant (although perhaps most pronounced) for clothes, but also evident in home furniture. The fashioning of furniture is more constrained because of the material characteristics and embeddedness of the commodity, i.e., its properties (Leslie and Reimer 2003: 436). While clothes are commodities with a fast
turnover time and dependent on fashion, they are reusable. There is an extensive second-hand market for clothes through charity shops and car boot sales and for more exclusive clothes in designated vintage stores (e.g., Gregson and Crewe 2003). It is also possible to adapt to fashion by making alterations to clothes and customise them in different ways.

Since clothes usually are not very technically sophisticated commodities that require advanced machines or special environments, it is also possible to make and create clothes in homes, if you have the skill, knowledge and resources. There are also many people around the world who sew and spin at home, and the clothing industry is characterised by small businesses widely spread throughout the world (Dicken 2003).

In contemporary society, or rather in the developed countries, most of the clothes are acquired through retail stores, and most consumers depend on others to make and sell clothes (Zukin 2004). Because of developments in the clothing industry with economics of scale and mechanisation of handmade work, tailored and customised clothes are expensive. It is instead the retail and fashion industry that customises and creates different ranges for different clientele. This is related to the branding and the importance of brands, which has been widely debated, scrutinised and criticised in both academic circles and the media (e.g., Klein 2000).

**Fashion retailing and H&M**

The fashion retail industry has gradually expanded its scope and size both geographically and in relation to other industries. The global retail industry has expanded backwards along the commodity chain into manufacturing – the garment and textile industry (Dicken 2003). The relationship between fashion and textiles is intertwined and they’re often difficult to distinguish from each other (Gale and Kaur 2004). In the retail sector the relationships between the retailer and the supplier differ from different firms, between and within sectors and over time and space.

Fashion retail firms and businesses display a variety of organisational forms. In fashion retailing different models from arms-length or closely controlled relationships to variants such as ‘preferred-supplier/hierarchical control’ are evident (Crewe and Davenport 1992). There are, for example, vertically integrated organisations using suppliers in the local proximity, which shortens the communication networks and makes them highly adaptable (ZARA); horizontally structured organisations focusing on being cost effective use preferred suppliers that, in turn, use subcontractors that are geographically distant (H&M), or in different forms of dispersed networks (NIKE) (Dicken 2003).

Since fashion retailing is labour intensive and characterised by fast turnover times the different organisational models try to balance risk and control, cost and adaptability. Large international retail corporations now in many ways drive the market from previously having been a sector that, to a large
degree, was driven by the market (Kumar 1997). The distinction between market driven and market driving industries is fuzzy since all industries depend on demand for their commodities. But it emphasis that new commodities are developed in order to stimulate more demand. The retail fashion-clothing sector is also expanding horizontally into other sectors such as home decoration, shoes and accessories as well as competing internally.

Today haute couture and exclusive fashion brands such as Gucci, Donna Karan, Dolce & Gabanna compete with more high street and mass market oriented brands like The Gap, ZARA and TopShop (Gilbert 2000; Tungate 2005). There is a general trend towards diversification, however, both regarding consumer markets and product range. Many high fashion designers, especially American designers, have diversified their fashion portfolios and have clothes from very exclusive hand-made haute couture aimed at the world’s richest women, ready-to-wear collections that are also displayed at fashion shows for wealthy social groups, and a diffusion of ranges for the middle market, where direct involvement of the designer is almost non-existent (Moore 2000: 268).

There are also tendencies amongst high street retailers to diversify their businesses with different types of stores for different target groups with different assortments, as well as horizontal and vertical expansions along the commodity chain and into other commodities and markets such as furniture and home decoration. The blurring between the clothing and furniture industries is evident in fashion magazines and lifestyle stores, and in the diversification of fashion retailers into home accessories, linens and furniture (Leslie and Reimer 2003).

The success story of the Swedish fashion retail company Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) is an illustrative example of many of the contemporary trends in fashion retailing. It exemplifies both the external and internal blurring of boundaries in the industry as well as the structural and organisational changes in the fashion retail sector. H&M started its business in Västerås in 1947. Over the years it has expanded and become one of the largest fashion retail chains in Europe, and today is one of the ‘titans of high-street style’ (Tungate 2005). It is a transnational corporation with approximately 1,300 stores world wide and over 60,000 employees in twenty-four countries, with over 90 % of their sales abroad (H&M 2007).

In later years, a fair amount of attention has been given to H&M for its collaborations with famous designers such as Carl Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney, Viktor & Rolf and Roberto Cavalli as well as for advertisements featuring supermodels and movie stars. In 2006, for example, a campaign with the music icon Madonna was presented that resulted in a design collection launched in March 2007. The inventive design and advertising is one essential part of H&M’s success story, along the business concept of offering ‘fashion and quality at the best price’ and efficient logistics (Tungate 2005: 46).
The launch of a new clothing collection by a famous designer is an event that makes consumers queue in the streets and draws attention to the store.

All of H&M’s production is subcontracted but closely monitored by production offices worldwide. The whole distribution process is directly controlled and managed in-house (except transport), including store ownership in contrast to other firms in the fashion industry (Dicken 2003; Moore 2000; Tungate 2005). Apart from clothes, H&M has a wide range of fashion accessories, cosmetics and now shoes, and they have plans to expand with linens as well. H&M is also an illustrative example of the importance of store location and the increasing significance of the store itself. For H&M strategic locations are crucial for the development of the corporation and in the expansion into new markets (H&M 2007).

**Strategic spaces of fashion**

Paris, New York, London, Milan and Tokyo are the global cities of fashion (e.g., Breward and Gilbert 2006). These cities are the hosts of the important fashion shows, the homes of fashion designers, the working ground for fashion magazines as well as the base for other workers in the fashion industry such as photographers, stylists and models. It is also in these cities where the most famous retail streets can be found such as Bond Street and Savile Row.

Global cities and particular spaces like these are important not only in themselves but for other shopping spaces, other fashion retailers and for shoppers as well as for the city itself since ‘retail shopping is one of the modern city’s greatest cultural attractions’ (Zukin 1995: 188). Where clothes are shopped is important in terms of absolute and relative as well as relational location. There are wide ranges of different types of shops and locations where clothes can be shopped.

The location is important both in regards to the cities and countries in which to establish, where in the city-region, in city centre or in the suburbs, and on a micro-scale the location on the street or where in the shopping mall. The frequency and the question of where the transaction situations are, from a consumer perspective, are important because the more stores that are located in the area mean less work, less movement and greater accessibility. Retailers and commodities are not evenly distributed spatially.

On a general level the more specialised the commodity, the wider its cachement area has to be, although this is not a clear direct or automatic relationship. Exclusive brands like Gucci, Chanel, etc., are concentrated in larger cities (global or potentially global cities), while regular grocery stores are more evenly distributed in accordance with the population. Smaller cities have a lesser selection and range of stores and services in comparison with larger cities, which have a wider range of different stores and services; although some small cities have more fashion stores than larger cities, especially famous holiday resorts. The location of fashion retail stores, especially high-end brands, has as much to do with the status of the city and symbolic forms, as with population density and relative location.

The location is a complex issue of economic revenues and rents, flows of people and consumer mobility, cachement areas and the surrounding environment, planning regulations and property developments, etc. (e.g., Birkin, Clarke, and Clarke 2002; Ratcliffe, Stubbs, and Shepherd 2004). Successful retailing fundamentally depends on the ‘ability to lure passing pedestrians into shops to make a purchase’ (MacLaran 2003b: 39).

On a micro level there is a cluster tendency in retailing, and retailers seem to attract other retailers locating together in linear or street-like formation. This seems to be a longstanding spatial pattern of retailing detectable in suburban shopping malls as well as in inner cities. The evolution of retail types is ongoing and there are at the moment many different retail types such as convenience stores and supermarkets, airport and railway station shopping, discount stores and category killers, pedestrian and strip malls, virtual and entertainment shopping, etc. (Chung et al. 2001). In fashion retailing the inner city and is still a very important place (Birkin, Clarke, and Clarke
Although fashion retailers are also established in suburban shopping malls.

While developments such as the rise of out-of-town shopping and e-commerce seem to presage the homogenisation and de-urbanisation of consumption, there are aspects of fashion culture which actively encourage production of active and differentiated urban spaces. (Gilbert 2000: 8)

Location is a critical element in the retail sector, but it is not only about location, just as shopping is not only about purchasing the commodity, it is also an experience in itself. The store is critical in the life path of commodities ‘both as a place for the transfer of commodities, and their transformation from manufactured goods to identity revealing ‘fashionable’ purchases’ (Pettinger 2006: 49). To shop at Fifth Avenue in New York during a trip is, for a Swede, rather different from shopping in the local shopping mall.

In fashion retailing there is often a differentiation between various types of shops and different locations (compare with differentiation of collections above). H&M differentiates between store types A, B and C. The more exclusive A-shops located at prime locations such as Fifth Avenue, New York and Hamngatan, Stockholm, have more exclusive interiors of natural materials such as marble and wood, while the B-shops have less expansive interiors and so on (Pettersson 2001: 241). Some clothes, such as limited series and special collections are only sold in the A-shops. The Cavalli collection was, for example, sold only through H&M’s online store and in certain high profile stores in larger cities (see Fig. 10).

Furthermore, the store is a space of communication between customers and businesses, shoppers and sales assistants and is in itself, perhaps among fashion retailers, one of the most important marketing tools (e.g., Pettersson 2001; Tungate 2005; Wrigley and Lowe 2002). This applies particularly to flagship stores that are usually ‘regarded as critically important and worthy of substantial resource investments’ (Moore 2000: 271). Their locations are often in world cities at prestigious addresses. The merit of the flagship store lies as much in its symbolic value, i.e., in creating the right image of the commodity, as in its distribution function and consumer accessibility (ibid.).

H&M is aware of the importance of the store as a communication point and entertainment location and continuously invests in redecoration and rebuilding of stores to enhance the shopping experience (Tungate 2005: 49). The extra rental costs H&M pays for some prime location such as its flagship stores in New York and Stockholm should be seen as advertisement and marketing costs (Pettersson 2001: 224). For H&M it is not only the square meters or the amount of shopping windows that are important for store location but also volume and height (Pettersson 2001: 223).

A central and longstanding notion is that the amount of time spent in the store or shopping mall is directly related to the amount of purchases – the
more time consumers spend the more likely are they to spend money. It is not only a question of attracting customers to the stores but also to entice the people in the stores to buy. In 2000 H&M estimated that only 10-20 percent of the people who visited their stores bought something (Pettersson 2001: 226).

In the case of H&M the primary customer principle is that of consumer self-selection and the essential work for sales personnel in the stores is to bring forth and hang clothes, put alarms on them and make sure that the shop is nice and tidy, i.e., commodity care, although customer care has become an increasingly important concept (ibid. 217). The display and presentation of clothes is dictated by the global headquarters but there are some possibilities of local differentiation within the central directives (ibid. 223).

The stores are used not only as distribution centres dependent on good locations but also as strategic investments and settings to create a more individualised and personal consumption experience, i.e., creating attractive places for consumption. The store as communication space is, however, not straightforward since there are often different opinions between consumers and retailers of what is a pleasurable in-store experience (Bäckström and Johansson 2006).

The interior design, structure of the building, display of commodities as well as the workers is thus critical for the retailing. Where to place the commodities in the store is an intricate and longstanding issue for retailers as well as for mall and shopping centre developers. Zola’s (2001 [1883]) classic work is often used as an early example of how to use the space of the store to increase consumption and it gives an interesting account of: ‘how store design and layout, incessant spatial reconfiguration of in-store space, display, manipulation of customer circulation patterns, and disorientation of shoppers induce consumption’ (Wrigley and Lowe 2002: 9).

As has been discussed, cafés are a way of making the store experience more enjoyable and to prolong it. When asked if ‘H&M cafés’ is the next thing, the vice president answered not yet, but added that there is a café inside one of the H&M stores in Italy and that it is important to maximise the usage of the retail space (Sjöström 2006). In 2007 a café was incorporated in the redevelopment of one of H&M’s flagship stores in Stockholm city. Café Moda is on the second level of the store that spans a whole city block and is situated adjacent to two other H&M stores.

4.4 Time-spatial Flexibility and Places

Initially, this chapter outlined a time-spatial framework for conceptualising transactions from a consumer perspective. This has been done in order to analyse how different commodity transactions are configured and constrained in time and space.
The framework suggests that there are four archetypical configurations of transactions situations, each of which can be modified in at least two different ways. The archetypes are based on the mobility of consumers and commodities and the spatial division of labour between consumer and producer. The time-spatial conceptualisation questions and transcends traditional classifications of the services industry both in regard to services work and service products, especially if, as has been done here, the materiality and sociality of transaction situations is stressed. Throughout the chapter this time-spatial framework has been illustrated and problematised by focusing on three commodities and their associated transaction spaces.

The properties of the commodity are fundamental in all possible transaction configurations. It is possible to transfer the content of books through all different types of transaction configurations in the typology (see Fig. 5 above). Clothes can be transferred through two out of the four transactions, while a cup of coffee is more or less restricted to one of them. However, the boundaries are neither clear nor precise. A cup of coffee to take away becomes rather similar to ordinary retailing. In fashion retailing the shop and other transaction places are an integral part of the consumption experience, and there are consequently similarities between having a cup of coffee and shopping for clothes in this regard.

There are transactions situations when the usage and exchange of products coincide in time and space. In such cases transactions are not only an initial part in the consumption process but also an essential part of the commodity and/or the consumption experience. New intersections are forming simultaneously as transactions become more and more distanciated.

Technology has made a range of transaction configurations more flexible in time and space at the same time as the place for the transaction is increasingly important. These apparently paradoxical developments are, in large part, due to the interconnections between the material, social and economic aspects in transaction projects and are also related to political changes. They reinforce each other.

On the one hand, in an economy increasingly focused on consumption and experiences, there is an increased emphasis on where transaction situations take place. The place of the consumption and transaction experience is often as important as the material transaction of the commodity as, for example, socialising over a cup of coffee. On the other hand, there are tendencies that commodities are being digitalised and that transactions are being spatially distanciated through the development of new technologies and organisational arrangements. In figure 5, there are, thus, simultaneously movements both upward to the right where transactions become more flexible and downward to the left where transactions become less spatially flexible.

Infrastructural and technological development and increased mobility have developed new commodities and made new transaction configurations
possible. This has implications for both the strategic organisation of service producers as well as for the consumers’ everyday life. An evident tendency is increased technological involvement in and digitalisation of certain commodities and transaction situations. Another, apparently paradoxical, tendency is the integration and juxtaposition of different transactions and commodities while differentiation of commodities and places for transactions related to individualisation and diversification of lifestyles are occurring. Where and when the transaction takes place becomes more important, in spite of the increased flow of commodities and flexibility of possible transaction configurations. The significance of this for the morphology of the city and urban everyday life is critical.

The increased flexibility and distanciation is not without problems. Transaction situations contain, in a time-geographical conceptualisation, ‘both strong social interaction (mutually between employees and between employees and customers) and weak traffic relationships (between customers that happen to be present simultaneously)’ (Hägerstrand 1987: 18). With increased mobility and time-spatial flexibility the weak forms might expand and diminish strong social ties.

Furthermore, the home, through the development of new transaction configurations, has become increasingly important. Through distanciated transaction configurations the home becomes part of the transaction space. In the emphasis on the shops and stores as an integral part of the consumption experience there is also a connection with the home. Retailers are also trying to create a homey environment in the stores, i.e., a safe and comfortable place. The cafés are strategically establishing themselves as a kind of third place between home and work. By providing different kinds of infrastructures the cafés become like a home in relation to the transaction configurations. It is possible to order things online from the café and social life has moved to the café. Instead of having to choose between working from home or working at the office there is now a third alternative for those with flexible working arrangements.

Connected to the increased flexibility is also the speeding up and shorter turnover time not only for commodities but also of environments where commodities are sold. The places of the transactions are increasingly changing and being refashioned in order to survive in the competitive climate. Its increasingly apparent that fashion is a general phenomenon, and that it is not restricted to clothing and that places are under the influence of fashion. The consumption, transaction and usage of commodities are furthermore related to, dependent on and associated with other commodities.

Many producers use different types of transactions configurations, as exemplified by Apple Computer, Inc. There are tendencies of firms diversifying their businesses and extending their business into other sectors. Fashion retailing is the most illustrative example of these developments. Global fashion retailers are extending their business both backwards, or vertically, along
the commodity chain into the garment and textile industry as well as side-
ways, or horizontally, into other sectors such as home interiors and shoes.
There are tendencies to integrate different types of commodity transactions
into one place such as coffee shops in bookshops. In many ways commodi-
ties and transaction situations are imploding into each other and it is difficult
to determine the primary or ‘real’ commodity (cf. Baudrillard above).

The typology of commodity transaction configurations may also be used
for an alternative categorisation of consumer services. The producers are, in
this context, the providers of the commodity not primarily the actor or com-
pany that produce the ‘actual’ commodity, which implies a service producer.
However, the service producer is an integral part not only in providing the
commodity but also in the process of producing commodities and in creating
value in relation to commodities.

The alternative classification was illustrated in figure 6. At the top of the
figure there is ordinary retailing and distribution of commodities either
through material stores or through different kinds of networks, i.e., e-
commerce and virtual spaces. To the left side there are restaurants, cafés and
other entertainment as well as a repair shop and bodily services – services
that usually are related to craftsmanship where the production and consump-
tion are closely related in time and space, and associated with the cultural
industry and cultural commodities.

Media oriented services, often also related to the cultural economical sec-
tor are, in this conceptualisation, on the opposite side, on the right side in the
figure, since many of these commodities can be digitalised and thus trans-
ferred without any physical movement of consumers or producers in time
and space. At the bottom of the figure are transaction situations that cannot
be moved, consuming landscapes and sceneries, gardens and monumental
sites, as well as consuming personal and household services. In work terms
this relates to maintenance and contract work, such as landscaping and gar-
dening as well as working in the personal sector, household care and nurs-
ing. These transaction configurations are much about cultivating places.

Places are increasingly, in Lefebvre’s term, conceived as commodities,
but commodities are also increasingly important in the formation of places.
Furthermore, how commodity transactions are configured, which configura-
tions are tactically utilised by consumers and encouraged by producer strat-
gegies are constituted and constrained by the formation of the city and the so-
cial politics of urban everyday life.
5. Formation of Consumer Service Spaces

How are consumer service spaces and transaction situations created and configured in relation to urban places and changes? In city centres there is an abundance of different and interconnected commodity transaction configurations competing for space and consumers. The juxtaposition and development of new transaction configurations constantly result in changing spatial formations and blurring of the boundaries between different transaction spaces. Commodity transaction situations are a crucial nexus in new spatial formations of consumer service spaces that have emerged in cities worldwide, which transcend work and leisure, consumption and production, public and private, economy and culture in the city.

In this chapter the spatial configurations of commodity transactions are contextualised and situated within the formation of consumer service spaces. In complementing the analysis structured around different commodities a place is used as the starting point. The different configurations are put together in one context and how they form and are formed by places is analysed. The place is Stockholm city centre. The formation of consumer service spaces is directly related to transformations in the practices and representations of city formation, where property development and urban planning, and their intersections are particularly important.

First Stockholm city is introduced, and changing spatial formations of transaction situations identified. The appropriation and usage of consumer service spaces and transactions situations are emphasised and discussed. The spatial formations of consumer service spaces observed in Stockholm city centre need to be historically contextualised and geographically situated to be appreciated and understood. It is also important to put the city centre into a wider perspective of urban development and in relation to the global cultural economy as well as to the larger urban diorama.

Second, consumer service spaces are conceptualised and put into an international perspective, where property development, city planning and policy-making, together with retailing and places are emphasised as especially important. Finally, two property developments, one historical and one ongoing, are used to exemplify spatial practices involved in configuring, forming and changing consumer service spaces are analysed before challenges for and of urban development as well as new plans and policies, i.e., representations of the city are reviewed. The analysis focuses more on implications and challenges for planning and policy making than the practices themselves.
5.1 Formations in Stockholm

Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, is one of the largest cities in northern Europe. During its more than seven century long history it has undergone roughly four grand transitions or epochs. It has evolved from being a pre-industrial town until mid 19th century, via an industrialisation epoch in two stages (establishment and consolidation) to a post-industrial city from the middle of 20th century (Johansson 1991) (Cf. Lefebvre’s description of city formations in Ch. 2).

From a historical perspective the city was formed in negotiations between public and private interests and actors, and between the local and national government, and increasingly different global processes, producing the city of today. The historical development of Stockholm is a drama more about land transactions and private enterprises than about rational planning (Johansson 1991). It is only the last hundred years that were characterised by what might be called modernistic rational planning and public interventions. Being a capital city, the national state has a particular interest and relationship to the city and its development.

Historically Stockholm expanded from the Old Town, which was the city centre up until the 19th century, and retail and services were an important part in the development of the new city centre at its current location at Lower Norrmalm (cf. William-Olsson 1984 [1937,1941]).

Stockholm city’s development during the 20th century can, in general terms, be described as a transformation from a modern and rationally planned city centre to a post-modern commercial and multifunctional arena. The city centre of Stockholm might be partly described as a consumption arena, or a consumptionscape (Olds 2001), with different types of transactions configurations, interconnected and proximate consumer service spaces. During this transformation the city centre was profoundly materially redeveloped – demolished and reconstructed. Along with these material changes there were also political changes with increasing emphasis on putting the city on the global map. This corresponds to international trends in urban politics, i.e., practicing global urban politics (Stahre 2004).

Stockholm city’s stages

The place officially known and in plans designated as ‘the city’ (in Swedish city) is more or less synonymous with the city centre, downtown, the central business district and the commercial, retail and entertainment district. There is no clear distinction between, for example, the financial business district and the shopping and entertainment area as is common in such large global cities as New York and London. Also located in juxtaposition are state government buildings as well as some of the primary local and national cultural institutions.
However, in Swedish the city is a problematic term not only conceptually but also practically since there is no definite distinction between cities and towns in Sweden. The term refers to both the municipality and the territory of Stockholm (Stockholms stad), and in more popular and everyday language the city specifically also refers to the inner city (Swedish sta’n) (Franzén 2007).

In Stockholm the inner city covers a larger area than what local governmental plans and official documents designate as ‘the city’ including more residential neighbourhoods, but not the whole municipality, which also contains an outer city and suburbs. Furthermore, there is an ongoing development of extending the inner city that is more or less encircled by water (expect in the north and northeast) to the nearest suburbs primarily through different waterfront developments. What constitutes city and the location of its centre is contested and shifting. The city is a practiced place.

The focus here will be on the city centre. For clarity and practical reasons the term city centre will be used in referring to the planners’ ‘city’. That is the area between Olof Palmes gata in the north to Strömstaden, with Gustav Adolfs torg and Tegelbacken in the south, Birger Jarls gatan and Nybroviken in the east to Karlbergs strand and the central train station in the west (see map Fig. 12). This delimitation is also warranted because of the unique characteristics of the place, and since it more or less overlaps with statistical units.
Stockholm’s city centre, which statistically consists of the two parishes Klara and Jakob, is distinctively different from the rest of Stockholm regarding population and dwellings as well as employment and workplaces.
Table 1. Stockholm in numbers: population, employments, workplaces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The city centre in absolute numbers</th>
<th>Percentage of the municipality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 (prognoses)</td>
<td>2,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwellings (2006)</td>
<td>1,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employments 2005</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade &amp; communication</td>
<td>12,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial services etc.</td>
<td>31,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; cultural services</td>
<td>10,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>9,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>68,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Workplaces 2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade &amp; communication</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial services etc.</td>
<td>1,453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal &amp; cultural services</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,085</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: USK, Stockholm Stad, 2007

The city centre is a commercial area characterised by businesses in the form of different service occupations. There are relatively few people living in the city centre but there has been a significant absolute increase during the last decade by approximately sixty percent. It is primarily and significantly an area for working with four dominating sectors; financial services, etc., public sector, personal and cultural services, and trade and communications. Employment numbers on average are significantly higher than the number of workplaces, which implies that the city is dominated by large workplaces. The concentration of financial services and the public sector is significant in the city centre compared to the rest of the city. The share of trades and communication, including retail is, however, on an aggregate level more or less the same as the rest of the city and the rest of the country (Smas 2005).

From a statistical point of view it is appropriate to label the city centre a central business district since it has the core of Stockholm’s commercial and business activities. The large public sector reflects Stockholm’s function as the capital of Sweden. The City Hall and much of the local government offices are located outside the city centre.
Stockholm’s city centre, however, is not a homogeneous place but consists of a diversity of elusive spaces and places within places. An interesting divider in the city centre is the ridge Brunkebergsåsen. The ridge’s central and elevated position, with bridges and overpasses, offers interesting vantage points and observation entrances to the city centre. It functions much like the balcony Lefebvre used for his analysis of the rhythms of Paris (Lefebvre 2004 [1992]). From the bridges it is possible to get an overview of the city centre, while at the same time be part of the urban life, i.e., hearing, smelling and feeling the rhythms of the city centre. The ridge offers places where it is possible to pause and observe the rhythms of the city at a distance.

Brunkebergsåsen is a natural ridge and a historical divide separating the eastern part from the western part of the city. The eastern part is often considered as more exclusive with designer brand boutiques, expensive restaurants and trendy nightclubs along fashionable streets as well as cultural and financial establishments around inner-city parks and the waterfronts. It was not as profoundly changed during the grand transformation of Stockholm city during the 20th century as its western counterpart (see below). The western side does not have the same aura of exclusiveness although it has both prominent cultural institutions and government buildings as well as international and national retail chains.

The ridge, or border, itself is interesting. It could be seen as an anomaly in the city centre, or an unintentional outcome of the transformation project. The infamous street Malmgatan, at the top of the ridge is both physically and socially separated from the surroundings, and is in many ways a backstreet with office buildings facing away from the street offering monotone facades, few entrances and retail stores. The bridge has often been considered a nuance, historically for being a physical barrier and in later years for its social problems, i.e., shady and criminal activities especially prostitution. Physically the barrier has been breeched and the street is now elevated and vertically separated from the surrounding street grid (see Fig. 11). The ridge slopes down towards the east and south but to the north and west is connected to the surrounding street grid with bridges and stairways, escalators and different passages.

The diversity of places in the city centre has strong historical path dependency. The historical trajectories are well illustrated through the variety and the evolution of retail formats and transaction configurations. Swedish cities have historically developed in close relation to different types of retail formats, four of which are particularly evident: the market square, the main street, the shopping city, and the out-of-town shopping centre (Bergman 2005). The development of the four retail formats can be connected to the four overarching historical epochs or transformations of Stockholm’s development.
In the contemporary city centre different types of historic and newer retail and commercial spaces are being juxtaposed on top and next to each other. Rather than clear shifts from one spatial formation to the other with well-demarcated boundaries the different forms have been developed in relation to each other and the historical formats are now integrated and intertwined with each other and new formations of retailing and consumption have emerged. The market square, with its long historical trajectory, is still evident alongside the important high-street that has been complemented with department stores and integrated in inner city shopping malls and different forms of passages (cf. discussion in Ch. 2).

The most thriving outdoor market in the city centre is Hötorget in front of the Concert Hall (see map Fig. 12 and Fig. 13). The square is one the oldest in the city centre alongside Brunkebergstorg and Gustav Adolfs torg (Gullberg 2001), and the only one that still functions as a vending place on a regular basis. The square dates back to the 17th century when it functioned as a farmer’s (hay) market. Today it is an outdoor produce market with cut flowers, fruit and vegetable booths as well as stalls with knickknacks. The booths and stalls are temporal; they are set up each morning and taken down in the evening, which gives the place a particular rhythm that transforms it into different spaces on a daily basis.
Adjoining the outdoor market is a more permanent and covered market hall with foods such as meat, fish, cheese and other delicacies from national and international cuisines. There are also eateries as well as a wine store. The market is open year round from Monday to Saturday with knickknacks and car boot sales on the square during Sundays. Here is thus a working example of the historical market square in a contemporary form.

The streets are arguably the most prominent type of consumption place in the city centre. It is on the streets that the rhythm of the city is most evident and where the consumption drama is performed. On the streets there are also temporary market places and transaction configurations such as fast food vendors and coffee carts, hawkers and dealers as well as various street performers.

The streets are, however, primarily spaces of flows where people move between destinations and negotiate their way in between buildings with stores at the lower levels and offices above. There is a range of different streets in the city centre from back alleys and high streets to traffic throughways and pedestrian malls. The streets display a diversity of people and activities but many of them are related to consumption activities. Streets, and especially main shopping streets, are an important part of city formation and urban development.

The pedestrian street mall Sergelgatan, observed from one of the city bridges, displays the daily rhythms of the urban consumer drama (see Fig. 14). In the evening hours a few people stroll down the street on their way to
a late night movie, or on their way home after a day’s work, or on their way to one of the still open restaurants. From lunch and through out the afternoon, intense commerce around the modern building complexes characterises the area. On the market square Hötorget at the northern end of the street vendors and stall salesmen shout in chorus to attract consumers. In the crowded street people flow back and forth, some walking fast with clear intentions others prancing, browsing and window-shopping.

The character of the area during the morning hours when the city wakes and prepares for the coming day is rather different. Before the stores open streets are cleaned and litter boxes emptied and through windows one can see cleaning buckets and janitors. Flows of office workers appear from the underground entrances on their way to workplaces and early meetings, some walking by the newly opened cafés for take-a-way coffee. Even earlier construction workers start to move cranes, raising steel bars and anchoring concrete foundations.

Historically there were three main south-north streets during the northward movement of the Stockholm city centre; Drottninggatan, Malmskillnadsgatan and Regeringsgatan (William-Olsson 1984 [1937,1941]) (see map Fig. 12 and Fig. 13). Of the three streets, only the first has maintained its position as a main street over the years. The importance and attraction of the two latter streets faded especially after the grand transformation of the city and when the ridge was breached by Kungsgatan, which became a central street for entertainment and especially cinemas, and later by Hamngatan (Sannel 2005).

During the last decades there has been upgrading projects along the ill-fated streets, with a few developments of residential housing and removal of passages and stairways. Regeringsgatan, which intersects with Hamngatan, has attracted new commercial establishments and a few concept stores. Along the street redevelopments were made with new offices and apartments, and escalators now connect Regeringsgatan with Kungsgatan.

The southern parts of Malmskillnadsgatan, with the square Brunkebergstorg, where Sweden’s central bank is located, was refurbished in the 1990s but still has the character of a city backyard (see map Fig. 12). In later years the bridge next to the bank became a parking area for tourist buses, and is thus, for some, one of their first encounters with Stockholm. From the bridge another angle or divide in the city is evident between the northern and the southern part, the old and the new. Governmental institutions and tourist attractions dominate the southern part while the northern is dominated by commercial activities. Kulturhuset is the physical manifestation of the boundary that opens up with a glass façade and entrances towards the north and modern parts of the city, while turning its back to the old town – the former city centre, with a solid concrete wall facing south.

Drottninggatan, which runs through the city centre from north to south, is still one of the main shopping streets. The long street has different characters
along its course and can be divided into three parts; the lower, the middle
and the upper Drottninggatan (the latter has been explicitly used in market-
ing, see for example the free commercial and promotional magazine ICity
Magazine (see also below)). The lower parts leading from Kulturhuset down
to the Parliament and government office buildings are mainly characterised
by tourist and souvenirs shops. The upper part, which is outside the city cen-
tre, is more varied with smaller and independent stores. The middle is a high
street for retail dominated by national and international retail chains.

Three of the four department stores in Stockholm city centre, or what
used to be department stores: PUB, Åhléns City, and SOUK (former Deben-
hamns), are located along Drottninggatan. All three come from three differ-
ent periods where PUB is the oldest and SOUK the newest. The fourth and
the most fashionable department store is Nordiska kompaniet (NK) located
at Hamngatan a few blocks away (see map Fig. 12). Today all of them are
more like inner city malls with more or less independent departments.

In the department stores fashion items dominate – clothes and shoes, ac-
cessories and cosmetics – but there are also other so-called lifestyle com-
modities such as interior design and home decoration, and entertainment and
media products. The departments are structured around different brands as
well as according to type of commodity (clothing and fashion accessories,
perfume and make-up, home decoration and furniture, books and media
products), and consumer groups (i.e., women, men, and children) (cf. Koch
2007 for a detailed analysis of department stores as situating spatial prac-
tices).

Over the last few years all of the department stores have undergone refu-
rbishments. Åhléns City is the flagship store of a national retail chain with
stores in major towns and cities throughout Sweden. It is an example of a
modernistic department store designed like a box with architecture and de-
sign focused on function and rationality. In recent years it has undergone
internal remodelling and most recently the main entrance that connects the
department store to the underground has been refurbished with more glass,
lighting and windows for displaying the cosmetic departments on the street
level.

Since its establishment in the beginning of last century PUB, adjoining
Hötorget, has expanded and contracted in different waves (Bergman 2001).
The department store, which is now more of an inner city mall, although the
main building has the architectural characteristics of old department store, is
currently undergoing refurbishment with the establishment of new shops.
The refurbishments include both international retail chains as well as smaller
establishments and independent stores. The newest department store-like
establishment is found at Drottninggatan next to Åhléns City. When Depe-
hamns closed down the property was redeveloped into the new inner-city
mall SOUK, which opened in March 2007 and targets the youth with such
attractions as the first Top-Shop flagship store outside the UK.
The dedicated inner city shopping malls Gallerian and Sturegallerian, which in many ways resembles their out-of-town counter parts, has also undergone refurbishment during the last couple of years. Gallerian is still structured around an inner street but with new design (see below) while the expanded Sturegallerian has a more intricate interior that is rather different from ordinary mall layouts.

There are also larger retailers, most often found out of town, now located in the inner city such as large stores for home-appliances and consumer electronics. When entering the stores, it feels and looks much the same as their counter parts along the highway and in the suburbs. Another interesting development is the showrooms for cars displaying the latest models established at strategic locations in the city centre. The inner city malls and retail stores are, however, not surrounded by vast parking lots. The architecture of the city malls is also more integrated with the surroundings and constrained by previously built environments to a larger extent, giving rise to interesting spatial formations.

Changing material formations

In the city centre there are many different forms of retail space, spatialities of consumption and configurations of transactions spaces. The most prominent and visible are obviously transactions in the form of retailing and shopping, cafés and restaurants, i.e., involving movements of the consumer (cf. Fig. 5).

Different historical forms of retail places, as has been reviewed above, are particularly dominant: market squares and fairs with temporary booths and stalls, streets with shops and boutiques, large department stores and supermarkets, as well as inner city malls and shopping arcades. The different retail types overlap with what is commonly recognised as key places for consumption: the market, the street, the department store, and the mall (cf. Wrigley and Lowe 2002; Lowe and Wrigley 2000; Hudson 2005; Crewe 2000).

This broad and general typology of consumption places does not directly incorporate or recognise the new spatial formations of consumption and transaction configurations that have emerged in the city centre alongside and in relation to these historical trajectories. Alongside the four still dominating consumption and retail places there are also smaller and more disaggregated developments. There are distinctive spatial forms that have their own particular historical trajectories, but which have become very much intertwined and juxtaposed with the others.

Technological development and the emergence of virtual forms of consumption have created new transaction configurations resulting in new spatial formations. Virtual shopping spaces and the Internet are present in the city in the form of wireless connections, Internet cafés, interactive consumer terminals, music download stations, etc. There are also pick-up and distribu-
tion centres for commodities bought on-line in the middle of the city. These developments might be seen as the fifth and latest retail format related to and directly visible in city formation. Other configurations are also present both indirectly and directly; there are homes in the city, which are important consumption spaces, delivery trucks and courier services supporting distanciated transactions.

Transactions spaces cannot, as argued above, be reduced only to retailing but also include, for example, cafés, restaurants and other consumer service establishments. There is an ongoing process of merging different types of retail and other forms of consumption into each other – into complex transaction spaces: cafés in bookstores, adjoining cinemas, in fashion retail stores, in bank foyers, are illustrative examples (see previous chapter). These different types of shop-in-shop developments can also be described as mini-malls or as a type of arcade.

Arcades usually consist of an indoor passage between two main streets with small retail and units. They are often built ‘by developers anxious to optimize the use of land or owners seeking to prevent incursion or misuse of their property’ (Ratcliffe, Stubbs, and Shepherd 2004: 430). The passages demand careful management and understanding of the conditions for the small businesses often established within them. The mall has its historical roots in both the department store and in the arcades, or passages, both of which emerged during the 19th century (Shields 1992a). There are both new and old shopping passages in Stockholm city centre, for example, Birger Jarls Passagen from the late 19th century to the most recent redevelopment in early 21st century under the H&M-building (see below).

Different kinds of passages, arcades as well as shop-in-shop developments, illustrate the historical trajectories of newer spatial formations and problematise the blurring of boundaries and implosion of activities in time and space. These developments transcend what is considered commercial and cultural spaces, public and private spaces, as well as notions of leisure and work. It is an implosion of activities in time and space where modern boundaries are blurred and redrawn, in other words it is post-modern consumption spaces:

In their totality, postmodern consumption sites are characterized by a new spatial form which is a synthesis of leisure and consumption activities previously held apart by being located in different sites, performed at different times or accomplished by different people. (Shields 1992a: 6)

The spatial developments in and around Hötorgetcity, with five high-rise buildings (Fig. 15-18), are observable manifestations of these types of both/and not either/or spaces (Pred 1997): spatial formations resulting partly from contemporary process and partly built on the historical trajectory of the previous.
Figure 15. Photograph (i) of indoor passage at Hötorgshusen, Stockholm

Figure 16. Photograph (ii) of indoor passage at Hötorgshusen, Stockholm
The five high-rise buildings Hötorghusen were a central part in the development of the modern Stockholm city (see below). The buildings had significant symbolic value, and were described as visionary by the planning advocates – as skyscrapers or more poetically as the five violent trumpet blasts of modernity symbolising a new scale and new beauty (Larsson cited in Gullberg 2001: 13). On the lower floors of the buildings new spatial formations are observable.

Three of the buildings have been connected at street level through walkways and glass roofing, which has created an indoor environment not like a mall but rather reminiscent of a resort lobby or hotel entrance with greenery and benches along side reception areas to the office and business environment. There is an indoor café and restaurant as well as other consumer services such as hairdressing, dry-cleaning and beauty parlours together with local, national and global retailers, mostly oriented outwards towards the surrounding streets.

There is a stark contrast between the two alleys that were built in and the third alley that is still an outdoor environment (cf. Fig 15 and 16 to Fig. 17). In the two indoor passages separated from the street by sliding doors a café and a restaurant have gradually expanded their business. This has made it difficult to demarcate what belongs to the restaurant or the café and what is a public passageway. It is not easy to define and describe the spatial formations that were formed but they are comparable to the passages of 19th century Paris:
glass covered, marble floored passages through entire blocks of houses, whose proprietors have joined forces in the venture. On both sides of these passages, which obtain their lights from above, there are arrayed the most elegant shops, so that such an arcade is a city, indeed a world in miniature (Benjamin cited in Frisby 2004: 279f).

The passages are as ambiguous today as they were in the Paris described by Benjamin (1992 [1927-39]). It is spatial formations that can neither be classified as purely a consumption space for shopping and leisure activities nor as a space only for production of professional and retail services. It is rather a space for consumption and production, leisure and work.

Spatial formations like these are particularly evident in and around city centre office complexes and similar spatial formations are visible in city centres around the world. They are, however, also evident in suburbia, in different inner-city quarters, in waterfront developments as well as at communications nodes such as airport terminals. Zukin (1995) has identified similar developments in New York in connection with designated business improvement districts in Manhattan, for example Bryant Park and the Grand Central Terminal, but the redevelopment of the former AT&T building to Sony Plaza is particularly similar (Zukin 1995: 3).

These post-modern consumption or liminal spaces (Zukin 1991) in the city centre are, however, built upon and configured in relation to the previous formations of the city, i.e., they are redevelopments and reconfigurations of prior spatial formations. In the outer city they may be constructed more or less without any consideration of the past but in the city centre they are rather an extension of the past. This is clearly evident in Stockholm city centre, not the least in Hötorgscity and around Hötorgshusen.

The 'new' spatial formations can be conceptualised as consumer service spaces that transcend the traditional categories of consumption and production, leisure and work. This formation of consumer service spaces has a diffuse intentional consumer and was created due to the already built environment and the protection of the historical and cultural values of the place, and because of changing leaseholders, new demands from tenants and customers, and new refurbishments to improve the value of the building. The consumer service spaces and their spatial formations are shaped and reshaped by many different actors and commodities, projects and processes in different combinations.

**People and everyday life**

Inner cities, city centres, downtowns and central business districts have been revitalised amongst politicians, planners and private businesses, in public debates and in research. This can, as discussed above, be directly related to the emergence of the global cultural economy and the increased competitiveness between cities, with a new urban politics and changing everyday
conditions. The city centre is a crucial space in the global cultural economy and in the globalisation of cities, but it is also an important and local place in many people’s everyday life. It has become popular to live and work downtown, for leisure activities and to spend recreational time.

The people and the everyday life projects taking place in the city centre are an important, but often overlooked part in the global city formation processes. It can be argued, in accordance with Hägerstrand’s and Lefebvre’s emphasis on everyday life (cf. Ch. 1), that cities, and research on cities, have to be populated with people and things. City centres as places for everyday life and lived spaces need to be populated with both the diversity of people using, living and working in the city and with buildings, infrastructures and commodities. The consumer service spaces are used and formed by a diversity of actors and the consumer service spaces also change and challenge the notions of private and public space. The city centre is, in general, a space of blurring categories:

… downtown has become a fusion of the ludic with the economic. Without doubt leisure is a commercial undertaking, but downtown is also a place where, in convention centres, symphony halls, night clubs, and domed stadiums, the business of work is play. Both the exchange of information in corporate office towers, and the sensory experience of arts and entertainment require bodily presence, mutual encounter. In a real sense downtown, while remaining the central business district, has also become the central meeting district. (Ley 1996: 330)

The formation of consumer service space in Hötorghusen has simultaneously both diminished and extended the public. On the one hand the refurbishments have produced a more pleasant and attractive environment and opened up previously restricted spaces as the pathways under the building blocks. On the other hand the spaces have been gated off and become monitored and controlled, and parts that were once open to the public have been closed off (see Figure 15-17 and below). The boundaries between public and private spaces are, furthermore, negotiated and renegotiated when they are used, i.e., when the social space is practiced and appropriated by people and things. What is considered public and private is constantly negotiated and the supposed privatisation of space is not a simple one-way process, rather:

… boundaries between what counts as public space and private space are not systematically dismantled and rearranged, rather they are confused and blurred. Social space, in uneven and specific ways, becomes porous. (Highmore 2005: 57)

The development of new rather spectacular office buildings in Sydney, involving internationally renowned architects, is a concrete and similar example of former private spaces being transformed into more or less public
spaces for different societal groups. It can be described as a communalisation process driven by both economic and cultural transformations reflecting ‘the qualitative differences in the ways that new public things are being created as well as in what these public things actually are’ (O’Neill and McGuirk 2003: 1762).

The spatial changes result from changing forms and practices of work for service professionals, but must also be related to changing forms of consumption and leisure practises. One characteristic of these new office complexes is the inclusion of locals for recreation and consumption such as relaxing areas, art galleries, commercial cafés and restaurants, etc. These changes don’t only involve the professional service workers but also other workforces and consumers more generally.

The resulting transaction spaces are interesting examples produced and created by a range of different historical and contemporary processes and different projects, and where a range of actors and activities interact and are juxtaposed.

The city centre is populated by a diversity of users and different types of people who are there for a variety of reasons. There are consumers and customers; shoppers, tourists, flâneurs, as well as producers and workers; businessmen, construction workers, sales personnel and contract workers. There are also homeless people and various street workers.

A range of different people, for example, use the consumer service spaces in Hötorgshusen and they are the pockets of local order for projects both in relation to work and leisure. There are workers ranging from executives, doctors and software engineers in the upper parts of the building, to sales-assistants, waitresses and receptionists in the lower parts. There are also consumers such as groups of elderly gentlemen at the café (often speaking foreign languages), parents walking around with strollers, youths hanging out, regular customers as well as shoppers and tourists.

The city centre is a vital place in the everyday life of many people. In particular, the workers in the city centre, the people that are in the area most frequently and regularly (though perhaps not the ones that use its facilities the most) spend a large portion of their days in the city centre. There are, in general terms, two dominating workforces – the professional service producers and the contract and service workers. It’s two workforces working side by side but who differ significantly; ‘the two workforces occupy the same place, yet they live their lives within different spaces’ (Allen and Pryke 1994: 453).

These are, however, two very heterogeneous categories including various types of service work and service products. For example, even within retailing there is a range of different workers and spaces. A fashion retail worker does not necessarily identify herself with a cashier in a convenience store but rather with other workers in the fashion industry (McRobbie 1997).
The two workforces are highly dependent upon each other and the geographical merging point between them is the consumer service space. The workforces also act interchangeably in the role of consumers and producers. The waitresses who later visit the bank to apply for a loan serve the banker visiting the café as a customer. The ‘producers’ in these transactions are service providers, such as retailers, but there are also many situations where the producers have a more active role such as baristas producing a cup of high quality coffee. Both types of service workers are essential in service production and in the new cultural economy. The services provided and produced are, in some cases, highly dependent on direct face-to-face contact with other people and on the bodily performances of the workers, even if they technically are possible to distanciate.

Consumer service work is very much based on interactive performance, of which the body and the character of the performers is an essential part. This has been shown with regard to such diverse categories as merchant banking (McDowell 1997) and restaurant work (Crang 2004 [1994]). The bodily performance of service workers is not only important for restaurants and banking, that is, in relation to transaction configurations where the commodity is consumed there and then. Workers in other transaction configurations are a crucial element in the transaction situation. As has been discussed above, working in bookstores and with fashion retailing involves a range of different bodily, personal and material tasks and chores. The thereness is crucial since ‘retail workers are involved in the production of consumption: in creating the shop as a selling space and retail goods as desirable objects of consumption’ (Pettinger 2006: 48).

The concentration of these services workers in the city centre is partly related to business practices and work activities but, as Sassen argues, this has probably as much to do with ‘the needs and expectations of people likely to be employed in these new high-skill jobs’ and because of the attraction of ‘the amenities and life-styles that large urban centres can offer’ (Sassen 1996: 32). An important part of this urban centre lifestyle seems to be a certain form of consumption; certain consumer amenities provided through labour intensive consumers service spaces (ibid.). This can also be seen as an example of the social practices of imagination (Appadurai 1996), that the people’s perceptions of a certain type of urban lifestyle are crucial factors in city formations.

5.2 Spacing Consumer Services

In many ways cities are contradictory and complex places containing a diversity of processes and things, formed and reformed by a range of actors and institutions through different representations and practices on a variety scales. Different types of transaction spaces are a vivid element of, and an
important value in, city formation and urban development. Services and service spaces in different forms are emphasised as crucial for the global cultural economy. Services and service spaces are key elements in the geography of global city formation as has been pointed out by global city researchers such as Sassen (2006; 2001).

Service spaces generally refers to ‘significant concentrations of service industries and occupations’ (Bryson, Warf, and Daniels 2004: 180) but can be conceptualised on different scalar levels from the city and districts, to workplaces and consumption environments, and involve both transactions between businesses as well as between consumers and businesses. Service spaces are, by necessity, always locally situated but they are also globally connected, and it is important to acknowledge that service spaces are formed both by local and global processes.

The conceptualisation of consumer service spaces proposed in this thesis is primarily related to transactions involving individual consumers and to a micro-level, as outlined above and identified in Stockholm city centre. Consumer service spaces are a contextualisation of commodity transactions situations, and consequently everyday social spaces and pockets of local order. The formation, domination and appropriation, of consumer service spaces as spatial practices are manifested through strategic representations of space and tactical spaces of representations of space (cf. Fig. 4). It involves different actors and interests and is entangled in the formation process of the city, in urban politics and planning, and elements of property developments and investments.

**Conceptualising consumer service spaces**

Service spaces are important and valuable for urban development and everyday urban life of leisure and work, both for consumption and production activities. Their most obvious economic value lies in them as places for commodity exchange and circulation, and workplaces and sites for the production of services. They are also urban amenities that can attract both human capital and financial investments (cf. Ch. 2). Service spaces are also infrastructures in the transaction of commodities and, as such, elusive because of their role as mediators between production and consumption. They are, furthermore, used and appropriated by service consumers.

Service spaces could be interpreted and valued as light institutions. In an increasingly distanciated economy Amin and Thrift argue that light institutions might be crucial supporting structures for urban development ‘offering collective assets through organised activity (meeting places, common services, associations, state support) as well as ‘petty’ institutions of no formal constitution (such as informal contact networks)’ (2002: 72 ff.).

Service space are difficult to evaluate both in economic and cultural terms, especially since it can be argued that the formal institutions and their representations of space are contested by their usage as spaces of representa-
tion. To understand and value service spaces it is vital to appreciate their complex function and formation processes involving a diversity of actors and the spaces multiple functionalities.

Service spaces are produced by the actions of property developers and investors, consumed by tenants and clients and transformed by social processes that involve story telling; stories that are told about cities, towns, people, places, companies, shopping streets and shopping malls. All of these processes are fundamental to understanding the operation of service spaces. (Bryson, Warf, and Daniels 2004: 196)

If everyday consumption and a consumer perspective are emphasised and acknowledged, consumer service spaces can be conceptualised as a synthesis of service spaces and consumption spaces. Consumer service spaces thus refers to specific settings of transaction situation configurations. The concept of consumer service space stresses the consumer and producer, the cultural and economic project of performing transactions in specific socio-political and material formations.

Consumptionscapes (Olds 2001) and retailscapes (Bridge and Dowling 2001) are used to broaden the view on consumption related spaces and include the larger surrounding landscape. Olds’ (2001) usage of consumptionscape is related to Appadurai’s (1996) five different scapes, which are more related to imaginary worlds that people are entangled in rather than the physical surroundings. Retailscapes is more related to microgeographies but still a broader concept than just retail stores or environments and more related to notions of landscapes of consumption. Servicescape (Bitner 1992) and atmospherics (Kotler 1973) are used in marketing and business literature to incorporate and emphasise the importance of the physical surroundings, built environment and the place for the transaction.

Consumer service spaces are something in between these concepts, broader in geographical scope than servicescapes but more limited than the material and imaginary landscapes of consumption. The concept refers mainly to transaction configurations where the consumer has to move to the transaction situation (cf. the configurations on the left hand side in Fig. 5). In these configurations the service producer has to provide and maintain the pocket of local order for the transaction. Consumer service spaces are, however, more than just the situations where commodities are transferred from producer to consumer but also include mediating technology and infrastructure for the transaction as well as organisational and institutional arrangements necessary for upholding them as pockets of local order (cf. Fig. 3).

From this perspective, consumer service spaces are a form of material and social infrastructure for economic and cultural activities for the transaction situation. This conceptualisation of consumer service constantly questions both who the producer and consumer are and what the commodities actually
are. Consequently, consumer service spaces are not limited to only retail and places designated for consumption such as markets, streets, department stores or malls. They also refer to the spaces in between and in connection to them such as passages, skywalks, tunnels, underground connections, pathways, escalators inside building complexes and between buildings (cf. retail mechanisms (Chung et al. 2001)).

Consumer service spaces are simultaneously in a process of explosion and implosion. The outdoor market at Hötorget, for example, is dependent on storage facilities nearby. Cafés and restaurants occupy parts of the pavements with outdoor seating. Stores occasionally expand their businesses to the streets outside the shops. These aspects must also be incorporated in the conceptualisation of consumer service spaces. This is especially important for urban development, with regards to land-use, regulations and accessibility issues and thus for the formation of cities.

The proposed conceptualisation of consumer service spaces has, in practice, similarities with so called ‘premium networked spaces’ (Graham 2004; Graham and Marvin 2001). Practically, premium network spaces refers to physical spaces such as enclosed systems of skywalks and internal pathways in and between buildings, connecting corporate plazas and atria. They are also a part of the networked spaces as well as virtual spaces, Internet services and electronic highways. It is spaces splintering the cityscape because they are simultaneously situated in the city and withdrawn from urban everyday life for large parts of the citizens of the city and configured for particular groups in society, specifically for ‘middle class consumption and formal work’ (Graham and Marvin 2001: 257).

Consumer service spaces, viewed as part of consumption-led urban developments, might have dubious values (cf. Ch. 2 and Amin and Graham 1997), but their importance in the city formation processes should not be underestimated because of their lack as tools or instruments in urban planning and policy making. An alternative valuation can be visualised if consumers are viewed as active subjects and not just passive objects, and consumption is recognised as a meaningful project in which consumers tactically appropriate spaces.

Consumer service spaces as social spaces have the potential of being political spaces in a society more and more dominated by consumption. It has, for example, been shown that mall users appropriate the mall’s in various creative ways (Shields 1992a). Lefebvre argues that consumer movements are vital political forces, just as unions in the industrial society, and that spaces like these are not only economic with just an exchange value but also political and have a use value (Lefebvre 1979).

The material production of consumer service spaces is projects initiated and realised by different actors and institutions that strive to make them into proper places (cf. De Certeau 1984 and Fig. 4). That is, different dominating actors and institutions try to stabilise the consumer service space through
different representations of space, limiting and specifying, naming and picturing them in certain ways, i.e., place marketing, adding and attributing the spaces with value and meaning; ascribing the spaces with certain well-defined functions, and making them into meaningful places. However, this is not a straightforward production process because when the places are practically appropriated and used by people, tenants, clients or other more temporary users, they change.

Consumer service spaces are constantly changing in accordance with the usages and users, they are not stable or at least not for any long period. Consumer service spaces are thus places continuously transformed and contested (cf. Fig. 4). When consumers use these spaces in their everyday life, often in different ways and for different purposes than those intended by the producers (Bryson, Warf, and Daniels 2004: 188), they change them, or in other words they practice place. The representations of space are consequently questioned and challenged, which encourages the dominating producers to react, reproduce and stabilise the places.

At the least, consumer service spaces do facilitate a meeting place and an interaction space among different people, between producers and consumers, between work and leisure. Although, consumer service spaces are commercial and often privately owned, there seems also to be little ground for criticizing or evaluating these spaces only on their lack of diversity and authenticity.

The formation of consumer service spaces and cities are challenged and negotiated by what the public, local and national governments should provide, and what should be regulated by the market and provided by private interests. It directly relates to what is perceived to be public or private, something that during history constantly has been negotiated and what is incorporated in the sphere is not something pre-given or a priori. Private and collective forms of consumption are constantly being negotiated as well as what is considered to be private or public responsibilities (cf. discussion around Fig. 3).

Historically what has been viewed as private or public has shifted. Economic and labour issues as well as much of what is today considered as political issues, were not considered as of public concern in the antic period: conversations, debates and actions belonged to the public sphere, not material issues (Arendt 1998: 61, 81). It is highly questionable whether previous city formations displayed a more diversified and inclusive public, and the new spatial formations seem to be ‘a reasonably accurate portrayal of the social forces underlying it’ (Fainstein 1994: 232).

Furthermore, there seems to be an increased awareness of the importance of consumer service space as premium networked spaces from different interests and from different perspectives:
… users demanding intense local and global connectivity are starting, along with the internationalising infrastructure operators, real estate developers and urban development agencies that struggle to meet their every need, to pay considerable attention to how the whole of their networked urban infrastructures are configured, managed and developed. (Graham and Marvin 2001: 382)

Property developers and investors are increasingly aware of the importance of the configuring, managing and developing of consumer service spaces. They are also the makers of the built environment and crucial in its production. Property development is, furthermore, entangled with the planning of the city and the public sector. It is situated in local planning systems. The importance of place and spatial practices unites property development and urban planning together, and there is an interesting connection with the retail sector as well. These are crucial aspects for understanding how consumer service spaces are formed in and part of city formation.

Politics, place and property

The intersections between the public sector and property development, between governmental institutions and private entrepreneurs, are multiple. On the one hand, ‘the public sector often plays a direct role in the development of urban space’, while, on the other hand, the property development industry and its operations ‘help to shape the built environment, influenced by powerful property interests, commercial companies and investment institutions’ (MacLaran 2003a: 3). The public sector does not only intervene in the property sector on a regulatory basis but also acts as property developers in some projects especially regarding public infrastructure (Fainstein 1994), and as landowners or indirectly as investors.

Urban planning is a crucial part of the formation of cities and consumer service spaces. Planning is an activity done on many levels and by a range of different entities that form and reform the built environment:

The built environment is not organic, although it may often appear chaotically unplanned. It has been created and is continually being re-created, albeit by collectivities of social actors engaged in complex dances of successive and symbiotic interactions. These interactions continually weave together nature, materials, techniques, socioeconomic processes, and cultural forms to generate the urban fabric – a transitory expression in space that, like any work of art, derives meanings more from observers’ responses than from creators’ intentions. (Abu-Lughod 1999: 4f)

Planning can be seen as the framework for property development and is practiced both passively in the form of regulations with plans and permits as its main instruments, but also actively using different policies and incentives for promoting certain developments (MacLaran and McGuirk 2003). To delimit urban planning a bit, it can be seen as an institutional practice involv-
ing both private and public partners in shaping and influencing the city formation through different projects. Planning is, furthermore and consequently, an extension of the political sphere (Olsson 1983).

Urban politics are formed and articulated in different policies and strategic plans that are implemented through planning practices and projects. Property development projects can, in other words, be regarded as the material manifestation of planning – the spatial practices of plans and policies as representations of space. The production and stabilisation of places are common denominators for planning and representations of space and property development and spatial practices. Viewing planning in terms of projects is also related to the changing practices of planning which has become more and more focused on particular projects and places in contrast to focusing on a territory with changing relationships between public and private.

In many cities and nation-states ‘the market’ has been given an emphasised role in urban planning and policy making (Newman and Thornley 1996). The entrepreneurial thinking that is seeping through most of contemporary planning and policy-making can be linked to the neoliberalisation process and the increased importance of market relationships as the ultimate evaluator (as discussed in Ch. 2). According to Graham and Martin (2001) comprehensive ideals of planning have collapsed, which has resulted in the splintering of cities though there are forms of strategic spatial planning strategies concerned with re-imaging and re-presenting the city as well as creating priorities for different developments, infrastructural projects, land-use management and conservatory regulations (e.g., Healy 2004).

The theory and practice of planning, however, is a complex history although it is often described as evolutionary and in different distinguishable stages starting with rational planning and ending up with communicative planning. But planning notions and implementation from all stages still exist and ‘if anything has occurred, then it is a shift in scope: to widen whose and what kinds of interests to take into account in designing and implementing plans’ (Bylund 2006: 46).

The changing forms of intersections between the public and private sector and increased collaboration between private and public interest can be regarded as a characteristic of entrepreneurial cities and, as mentioned in chapter two, the ‘new urban politics’ (Hubbard and Hall 1998). Smith (2002) argues that gentrification has become the dominant and hegemonic global strategy for urban planning. This is certainly the case if gentrification is defined as ‘a process involving change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through reinvestment of fixed capital’ (Clark 2005: 258), and if gentrification is not limited to rehabilitated inner city residential areas.

Aesthetics, symbols and representations play a significant role in the symbolic urban economy and in new global urban politics. City marketing as
a means of attracting investments is perceived as increasingly important for urban development. To represent the city, giving it the right image and putting it on the global map has become a high priority for both public city officials and for private entrepreneurs and investors (cf. Ch 2). City and place marketing is essentially nothing new but it has increasingly become big business, especially since it often involves large construction projects with significant investments and money flow.

There is a range of different business strategies and economic incentives for place marketing (Kotler, Haider, and Rein 1993) and various ways of practicing place marketing (e.g., Ek and Hultman 2007). Place marketing is a project not only about producing new logos and symbols of the city but also setting up groups and boards, etc., since the representations need maintenance and work in order to be updated and communicate a relevant message both in form and content. As strategic representations of space, city marketing commodifies places in order to promote them and the city as attractive places for investment and the establishment of firms, interesting places for tourist and business visitors, as well as good places in which to live and work.

However, cities are not commodities they are unruly places. Plans and policies are often short lived and changed during their realisation and when the users start to appropriate places through tactical spatial practices and using them as spaces of representations. They are also very much political projects and are thus dependent on the political system and the politicians in office. The democratic system with elections at a few years’ intervals means that how the city should be represented can change quickly.

Haila (1997) stresses the importance of discussing the politics of becoming a global city and not only a global politic. This means that global urban politics is not restricted to global cities like London, New York and Tokyo. The same political trends and practices can be detected in other cities such as Sydney and Stockholm. The politics of becoming a global city is practiced differently with, for example, a different focus on attracting investment marketing and selling cities in relation to controlling and regulating urban property development (Haila 1999a, 1999b). It is, however, closely linked to entrepreneurial forms of planning, international property developers and global investors and real estate capital.

Since the property industry is a significant part and increasingly active partner in city formation and in urban planning, it is important to recognise ‘the builders of the city’ (Haila 1997), i.e., property developers, contractors and financiers, etc. To understand how consumer services spaces forms and is formed by the city it is also important to recognise the buildings themselves, especially since it can be argued that architecture and the built environment are ‘the most important material and visual realm in which this competition takes place’ (King 1996: 100). In the complex city formation
processes the building is the physical manifestation, ‘the tip of an iceberg’ (Guy and Henneberry 2002a: 5).

Property development projects are, as other commodity transactions, constructed around a commodity – a building or other type of infrastructure, consumers – the users of the building, and producers – the property development industry.

The property development industry is like any other industry dependent on profit generation and market mechanisms but it has some unique characteristics ‘in the way it combines attributes usually belonging to quite dissimilar industries’ (Fainstein 1994: 221). It has similarities with the manufacturing sector as it produces tangible objects such as buildings, which, however, are somewhat special since they are both capital investments and commodities. More importantly though buildings are more or less immovable which gives the property industry characteristics similar to the entertainment industry in terms of the distinctiveness of the product and the way buildings are put together and the ad hoc way of setting up temporary production sites.

Property developments do not only have local importance but a wider global significance through the entanglement in international networks and flows. It is a sector that is fundamentally important in the formation of cities and in the global cultural economy, because of the industry’s direct involvement in producing the material of the city, from townhouses and apartment blocks, to office towers and shopping malls, to groundscapers and skyscrapers. It is also important because the property development industry is ‘one sector that is being radically transformed by the globalization of finance and the restructuring of FDI’ (Olds 2001: 23).

The development of a global real estate industry can be viewed partly as a result of increased institutional investments (banks, insurance companies and pension funds, etc.) in commercial properties and decreasing financial involvement of tenants: ‘the users of buildings have increasingly preferred to release their capital tied up in fixed investments (land and buildings) to support and expand their current activities’ (Bryson, Warf, and Daniels 2004: 183).

Since the 1980s there has been an increase in the number of international developers and contractors, but more importantly internationalisation processes of property investment portfolios, which seems to be a driving force in the globalisation of property markets (De Magalhaes 2002). The real estate sector can be viewed as a partially globalised sector increasingly dependent on global flows of capital, expertise and image (Olds 2001), while at the same time strongly connected to and embedded in local firms and institutional practices on which global financiers and developers depend (Logan 1993).

Developers tend to operate on a local scale and are rather ‘hollow corporations’ reliant on subcontractors, just-in-time production and temporary and flexible workers (Fainstein 1994). Property development is highly dependent
upon and driven by economic cycles of boom and slump but actor’s strategies and relationships are increasingly significant (Guy and Henneberry 2002b), especially since the sector has become more demand and consumer oriented (Harris 2002).

There are a number of archetypical interests in the property development industry: landowners, developers, investors, tenants, financiers, construction companies as well as different types of capital involved in the property market (MacLaran 2003b). The interests often overlap and one actor can have multiple roles: for example, development agencies can be constituted by property development companies, financial institutions, construction firms, public sector agencies, large landowners or business concerns; and there is a complex weave of financial sources and types (Ratcliffe, Stubbs, and Shephard 2004).

Furthermore, the different actors have different rationales and interests in the development: architects shaping and creating the building, developers renewing the urban environment, occupiers seeking appropriate space, investors striving for growth in capital and avoiding risks, and real estate agents constructing markets (Guy 2002). Globalisation and horizontal integration within the real estate industry have resulted in ‘blurring the traditional distinctions between developers and financiers’ (Logan 1993: 45).

The role of the architects is important especially in the symbolic economy where the symbolic value of the building is highly important (Zukin 1991). For the occupants it is important that the building represents the appropriate image and for the investors the right image enhances the exchange value of the building. There are, consequently, many intersections between property development and consumption that will be explored in the following concrete examples from Stockholm city centre. The increased importance of the real estate sector and the emphasis of the symbolic aspect of the city that are both strongly connected to consumption, and Haila argues that:

The claims of Lefebvre and Baudrillard are connected, not only in arguing for a decrease in importance of the productive and industrial sectors, but also in making an implicit connection between real estate sectors and consumption: real estate capital has found an unexploited area of consumption, where it increases not only its own profit but also consumption through development of places of consumption. (Haila 1997: 55)

5.3 Refashioning City Properties

To understand how consumer service spaces are formed in and part of city formation it is important to acknowledge all the different entities and processes involved, both spatial practices and representations. Directly involved in the material production and construction of consumer service spaces are
local governmental institutions and construction companies as well as global capital and actors from different sectors. It is obvious that the property and real estate sector is involved in the construction of buildings and sites for consumption such as malls, supermarkets, stores and boutiques. Retail firms and other consumer service providers have, in many ways, been indirectly involved in different parts of the property development process, for example, through lobbying for a better local business environment. The retail sector has, however, mainly entered the real estate sector as a tenant – as a consumer, not as a producer or investor but there are indications that the relationships are changing.

There are signs that these simple relationships are changing and that other intersections between the real estate sector and retail sector are merging through investments and capital flows. Simultaneously as the respective sectors are changing within, they are also changing with the development of the global cultural economy and in response to changing consumption practices and alternative transaction configurations. Local governmental institutions still have an important role in the formation of consumer service space through policymaking and promotion, as well as through planning and regulation.

A development project of special interest in this context that highlights the multiple and changing intersections between property development and consumption is the rebuilding of what might become known as the H&M building, which will contain the company’s global headquarters and a flagship store. The example also shows the importance of public planning, the complicated development process and the diversity of actors involved in producing spaces for consumer services, but also the capital and property linkages between the two sectors.

The continuing redevelopment of Hötorghusen further highlights the changing actor and institutional relationships as well as provides a historical contextualisation. They complement the analysis of the contemporary consumer service spaces and the changing spatial formations observed in and around Hötorghusen, with historical and archival material.

Hötorgshusen’s historical trajectories
As mentioned above, Hötorghusen was a vital part of the grand transformation of Stockholm city and the lower parts of Norrmalm during the 20th century (see Fig. 18). The grand transformation physically manifested the transition from the industrial to the post-industrial period and has been thoroughly scrutinised (e.g., Gullberg 2001; Hall 2002; Eriksson 2004; Sidenbladh 1985). The grand transformation was not a direct consequence of de-industrialisation or of any war demolition but a rational planned project of modernisation and sanitation. The project was initiated by the local government in order to create a new attractive environment suitable for a modern and internationally competitive city (Clark and Gullberg 1997: 257).
The three overarching objectives were to facilitate an appropriate physical infrastructure, to produce a favourable milieu for retailing, financial businesses and other economic actors as well as for governmental institutions, and to create a generally representative and attractive cultural as well as commercial environment (Gullberg 2001: 245f). The project has been described as one of the most extensive redevelopment and regulation projects of any European capital during the 20th century (Hall 2002: 127).

The transformation has consequently been heavily debated and the criticism turned from being mainly positive up until 1965 then culminated in a negative critique in 1968-1970 (Eriksson 2004: 242). Whether or not the project achieved its aims is debatable but today the area is designated as of national interest because of its architectural and cultural values.

A conclusion that can be drawn is nevertheless that the transformation project did produce ‘a complex web of owner relationships and supply strategies, shopping patterns and yield flows, homeliness and consumption cultures, national pride and intensive entertainment’ (Gullberg 2001: 243 translation). This is particularly evident when tracing ownership relationships, detailed plans and building permits in The City of Stockholm’s City Planning Administration Archive and The Swedish Land Regulation Authority’s property registers.
The design scheme for Hötorgscity with five high-rise buildings adjacent to a low-rise complex, was first launched after the Second World War, with the general plan of Stockholm 1946 and a previous principal decision from 1945 (Gullberg 2001: 290), but it was a long and troublesome process with many conflicts towards realisation. The more concrete planning of the area did not start until the beginning of the 1950s, with the architectural formation of Hötorgshusen (Helldén 1962: 298), while the construction took place during the latter part of the decade. The official opening of Hötorgscity occurred in April 1959 with the completion of the first stage of the pedestrian street mall Sergelgatan (see Fig. 14) adjacent to the buildings, but the last building was not completed until 1966 (Sidenbladh 1985).

The owner relationships were a crucial part of the whole transformation process. The local government began the project by acquiring land-ownership though extensive land-expropriation, and is still the largest land-owner in the area. The land-ownership was supposed to guarantee economic return to the municipality through leasehold-rights and partly finance the redevelopment scheme, and the larger transformation of the city centre. The leasehold rights for the five high-rise buildings were offered already in the 1940s but interest from developers was low because of the arrangement with leasehold-rights and the local government thus had to develop the first high-rise building by itself (Eriksson 1976: 28).

Although the five buildings are physically very similar, each building had its own renowned architect and its own developer (see Fig. 18). The architect of the first building, counting from the north and the Consort Hall, was David Halldén and the developer was the local government, and Stockholm’s savings-bank. While the other buildings have had different leaseholders during the years this building remained in municipal ownership until the end of 2003 when an exchange affair with the state-owned real estate company Vasakronan AB was made. The local government required a high-rise building in the southern parts of the inner city, meant for developing student housing and an inner city mall. Vasakronan AB had already acquired the second, third and fourth buildings in 2001.

The construction of the second building, designed by Anders Tengbom and developed by Fastighets AB Tornet (in association with Stockholm savings-bank), started in 1956 and was completed in 1960 (Tengbom 1962: 302). Buildings number three and four, designed by Sven Mareklues and Lars-Erik Lallerstedt respectively, are legally the same property. It was developed by a private company named Fastighets AB Hötorget formed by Sven Tyrén, John Mattson and Bror Hultström for the purpose of taking care of the leasehold rights of this property (Markelius 1962: 303). Much turbulence with implications extending far beyond Hötorgcity has surrounded the third and fourth building.

The financial and property boom that culminated during the late 1980s and abruptly burst in the beginning of the 1990s had significant impact on
Hötorgshusen. In the centre stood the property company BGB which held the leasehold-rights for the third and fourth buildings during that time. The company was introduced at the stock exchange, with the two buildings as their only asset, but problems started for the company partly due to another acquisition the company made, and in 1992 it filed for bankruptcy (Fastighetsvärlden 2001). The life-insurance company Förenade Liv, that already owned the second building, acquired the leasehold rights before selling the leasehold rights to Vasakronan AB in 2001.

The fifth building that faces Sergels torg is somewhat of an outsider (see Fig. 18). It is physically separated from the others by the elevated street Mäster Samuelsgatan, which gave the architects Sven Backström and Leif Reinius more creative freedom (Backström and Reinius 1962: 308), but also regarding today’s ownership. The building block was developed by the private company AB Samuelsson & Bonnier and was completed in 1961. The development project had a slow start and the actual initiation was delayed until 1959 due to the hesitation of private developers to engage in the project only as leaseholders, which halted the large development project a bit. During the years the leaseholders of this building have varied and been held by large as well as smaller private companies, but since 1995 the pension-fund company AMF has the leasehold rights (it also has the leasehold rights for the inner city mall Gallerian).

Since the grand transformations of the city there have not been any large-scale development projects in this part of the city. But there are constantly smaller redevelopment projects in action. Of the different redevelopment projects in the inner city that were set in motion during 1980s none directly involved any refurbishment of Hötorgshusen until the 1990s.

In the 1990s the local government unexpectedly suggested a radical redevelopment scheme of Sergels torg (see Fig. 11), which brought up the city-centre to the top of the local political agenda (Franzén 2002). Whilst any larger redevelopment plans were abandoned, small-scale transformations have occurred around the square both in the northwest and southeast corner. In the northwest corner the entrance to the subway-station and to the department store Åhléns were refurbished and in the southeast the underground passage from the square to the inner-city shopping mall Gallerian and the basement of the department store NK were also refurbished. There have been smaller changes in and around Hötorgscity as well.

In the middle of the 1990s the low-rise complex to the west of the high-rise buildings were redeveloped into a multiplex cinema which increased the height of the building, and there were proposals to cover the pedestrian mall with glass roofing which were never realised (Hall 2002). There have been minor physical changes over the years both on the inside and outside of the five buildings, as observed above (see Fig. 15-17). The five high-rise buildings were joined together partly at the entrances to the office complexes and they partly contained service and retail facilities for both the tenants and
workers in the buildings as well as for public consumers, as discussed. These changes required building-permits, and on occasion revisions of regulation plans, such as changes of the facades and entrances. It’s notable that even smaller changes such as external lighting and billboards require a building-permit in accordance with the Swedish planning and building legislation. The most observable spatial changes took place on lower levels.

A redevelopment scheme for Hötorgshusen was launched in the late 1990s that required changes in the detailed plan of the area, a detailed plan that now covers all five buildings. The revision of the detailed plan included a change of public accessibility to the passages between buildings two and three (Luternsgången) as well as between buildings three and four (Postgången) and to the roof terraces. The plan also includes the possibility to cover all three passages (including the passage between building one and two Hötorgsgången) with glass roofing (see Fig. 15-17). Today two of the passages have, as mentioned, been covered with glass roofing and an internal path from Mäster Samuelsgatan to the subway entrance at Hötorgsgången has been created. The third passage at Hötorgsgången has not yet been built but a building-permit was granted for such a redevelopment in February 2003 and a building-notice sent to the city planning administration in March 2005.

An interesting characteristic and a significant part of the original vision of the Hötorgscity was the system of roof terraces (see Fig. 14). The system was also connected by bridges to the neighbouring low-rise building complexes with the underground food market and the cinema complex. This was supposed to be an oasis for relaxation for the public, furnished with park benches and greenery, outdoors restaurants covered with tent roofs and sandboxes for the children. In the city plan from the late 1970s it was designated as a park area with a boundary of 150x90 meters, and a bridge connection to the bank buildings in the east was proposed but never realised (Sidenbladh 1985).

The usage of the terraces was less frequent than anticipated mainly because of their physical location two stories up from street level and they became a retreat for shady activities, and were therefore closed off to the public in 1987 (Gullberg 2001: 240, 250). There were also management problems (Sidenbladh 1985). This is an obvious example of how the creative tactics of the users appropriation of space conflicts with the strategic plans of the producers, i.e., how spaces of representations oppose representations of space.

According to the property register, the leaseholders have become fewer over time. The public sector’s involvement has not diminished but altered its form – from direct involvement to indirect via a state-owned company and in the process a scalar shift can be discerned from the local municipality to the state. The development also illustrates the increased involvement of actors other than traditional developing and property companies, such as pension-
funds and insurance companies, in the property market. The initial development of the buildings with famous architects indicates that the symbolic value of buildings is not a new phenomenon. These are all small changes but taken together they have a significant impact on the area.

**Reforming city centre properties**

The planning of Stockholm city centre, as has been implied, has changed from direct and active involvement in the production (and destruction) of the building environment to more indirect and passive interventions. During the grand transformation the city was directly involved in the city building process, not only as a landowner but also as an initiator and developer. The local government is still an important landowner in the city and many buildings are on leasehold rights, for example, Hötorghusen.

The Swedish planning system is a decentralised system and the municipalities have a monopoly on land-use planning. The main planning instruments are the comprehensive plan, detailed plan and building permits. It is mandatory to have a comprehensive plan for the whole municipality. The comprehensive plan is not legally binding and is often very general and descriptive with vague statements and policies for planning. The detailed plan is legally binding and compulsory for any development projects in built up areas (cf. Newman and Thornley 1996 for an overview of the Swedish planning system in English).

The political policies as well as planning practices in Sweden have, like in most countries, changed and turned away from the modernist planning ideal. The Swedish local government and planning has generally changed from a system of local welfare regimes to fragmented partnerships (Elander and Strömberg 2001).

An example of a public-private partnership in Stockholm city centre is the organisation ‘City i samverkan’ (City in Collaboration, CIS). It is an organisation formed by a diverse set of actors with close interests in the city area such as commercial retailers, property companies, cultural organisations, the local government and departments as well as state authorities. The vision is, according to their webpage, to promote and strengthen the city as a site for commerce, culture and entertainment through different projects in relation to the physical environment, safety, events and commercial activities.

In the process of making Stockholm city into the most attractive city in northern Europe, representations of it as a unitary place are viewed as important. The CIS is a collaborative partner in the publication of a new free consumer magazine ICity Magazine, available in stores, cafés and restaurants. The magazine is rather ambitious, oriented towards fashion and lifestyle with reviews and advice but it also contains some articles and columns. It is a shopping-guide for those who are in the city during the day to shop, work, eat, and workout.
The overarching policy for Stockholm, expressed in the comprehensive plan from 1999, is to build the city ‘inwards’, that is to expand the inner city and use infill sites for new developments (SBK 1999). Much of the attention has been on the edges of the inner city. Many of the focus sites for new development projects are located at the waterfront and are former small-scale industrial areas. Almost all the projects involve residential housing and offices as well as commercial spaces. The spatial representations of these developments, the plans, policy documents and particularly architectural drawings, contain pictures of people drinking coffee in cafés and walking around in the streets and squares carrying shopping bags. Public life and consumption are evidently seen as a vital part in creating an urban atmosphere and making the city attractive.

In plans and policy documents there is an increased emphasis on positioning the city in an international context and on creating a liveable inner city. The plans and policies related to the city centre focus on making the city centre an attractive place to work, live and visit – a place both for consumption and production, labour and leisure.

A highly important change that has occurred gradually since the 1970s is the development of residential buildings in and around commercial and office complexes in the city centre. In the city plan from 1977 the city centre was designated for commercial and buildings as a central business district, and there was not a single residential building within the area (SBK 1978). The latest comprehensive plan for Stockholm from 1999, in development programs and proposals from the 1990s and onwards, the development of residential buildings is stressed as highly important in order to create a more liveable and attractive environment with 24 hour-a-day activities. Housing and better ground floors with shops, restaurants and cafés are an essential part in this process.

Mixed functions with housing, offices and commercial spaces in the same neighbourhood is a citywide policy, which includes incorporating residential developments in the city centre to breakdown the monotonous social and physical landscape. The policy is accepted across the political spectrum and the redevelopment of offices to housing is also seen as a way of promoting social integration (Styregård 2006). Some of the more spectacular or innovative redevelopment projects include townhouses with small gardens on the roof of the commercial building housing the mall SOUK (Lidbom 2005) (see Fig. 13) and condominiums attached to a parking garage with a common grass lawn on the roof. There are also plans for residential development in the low-rise building that was part of the system of recreational terraces adjacent to Hötogshusen.

The production of ‘luxury residential spaces, often linked to office developments, the CBD, and leisure/tourism /…/are clear functional and symbolic representations of the emergence of the globalising city’ (Olds 2001: 30), and a reflection of urban gentrification as a global strategy (Smith 2002).
Residential developments, however, are different from office development, which is different from retail developments. For property development in general what happens in direct proximity to the property is essential since its success depends on its relative location; ‘unsuitable’ neighbouring developments with negative externalities can have significant impact on the profitability of the real estate (MacLaran and McGuirk 2003: 86).

The developments with more residents in the city centre will probably have some impact on other development projects in the area and implications for the development of the city centre. The city centre might also have to cater to new types of services for these residents such as primary schools, day-care centres, grocery stores and other local and public services associated with residential neighbourhoods that the city centre currently lacks.

The development of residential housing poses new challenges for the development of the city centre. The success of mixed developments such as this is highly dependent on functional synchronisation of such property sectors as retail, office and residential (Beauregard 2005). It is often assumed that retail developments simply follow residential developments but Beauregard’s study of the downtown residential developments in New York suggests otherwise. The downtown retailers do not primarily cater to neighbourhood services but rather the daytime population of the central business district, and there is little incentive to switch towards more residentially oriented services because of the relatively small market, and lack of appropriate space.

Stockholm’s mixed function policy has resulted in almost a significant increase of residents (see Tab. 1) and new residential developments mainly in the form of luxury condominiums. The development of what might become the so-called H&M-building is an illustrative example of the new policies, the challenges of property development in the city centre as well as the changing relationship among actors involved in the formation of the city and consumer service spaces.

In the autumn of 2005 a careful demolition of the parking garage at the intersection of Drottninggatan and Mäster Samuelsgatan begun (see Fig. 19-20). The parking garage, which was a part of the grand transformation, was the first above ground garage in the city centre and stood finished in 1963 (Sidenbladh 1985). As it is located in one of the busiest retail intersections in the city the demolition had to be careful not to disturb the shoppers and retail activities in the area and in the lower floors of the parking garage.

The demolition was the initiation of a property redevelopment project involving two parts. The first part was the rebuilding of the parking garage into an integrated retail and office building. The second part of the project involves the development of residential housing on top of the low-rise building from the grand transformation, which is a direct result of the policy to mix different functions within the city centre.
According to the architects the redeveloped building will provide a new attractive passage through the block with a new rational retail layout and facades. An analysis of the redevelopment project shows the diversity of actors.
and institutions involved but also the blurring of roles and market relationships. The initiative for the redevelopment came from the former leaseholder and construction company JM AB in 2000, not from an independent developer (not unusual in a Swedish context with large and powerful construction companies with historically strong ties to property development and urban planning).

The project required a new detailed plan, a process that took almost five years. Although most of both the private and public planning consultation partners were positive to the land-use change there were grievances about the new architectural design and its relationship with and effect on the pre-existing architectural and cultural values of the place, which partly explains the long process. The previous experience from the grand transformation has probably also been of great significance since it resulted in a complex relational web of leaseholds and property rights and out of date detailed plans, and the fact that the property was partly designated as of national interest.

During the planning procedures, Ramsbury AB acquired the leasehold rights for the building and took on the role of financier and investor while local government has remained the landowner. Ramsbury AB is a private investment company owned by Mr. Persson, chairman of H&M. The reconstruction of the parking garage will be done by NCC AB and the contract is worth more than half of the amount for which the leasehold rights were acquired. In 2002 when Ramsbury AB acquired the property Mr. Persson declared that the acquisition had no direct relationship to H&M’s enterprises, but that there were long term strategies for its development (Leijonhufvud 2002). But, in 2005 it was announced that the company will relocate their global headquarters to the building since the office space will be more suitable and adaptable than their current facilities in Saléhuset, an office complex a few blocks away (Leijonhufvud 2005).

H&M has a significant presence in Stockholm city centre with over a half dozen stores at prime retail locations less than a 10 minute walk from each other and the global corporate headquarter. On the street corner of Mäster Samuelsgatan and Drottninggatan there are currently three large stores with several floors, two of which cut through the block and have several entrances. On the corner of Hamngatan and Regergringsgatan there is a large flagship store with three floors and across the street a concept store at the entrance of the inner city mall Gallerian. At the other end of the mall there is another store with two floors.

Historically Hötorgscity, a name that was promoted by the founder of H&M, played an important part in the development of the company, especially the establishment of a two story fashion store in the first Hötorgshuset in 1959 (Pettersson 2001). The establishment was a bold move and the beginning of a successful location strategy with a cluster of stores in close proximity, which has since been used when the company expanded abroad. Through Ramsbury AB the indirect presence has been even further strength-
ened with the acquisition of the Åhléns-building, one of the largest department stores in Sweden, on the opposite corner including the land-ownership, alongside the property across from that (Andersson 2006a).

The H&M-building and the activities of Ramsbury AB indicate new developments and another connection between the retail sector and real estate other than as landlord-tenant: over accumulated capital from the retail sector is invested in real estate. The boundaries between fashion retail firms, textile and garment production, and the design industry are already blurred, as discussed above, and this development with increased importance of the places of consumption could further extend this to property development.

The example also illustrates the presence of global actors and of actors that probably have a slightly different rationality for investment in the built environment than the traditional real-estate sector. The property development sector also has another characteristic resembling the retail and service sector, or at least parts of the retail sector, and that is the importance of location, but more importantly of place. Furthermore, the property market and city building projects are of potential interest to global retailers.

Properties are highly immobile commodities and constitutive of places. As argued above, the investment in retail and shopping spaces is lucrative and important in the practices of globalising urban politics (e.g., Haila 1997). Shopping malls and other forms of indoor shopping environments are very attractive for property developers and investors, as well as for tenants and for city planners. In Stockholm the number of indoor shopping environments is continuously expanding, both in the inner city and at the edge of the city. A significant number of the larger redevelopment projects, proposed or already started, have some kind of mall-like environment associated with it. New malls are being planned or old ones are being refurbished and expanded. Consequently, a noteworthy amount of resources are invested in these kinds of shopping environments by traditional and national property investors and by international corporations (e.g., Nilsson 2007).

In May 2007 the local government of Stockholm sold Centrunkompaniet, with ten malls, to the British real estate company Boultbee (Sundström 2007). Sturegallerian was bought by Tamweelview European Holding, which is owned by Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), the state-owned investment company of the United Arab Emirates (Andersson 2006b). In all examples the buildings have mixed functions with both office and retail space, and in many cases also residential housing.

The largest inner city shopping mall, Gallerian, is another example of how consumption places are used as strategic long-term investments. Gallerian was refurbished in the early 2000s in large part through its investment owner AMF Pension. The ambitions were to create an attractive and inviting bright and airy indoor city street throughout the block (Wester and Elsner 2005). It is a rather classic mall with an anchor store and day spa at the far end in order to generate an even flow of consumers along the mall. To fur-
ther attract consumers the mall stages different kinds of events such as fashion shows. In the middle of the mall there is a pedestrian strip with permanent stalls for accessories and delicatessens, as well as eateries and coffee shops (see Fig. 8). Seating places are otherwise limited and consumers often occupy stairs as places to hang out and relax. They appropriate the mall through different spatial practices and ways of representing themselves.

5.4 Challenging Prospects

The examples used in this chapter (and the previous one) are not only relevant or specific to Stockholm. There are significant similarities between what is going on in Stockholm with developments in other cities, for example New York and Sydney. However there are differences: spatial practices and representations of space are embedded in specific socio-political contexts and local historical trajectories. It does, however, put the development in Stockholm in an international perspective and it might be argued that Stockholm is a globalising city or at least practicing global urban politics.

In this chapter, transactions have been situated in time and space by using a place and historical trajectories of different consumer transaction configurations as the point of origin. By conceptualising consumer service spaces as pockets of local order the importance of the built environment and technological infrastructure surrounding the transactions have been stressed, as well as the labour aspects of the transactions. This has been illustrated through observations of different consumer service spaces complemented with historical material and by analysing two property projects and reviewing contemporary urban planning and policy-making in Stockholm city centre.

The significance of consumer service spaces in the city centre is a result of social and political and material and historical processes. As has been shown in Australian cases (Mullins et al. 1999) the concentration of consumption spaces in central city areas are a result of local governmental redevelopment projects and migration patterns, i.e., middle class and elites moving in to the city centre, in combination with the historical and geographical context. The city centre often has a good foundation and earlier infrastructure such as heritage buildings, museums, theatres market squares, etc., and the different spaces have positive effects on each other.

This chapter has stressed that the public sector still is, on multiple scalar levels, important in the formation of Stockholm city centre and of consumer service space through landownership and leasehold rights as well as through exercising regulatory and legislative functions. The public sector is also articulated through re-imaginations of the city in public-private collaborations and policy implementation through planning regulation.
Governmental interventions in the city have changed and been repositioned but have not disappeared. The repositioning has been done through more or less conscious negotiations with different public and private, local and global interests. In contrast to the dominating discourse of state withdrawal, the public sector is significantly involved in the formation of the city centre. It has even, to some extent, increased its power-base, though in a different form and on different scalar levels. This can be seen as an example of how the state undergoes qualitative changes characterised by restructuring and (re-) regulation in an era of neoliberalism. That further strengthens the argument that neoliberalisation is a complex process and not just a hollowing-out of the state (Peck and Tickell 2002, 2003).

The conditions for planning are changing, while at the same time new plans in response to the challenges are produced, which will create different challenges when they are implemented. Different projects in the city are competing and conflicting as well as merging and consolidating with each other, which often results in paradoxical situations.

An interesting paradox is, for example, that while there is an emphasis on the importance of a mixture of functions in new urban developments, there are homogenisation tendencies. A traditional and often romanticised city ideal, usually represented by lively streets with storefronts and cafés, is seen as crucial for urban growth, economic development and social integration. Simultaneously significant investments are made in indoor shopping environments that often are oriented inwards with stores turning away from the street and which often have the similar retail chains.

Another challenge and potential conflict is between the new residents in the city centre with perhaps rather different demands for services and retailing than what is being offered at the moment. The consumption in the inner city centre is primarily oriented towards leisure and speciality shopping and not towards daily purchases of groceries and other mundane purchasing projects. If diversity is a political goal, intervention from the public sector as economic planning in the form of incentives for other services might be needed as Fainstein (1994) argued, although this might be politically impossible in an increasing market oriented type of planning.

The analysis of the two property development projects has shown multiple intersections between the consumption and real-estate sector with strong relationships to global city formation processes and urban politics. Consumer service spaces have become important investments for various national and global actors from a range of different sectors. This has resulted in new interest in taking part in the formation of cities since consumer service spaces are a vital part of cities.

The examples have shown that it is not only as tenants that retailers and other consumer service spaces intersect with the real estate sector, but also that transnational retail corporations seem to have become investors and financiers of property developments as well. In relation to this, the impor-
tance of place has been cautiously stressed as a common feature between retail and real estate sector and redevelopment projects in the city centre.

The spatial reconfigurations and property development projects are not only dependent upon the real estate-sector, retail and consumer service firms or on urban politics and planning, but also on the demand for and users of these spaces. Recognising that the users’ tactical creation, through spaces of representation, is a fundamental part of the formation of consumer service space and city formation is another practical and theoretical challenge for city planning and for research.

Consumer service spaces, in Lefebvre’s (1991 [1974]) terms, are also directly lived spaces that cannot be fully appreciated by perception or conception alone: the spatial formations cannot be reduced to dominant representations of space or spatial practices since they simultaneously are spaces of representations, spaces of resistance and of everyday life. This will be further developed in the following concluding discussions.
6. Conclusions

So far, this book has been concerned with different aspects of how consumption and urban everyday life in cities are interrelated, formed and reformed by each other. The focus within this broad theme has been on commodity transaction situations as an analytical approach to understanding these interdependent relationships. The methodology has been to conceptualise commodity transactions in order to understand how these situations are geographically configured and constrained, and how consumer service spaces are formed in relation to the city. The more specific objective of this thesis has thus been to analyse how commodity transactions situations are configured and how consumer service spaces are formed. The objective has been addressed through three different but interrelated research questions.

In this chapter, the focus will be on bringing together the findings of the previous chapters and to clearly connect them to the questions asked in the beginning. The first question addressed is how transactions can be geographically situated and conceptualised from a consumer perspective. This has been the overarching conceptual and methodological question that has guided the analysis. It also generated the following two more practical questions: how different situations of commodity transactions are configured and constrained in time and space, and how consumer service spaces for commodity transactions are formed in and part of city formation.

**Time-spatial conceptualisation of transactions**

In this thesis transaction spaces have been broadly conceptualised as spaces where something is transferred from someone to somebody else. A transaction space can be configured in multiple ways and be constituted by several different entities, places and flows, but it is always situated in time and space.

The focus in the conceptualisation and analysis of transaction spaces in this research project has been on material, economic and social situatedness of commodity transactions. It has been shown that geography and history matters in absolute, relative as well as relational terms, as argued by Harvey (2006; Harvey 2006 [1982]), for how commodity transaction situations are configured and further that transactions matter in formation of consumer service space formation as well as city formation.

The argument that commodity transaction situations are constituted by different entities and can be configured in different ways in time-space does
not mean that there are not also some invariant elements in a transaction situation. A consumer, a commodity (good, service, experience), and a producer (manufacturer, provider, stager) are always indispensable for any transaction. It is necessary that somebody initiates the transaction, as well as values and appreciate the transfer and also that someone offers a value that is transferable. In order to realise a transaction these three entities have to be synchronised and coordinated in time and space as has been stressed through the time-geographical perspective.

The time-geographical perspective employed in this thesis emphasises the situatedness of projects. A focus on thereness and material coexistence in time and space has been helpful in describing constraints and framing possible transaction configurations. This study has theoretically identified four archetypal transaction configurations if the time-spatial mobility of consumers and commodities are taken into account and the spatial division of labour between consumer and producer is considered.

Chapter four showed seemingly contradictory tendencies of how commodity transaction situations are configured. There is, on the one hand, an increased time-spatial flexibility of possible transaction configurations and, on the other, an increased strategic importance of particular places and consumer service spaces. The materiality of the transaction is significant for how commodity transactions are configured even if the commodity is an intangible service or a memorable experience. The effort put into performing transactions and the division of labour is also vital in how different transactions are configured and in the formation of consumer service spaces.

In chapter five formations of consumer service spaces, conceptualised as a type of transaction configuration, in Stockholm city centre was analysed. By stressing the term service in consumer service spaces the labour parts in performing transactions are emphasised. It includes work by the consumer who has to move to the transaction situation, in different ways engage in the transaction, and often transport the commodity from the situation. The service producer provides the commodity but also in different ways create and add value to the commodity and the transaction. While service producers and consumer activities are essential entities and parts, they are not sufficient to understand the formation of consumer service spaces.

This thesis argues that consumer service spaces can be conceptualised as pockets of local order that need to be maintained and regulated in order for a transaction to take place (Hägerstrand 1985a; Lenntorp 1998). It is therefore important to also include supporting technology and infrastructure as well as the material and symbolic dimensions of the built environment in the analysis of consumer service spaces, and transaction configurations more generally.

Despite the increased possible flexibility of transactions through technological development and organisational changes, transactions are still place-bound. That specific transaction spaces, such as consumer service spaces in
city centres are important and continuously produced and reproduced are not only due to material constraints or of necessity for proximity. Transaction spaces are also economically and socially important.

Chapter five showed that a range of different entities, projects and processes form (and are formed by) consumer service spaces for commodity transactions. The spaces are continuously formed and reformed between producer strategies, consumer tactics and material practices. This threefold typology is derived from Lefebvre’s (1991 [1974]) notion of the social production of spaces combined with de Certeau’s (1984) emphasis of tactics and strategies.

Transaction spaces are crucial for the circulation and accumulation of capital, global politics and local planning (i.e., domination of space and representations of space), as well as for practiced place, everyday life and consumer tactics (i.e., appropriation of space and spaces of representation). It is here that Lefebvre’s (1991 [1974]) analytical separation between representations of space, spaces of representation and spatial practices is particularly useful. Thinking of space in three moments helps to depict not only discourses of space and material spatial practices but also the lived space of everyday life. The notion of spaces of representation and appropriation of space is critical for understanding city formations and the diversity of projects that are involved in the formation of consumer service spaces and places.

During the explorative journey of this research project three main concluding discussions have been identified; (1) the material element of transactions as spatial practices and the historical embeddedness of transaction configurations with both continuities and changes; (2) the economic dimension of transactions and the entanglement of transactions spaces in the global cultural economy as well as in local city formation; (3) the social embeddedness of transaction situations and its relationship to the tactical creation of places as well as the distanciation and integration of different activities of everyday life. The rest of this chapter will focus on these three main discussions.

6.1 Historical and Material Practices

How the rhythms of everyday life and the movements of consumers and commodities are configured is important in the formation of cities. The places for consumption and flow of commodities are a crucial part of urban everyday life. Consumption and transactions of commodities have always been important for urban life but the way transactions take part in these processes has transformed over time. How and what is consumed, where and when consumption takes place, as well as the attitudes towards consumption has changed.
The role ascribed to consumption at a societal level is fundamentally different in current urban consumer society (Bauman 2007). This becomes evident through dominant strategic representations of space, through users’ tactical appropriation of space, and in the formation of material places. The spatial formations of different commodity transaction configurations and consumer service spaces are historically dependent and the analysis has discerned both historical continuities and changes regarding transaction space.

Consumption is perceived differently by different generations but also within generations, and the perception of consumption is often tied to gender relations. In regards to shopping, gender relations are changing, with more shopping being oriented to both men and women, but the gender differences are still significant. Although more fashion retailing targets both male and female consumers, women’s clothes still dominate the sector and receive the most attention as well as occupying the most room and prominence in consumption spaces (Bradley 2007).

The historical trajectories of consumption forms and consumption spaces are significant. Almost all retail formations are alterations of prior configurations; malls derive from department stores and passages, and Internet shopping from catalogue shopping and mail ordering. Exceptions emerge when technological developments and innovations make new configurations possible, for example, digital commodities and virtual mediation.

Different configurations compete and complement each other, coexisting and reinforcing each other. In the city centre of Stockholm a range of different historical forms of retail and consumer service spaces coexist. From outdoor markets and independent boutiques, passageways and department stores to inner city malls and suburban-like supermarkets, flagships stores for global retail chains and Internet outlets with pickup and downloading services.

There are, as suggested by Glennie and Thrift (1992), significant continuities in consumption forms and resemblances between post-modern forms of transactions and early modern forms. The rationalised and effective transactions formed around mass-produced and standardised commodities are perhaps somewhat of a deviant. The contemporary tendencies of customised, personal cultural commodities, and experience-based consumption in specific and designated places are more easily compared to the early modern period, with small-scale and craft-oriented personal goods and services.

Perhaps the functionally separated urban structure with clearly designated retail and service areas separated from residential, office and industrial areas, which characterised the modern period, is also a historical invariance. The spatial practices of planning and how the city is represented today have many resemblances to early modern city formations. The functional integration of housing, offices and retail with mixed-usage of the city centre resemble, and the contemporary planning and policy ideas draw significantly on, an idealisation of the pre-modern city.
The differences and similarities should not be overemphasised, especially since, as argued in the second chapter, the contemporary forms of consumption are characterised by differentiation and blurring of boundaries. The abundance of commodities and the increasing turnover time of both nondurable and durable goods and services as well as the importance of fashion as a general mass phenomenon is a significant development.

There are, nevertheless, some grounds for claiming that it is primarily the content and not the form that has been changed, and that the transaction is a time-spatial invariance. A consumer, a commodity and a producer are still necessary for realising a transaction, but what is transacted and how it is transacted has changed, i.e., both the commodity and the mediation of the commodity. However, the changes are more fundamental than just a change of content. The form of consumption does not change quickly. Internet shopping, for example, is still a minor form of retailing, although some sectors have been radically changed and challenged. There are, nevertheless, changes in consumer behaviours and which transaction configurations are preferred has a significant effect on the formation of cities.

In this conceptual analysis it has been stressed that the transaction configuration is highly dependent on the properties of the commodity and the values that are being transferred. The consumer and ‘original’ producer of the commodity has become increasingly distanced in time and space through division of labour processes. It is often difficult to specify the ‘original’ producer of a commodity, as well as to distinguish the original commodity as they become more complex and attributed with symbolic values and are entangled in different kinds of services and experiences.

A cup of coffee has more constraints than books, for example, and can only be transacted in a limited number of configurations. Books and texts can be transacted in more or less all possible configurations, outlined in chapter four. This is, however, dependent on whether it is the book as a material artefact or the contents of the text that is considered. A cup of coffee, like other prepared foods, needs to be consumed in a relatively short time interval after it has been made. This means that there are significant material and bundling constraints for transacting and consuming a cup of coffee.

In contrast, the content of a book can be transferred in a range of different configurations. There is significant time-spatial flexibility for transferring the content of books. Apart from being a mobile commodity from the beginning, the text, like many other media oriented products, can be digitalised and thus transferred almost instantaneously from place to place. Books can be purchased in a retail store or ordered through Internet shops. The content can also be instantly downloaded in the form of texts or audio recordings. The book example illustrates how technology changes the conditions for transactions and consumer behaviours both regarding the transaction of books, which is increasingly done over the Internet, but also how books are
consumed in new ways through different media as well as how reading and the book retail industry is challenged by other sectors.

Technological innovations and infrastructural developments have consequently changed the commodity and how it can be transferred. It is not only the material good that creates constraints for the transaction but, more importantly, the service and the experience related to the good. From a consumer perspective, services and experiences have, an even higher degree of bundling constraints, synchronisation and coordination in time and space, because of the need for the consumer to be in proximity or at least materially connected to the provider or stager. This often means that the consumer has to move to the transaction space or facilitate a space for the transaction.

An increased focus on experiences and service content of commodities has made bundling constraints even more profound and emphasised the particularities of places. The importance of place is also evident through the implosion of different retail formats in time and space. This has been illustrated through retailers’ and service producers’ strategic usage of space through, for example, emphasising cafés as ‘third places’ and shop-in-shop developments, and through the blurring of spaces for work and leisure, production and consumption, as in the passages in and around Hötorghushusen. To use Baudrillard’s (1983) term, there is an implosion of activities in time and space, blurring traditional boundaries.

6.2 Capitalising Transaction Spaces

How commodity transaction situations are configured is not only a technical and material issue. It is also dependent on the social and mental conceptualisation and appreciation of the transaction situation where the properties of the commodity and place are crucial components, as well as on global and local capital flows and profit accumulation.

The rhythms of capital are dominating rhythms in the formation of contemporary cities and consumer service spaces. It involves global flows of information, capital and commodities. Transactions connect and mediate different places through global networks but a transaction is also situated and embedded in its surroundings – in the diorama. Production of transaction spaces is simultaneously both local and global. Even production of specific localised consumer service spaces is directly involved in the global cultural economy. There are multiple processes and entities taking part in the formation of consumer service spaces.

The most obvious rhythm of capital in consumer service spaces is the flow of money through transactions of commodities between consumers and service producers. Consumer service spaces are critical for the distribution of commodities and are produced because they are profitable and because consumers use them. They are also workplaces for many people employed in the
service sector. But, consumer service spaces are also important for controlling a transaction situation and regulating the division of labour between consumer and service producer. In this thesis traditional classifications have mainly been questioned through focusing on the time-spatial constraints of transactions from a consumer perspective.

To control accessibility to a transaction and the acquisition of a commodity is important in order to generate profit, reduce costs and minimise risks. The concept of local pockets of order clarifies the importance of control by emphasising that the transaction spaces have to be maintained and controlled. Depending on the configuration of the transaction situation the producer and the consumer respectively are more or less in control of the situation. In well-defined and regulated consumer service spaces, such as retail shops, department stores and inner city malls, the service producer is in direct control of the situation. In these configurations the consumer is also doing noticeably more work in comparison to other transaction configurations but is, on the other hand, the initiator of where and when the transaction takes place.

Different distanciated transactions require significant synchronisation and coordination in time and space, both for consumers and service providers. For the service provider a fair amount of work is required as a range of actors are involved in distributing the commodity that needs to be coordinated in time and space. The transaction situation might not require any movement of the consumer, although a distanciated transaction often requires some kind of effort, the consumer often has to be at a certain place and a certain time to receive the commodity. Digitalised commodities, which do not require any movement of either producer or consumer, seem to be difficult to control and, because of their properties, challenge many industries (Poster 2004).

The expansion of global fashion retailers into the production of garments and textiles can also be interpreted in terms of control. Vertical integration is a way of controlling the commodity chain. The expansion into other sectors can either be about moving into new markets (i.e., clothing into home interiors and vice versa) or to increase control over the transaction situations (retail into real estate, retailing to e-tailing). These strategies result in a blurring of boundaries between traditional sectors and categories, and between manufacturing and services industries.

However, consumer service spaces are not only important for selling and distributing commodities but also as fiscal resources and investment objects. The circulation of capital is, as Harvey (1978; 1989a; 2006 [1982]) argued, dependent on fixation points in the form of built environments, technical infrastructures and on labour power. Consumer service spaces and other consumption-oriented real estate are increasingly perceived as good investments by a diversity of economic businesses from traditional property development and construction companies to insurance and other investment com-
panies. Lefebvre’s claim of a shift from production in space to a production of space as well as the increased importance of the second circuit of capital seems accurate (1991 [1974]; 2003 [1970]).

How consumer service spaces are perceived and conceived is critical for attracting both consumers and investors. To secure investment and make it profitable it must be properly managed and maintained, both practically through material improvements and maintenance and the symbolic aspect of the building, which is crucial – how the building is represented and its relative location in the city diorama. The symbolic value of buildings and consumer service spaces, along with price mechanisms, are increasingly emphasised as competitive advantages (cf. Zukin 1995). As experiences and services are important in relation to transactions, places need to offer something more than just distributing commodities to stand out in relation to other similar or competing transaction configurations. There is a creative destructive element in the production and reproduction of consumer service spaces and the design and symbolic value of particular consumer service spaces are twofold.

First, the design and interior of consumer service spaces is important for attracting consumers and to convince them to buy commodities on display. As the retail fashion examples in chapter four showed, the turnover time of the built environment or at least the interior design of consumer service spaces are important. The store needs to communicate an appropriate image and atmosphere to attract consumers, which often implies that the interior design has to continuously change with fashion. This can be transformed rather quickly, but the formation of the built environment is slower and takes considerably more time than changing the interior and the display of commodities. Masking buildings with billboards, advertisements and other decorations can briefly change their appearance.

Second, symbolic values of buildings are important aspects for attracting investments, and can make the difference between a good and bad investment. The value of a building is, furthermore, highly dependent on the immediate surroundings and its relative spatial location as well as on how the city is represented and conceived more broadly. City planning and policy-making is thus an important part of the production of consumer service spaces. It is a dual relationship where it is important for city management, local and national governments, to help facilitate the redevelopment and production of buildings with a high symbolic and exchange value in order to attract new and future investments, and to place the city on the global map.

The symbolic value of buildings or placing cities on the global map is not a new phenomenon. The transformation of Stockholm city in the mid 20th century with Hötorgshusen as material manifestations of the modern city aimed at producing an internationally competitive city centre. However, the means of representing the city have changed. Advertising and marketing
cities has become increasingly sophisticated and economically important, just as the marketing of commodities has become more refined.

In the contemporary dominant representations of space, policies and plans, urban amenities such as consumer service spaces are seen as crucial for attracting capital and people, and for urban development. The pronunciation of consumption is in line with larger processes of neoliberalisation and global urban politics, where commercial interests are given more and more attention and appreciation. National and local governments are critical actors in the production of consumer service spaces both through planning as an institutional and regulating practice, and as investors and partakers in development projects.

For a long time commercial and private interests have had a part in the planning of Stockholm. There have, nevertheless, been changes in the relationships between the different interests both in the form of new actors and new representations as shown in the fifth chapter. International real estate investors, property developers, construction companies, pension funds and life insurance companies as well as retail chains and service producers, private and public investment companies are all taking an active role in the redevelopment of Stockholm city centre and in the formation of consumer service spaces.

The importance of consumer service spaces could thus be seen as a self-reinforcing process. The problem is that consumer service spaces are unruly places. Although there seems to be a general positive attitude towards consumer service spaces there are other interests at play as well, and the construction of consumer service spaces is not without conflicts.

6.3 Places of Everyday Tactics

The production of space is not a straightforward process but rather a continuous project. Dominant representations change when they are put into practice through different strategies. The spaces are often used and appropriated in different ways by the users than what was intended by the producers. Consumer service spaces play an important part in the consumption and the production of everyday life and social relationships in the city.

Transactions spaces are essential places for everyday life. They are important places for both consumers and people working with providing and supplying commodities. The consumer’s tactical appropriation of space is a crucial part in the formation of transactions spaces in general and consumer service spaces in particular. The tactics of consumers are displayed through different spatial practices – how consumers appropriate transaction spaces and use different configurations in order to engage in commodity transactions.
Performing a transaction is a project that requires skill, knowledge and information. To make a transaction the consumer has to have knowledge of and about the commodity, how it can be transferred and where it can be acquired. The importance of skill and knowledge should not be overemphasised, as many shopping projects are routinised and rather mundane practices as buying milk in the grocery store. Going shopping is, nevertheless, for many a serious activity invested with meaning and not something cumbersome or a just a way of spending time. It is also a way to position oneself and to socialise with others.

How consumers use different transaction configurations in order to realise a transaction and negotiate between different spatial divisions of labour (retailing vs. e-tailing/self-service vs. full-service) affects the formation of both the city and different transaction spaces. In the formation of transaction spaces it is also important how consumers tactically use and appropriate consumer service spaces through different spatial practices (window shopping vs. commodity shopping, coffee drinking vs. working in cafés, reading in bookstores vs. buying books in bookstores).

The importance of service workers and the materiality of service work has, in this thesis, been continuously emphasised and illustrated through different examples. The most obvious is the making coffee and preparing café food. But, the materiality is also important in retailing, which has been illustrated through fashion retailing and bookstores. In both examples the workers are, in different ways, displaying and handling tangible commodities.

The embodiment of service work is important in consumer service work and spaces. This is particularly evident in fashion retailing where the bodily appearance is critical, the worker is expected to be fashionable and express this through clothes, appearance and personal style. In the bookstore the workers use other personal means as well such as hand written reviews of books and reading between serving customers at the cash register, which signals personal connections to the commodities offered.

How transaction situations are configured in time-space is dialectically dependent on the larger societal notions such as home and work, labour and leisure, private and public; that is, what activities are done where and when. Transactions that previously were materially and socially restricted to the privacy of homes are now performed publicly at different places in the city.

Although it is possible to perform transactions anywhere it is not socially accepted to do so. There is a range of different social codes for how consumers can behave in café and in stores. It is, for example, seldom acceptable to bring complementary food or drinks to a café or a restaurant, and it is sometimes seen as inappropriate to bring noisy babies and bulky strollers into consumer service spaces.

The development of international and national coffee chains is a reflection of changing organisational forms and the global cultural economy but also
an expression of public life, new work practices and different leisure activities. It is accepted to work in coffee shops as well as to read books and newspapers, and communicate through portable devices such as mobile phones and laptops. At the same time the home has increasingly become a fundamental part in different transaction spaces. It is not necessary to get out of the home to do window shopping; browsing through the Internet can be seen as a form of window shopping. Living rooms are becoming part of transaction spaces as well as work places through the Internet and other connecting media.

The focus on transactions as material, economic and social projects has highlighted the changing relationship between public and private not only in formation, production and consumption of consumer service spaces but also through distanciation and integration of the private into the public and the public into the private. Through new technological innovations and socio-cultural changes the borders between public and private are being renegotiated and redrawn.

The home is an important transaction space and, simultaneously, a place for urban everyday, just as the city.

Final comments and future openings
This explorative thesis has used different examples to illustrate and problematise the importance of commodity transactions as situated material, economic and social projects for city formations and urban everyday life. The usage of examples based on observations has provided a means for integrating elements and processes that are usually held apart into one analysis. The difficulty with the method has been that each example insists upon further analysis, not that observations are often tentative, which was counteracted by situating the examples in an historical context.

Transactions have been situated in time and space through a focus on commodities and places but the impacts and importance of different transactions are crucial issues for further exploration. The analysis of transactions appreciates the properties of commodities, i.e., how properties constrain the transaction, but it has not explored in depth the different usage of commodities that has been transacted. It would be interesting to extend the conceptualisation of transaction situations and further explore different spatial practices of consumer tactics and producer strategies. In relationship to this, two areas stand out as particularly interesting.

The first issue is the materiality of service work and the production of consumption. In order to more specifically research how the materiality and gender differences of service production and retailing and how retail and service workers actively or passively form and reform places and embody their work. The workers are probably also a rich source for studying different consumer tactics and spatial practices.
The second issue is the intersection between the retail sector, property development and urban planning. It would be interesting to further investigate the relationships between these three sectors and their different incentives and rationalities. The significance of city representations as well as the built environment and impact of different transactions configurations and consumer service spaces are uncertain questions that remain open for further explorations. The importance of different transaction spaces needs to be further analysed.

Questions of political and ecological sustainability, as well as questions of social equity and accessibility to transactions, are larger and broader critical issues that need to be addressed in future studies. It is issues that have been partly touched upon in this thesis but not explored to any particular degree. On a more conceptual level the transcendence and power aspects of the transaction situations can and should be developed further as transactions are ultimately power relationships.

Power relationships are, as Hägerstrand argued, constitutive of geography (1985b), and the same can be argued for social sciences more generally (Flyvbjerg 2001). The transactions power relationships have in thesis been implicitly recognised through both the time-geographical conceptualization of transactions as performed projects situated in pockets of local order and through the interpretation of Lefebvre’s (1991 [1974]) spatial typologies in combination with de Certeau’s (1984) emphasis on tactics and strategies.
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