

## Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Destinations

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# 24 From Marketing to Market Practices: Assembling the Ruin Bars of Budapest

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### Contents

Introduction	2
From Marketing to Market Theory: Learning from Economic Sociology	3
The Case of the Rom Bars of Budapest	5
The Emergence of the Rom Bar Assemblage	5
Conclusion	9
References	11

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## Introduction

In a recent special issue of *Marketing Theory*, Araujo et al. (2008) call on the marketing discipline to embrace the insights of the social study of markets in economic sociology as a promising avenue for revitalising the classical concepts of marketing. Drawing on the research programme launched by Michel Callon's 1998 volume, *The Laws of the Markets*, they suggest that one traditional disciplinary distinction be abandoned in particular: 'Although convenient, a distinction between market-making practices – defined as activities that shape the overall market structure – and marketing practices – defined as firm-based activities aimed at developing an actor's position within a structure – is misleading' (Araujo et al., 2008: 8). In this chapter, we take up Araujo et al.'s (2008) call to deploy such a constructivist economic sociology perspective in the study of an empirical case. The case study concerns the emergence of a particular type of hospitality establishment in Budapest between 1999 and 2009. A *romkert* or *romkocsma* (meaning ruin garden and ruin pub respectively), referred to hereafter as a *rom* bar, is a venue that incorporates its ruinous surroundings (such as dilapidated courtyards and other distressed material goods) as part of its service concept and consumer experience (see Lugosi and Lugosi, 2008). We re-describe the evolution of the *rom* phenomenon using the actor-network theory (ANT) perspective of Callon and colleagues. A small but growing body of work has begun to apply ANT in tourism research (cf., Jóhannesson, 2005; van der Duim, 2007), but attempts to engage with ANT in studies of hospitality have been limited (e.g. Grit and Lynch, 2008). This chapter demonstrates the applicability of ANT to hospitality by providing a nuanced, processual approach to understanding how hospitality venues draw upon, incorporate, and contribute to a range of social and spatial practices. By doing so, it contributes to an emerging body of work that seeks to understand the complex relationships between hospitality and space (see Bell, 2007; Lugosi, 2009). However, beyond contributing to debates in hospitality research, we are interested in exploring what the case of Budapest's *rom* bars can contribute to debates on market practices. Implicit in our discussion is the assumption that traditional marketing concepts such as segmentation, positioning and targeting through integrated marketing communications offer a simplistic understanding of the emergence and existence of *rom* bars. Our work therefore offers an alternative way to conceptualise marketing and market practices.

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