THE
SHOPPING
CENTRE
1943-2013

The Rise and Demise of a
Ubiquitous Collective Architecture

Edited by Janina Gosseye & Tom Avermaete
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INTRODUCTION

The Shopping Centre
1943 -2013
The Rise and Demise of a Ubiquitous Collective Architecture

Janina Gosseye & Tom Avermaete

In his seminal essay ‘Public Spaces, Collective Spaces,’ which was published in 1992, Spanish architect and critic Manuel de Solà-Morales suggested that the civic, architectural, urban and morphological richness of contemporary cities resides in their collective spaces that are not strictly public or private, but both simultaneously. De Solà-Morales described these places as ‘the ambiguous spaces where the public form of our cities is played’ and encouraged architects to resist ceding the battle over the design of shopping malls, vacation centres, parking lots and cinema complexes to commercial logic and developer standards. De Solà-Morales argued that these spaces warrant architects’ attention, even if only for their ubiquity, volume and massive use, as he pleaded for a shift – both in terms of design and research – away from the standard, safe ‘subsidized urbanity’ to more slippery, less evident and (arguably) more interesting areas.

In the more than seventy years that have passed since Victor Gruen and Elsie Krummeck first introduced the concept in Architectural Forum, much has been written about the shopping centre. Curiously enough, the discipline of architectural history has made little contribution to this existing scholarship. In the canonical histories the perception has been shaped that the shopping centre is a ‘second-class’ citizen, an outcast, less valuable than its more ‘high-brow’ civic companions such as the museum, library or theatre. This historiographical discrimination seems at odds with the growing impact of mass production, mass distribution and mass consumption on our cities and territories since the end of the Second World War – of which the shopping centre is the spatial epitome. Moreover, architectural scholars have refrained from engaging profoundly with the shopping centres’ original premise that it could ‘expand beyond the goal of creating merely machines for selling, and could satisfy the demand for urban crystallization points and thus offer to the suburban population significant life experiences.’ Victor Gruen’s claim that the shopping centre can act as a full-fledged ‘urban centre’ is generally accepted, but even so did conspicuously not make it into the pages of architectural historiography. The reasons for this radical exclusion of the shopping centre from the histories of architecture remain vague: Intentional distance from an architectural figure that is complicit with late-capitalist logics? Difficulty to engage with the non-explicit authorship and the generic style of the shopping centre? Or, a lack of a conceptual apparatus to qualify the public character of this privately-owned and collectively-practiced instance of the built environment?

The few occasions when the shopping centre has been admitted into the ‘prestigious’ realm of architectural history, the writings have commonly been biased towards the United States with surprisingly little attention for the numerous shopping centres in other national and cultural contexts. This has led to the assumption that the North American dumbbell mall is the singular, immutable paradigm that has hovered over geographies and cultures since the mid twentieth century without losing its prime characteristics; an enclosed box surrounded by a large parking lot, which is characterized by comprehensive surveillance, engenders social segregation and encourages unchecked urban sprawl. Are these assumptions justified? Or, are the true capacities of the shopping centre – as a result of negative propaganda – obscured by our failure of vision? As more and more shopping centres are changed beyond recognition or die a slow death, this conference questions if we should all cheer and shout ‘hooray,’ or if there is more to shopping centres than meets the eye. By offering a fine-grained, region-specific reading, this conference aims to distil the shopping centre’s key characteristics and reassess the contribution that it has made to post-war built environment and architectural culture.

The proceedings of this conference are divided into four parts, each of which corresponds with one of the thematic conference sessions. The first subsection, entitled Acculturating the Shopping Centre investigates if ‘hybrids’ developed as the paradigmatic shopping centre concept, the American dumbbell mall, encountered different socio-cultural climates, and what region-specific typologies can be identified. It also questions if, as societies changed over time, the shopping centre concept also – in a true Darwinistic fashion – evolved over time. Nicholas Jewell’s contribution ‘Eastern Promises’ accordingly explores...
the hybridization of the shopping mall as its international spread mirrored the migration of global capital from the Western to Eastern hemisphere.

Jewell recounts the transformations that occurred when the mall arrived in Singapore, where it became an object of quasi-metabolist experimentation, to its adoption in Hong Kong as an agent that manipulates the city section, to the synthesis of these propositions in mainland China where the shopping mall has become a keystone in the mixed-use expansion of its urban schema.

By revisiting Jameson’s analysis of the Bonaventure hotel in his seminal essay Postmodernity or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, Esra Kahveci and Pelin Yoncaci Arslan conversely develop a comparative analysis, which presents the Cevahir shopping mall in Istanbul as a player in the global league of shopping centres, which signifies an architectural mutation; a constructed instance of postmodernity, similar to the one that Jameson observed in the Bonaventure hotel, albeit repeated in a remarkably different socio-cultural environment.

Kahveci and Arslan thus argue that Cevahir is nothing more than another expression of the global post-modern ‘shopping mall’ phenomenon, making the users that dwell in the building, the only visible remainder of local context. Cynthia Susilo similarly identifies the Boulevard Commercial Project (BCP) in Manado (Indonesia) as a generic reproduction of foreign ideas, but attributes a greater role to the users in the process of ‘acculturation.’ Susilo claims that the BCP’s spaces are socially reproduced through intense interactions between the mall and the Manadonese, thus creating spaces that are neither foreign nor completely local but both at once – a genuine indigenous modernity.

Finally, Scott Colman recounts the evolution of Westfield. In the 1950s, this Australian company began with the importation of the American, suburban car-oriented mall typology to Sydney. Since then, in a true expression of the ‘survival of the fittest,’ the company has continuously evolved and redefined itself to meet current market demands and consumer logics. As a result, Westfield today constructs dense, vertical shopping typologies that occupy legacy sites of the industrial city and are ‘hardwired’ into the city’s public transport system.

The second section, Building Collectives and Communities, focuses on the reformist underpinnings and socio-cultural ambitions of shopping centres. It explores the contribution that shopping centres have made towards moulding a ‘common ground’ and casting a ‘space of appearance’ within contemporary society. Leonardo Zuccaro Marchi investigates the transatlantic migration of ideas and references for a community ‘core’ in the period between 1950 and 1970. He illustrates how an osmotic relation existed between the concepts that were elaborated in the avant-garde theoretical debates of the late CIAM and the ones that were implemented by Victor Gruen in his initial designs for shopping centres.

Sanja Matijević Barčot and Ana Grgić similarly investigate the shopping centre’s ‘core’ potential, but shift the focus from West to East, as they probe into the social role that the shopping centre assumed in the construction of Croatia’s socialist reality between 1960 and 1980. They claim that shopping centres in Croatia were often ‘institutionalised’ to a certain extent. Not only were they publicly financed and managed but, more importantly, they were regarded as indispensable and powerful components of a socialist urban planning. Finally, Jennifer Smit and Kirsty Máté’s paper, in an attempt to redress the growing international criticism of the shopping centre as an undemocratic space that has a problematic relationship between private ownership and public participation, researches the malleability of the ‘public character’ of the shopping centre through the applied practice of ‘guerrilla-picnicking.’

From Node to Stitch, the third subsection addresses the key role that the shopping centre has played as part and parcel of urban planning from 1943 to today. It connects the development of shopping centres to urban reconstruction and revitalisation efforts on the one hand and explores shopping centres’ contribution to urban expansion projects and structured suburbanisation on the other. Il Lee, Joo hyun Park and Hyemin Park study the emergence of the mega shopping mall. This typology is characterized by the augmentation of the shopping function with cultural and leisure facilities, such as multiplex theatres and various food and beverage stores, thereby giving the shopping centre the spatial and programmatic density to act as a new urban anchor.

Thirty-three case studies illustrate the key role that these mega-shopping malls have played in South Korea’s urban planning and design over the past last fifteen years. Travelling back in time, Joonwoo Kim takes us to 1960s South Korea, when one of the first ‘shopping centres,’ the Sewoon Complex, was built in Seoul. In his paper, Kim narrates how this megastructure, which is one kilometre long and fifty metres wide, which incorporates shopping, public functions and housing, and which was initially built as a ‘stand alone’ autonomous entity on an inner city clearing, has over the years forged strong connections with the surrounding tissue. Rana Habibi’s paper discusses a similar ‘superstructure’ with shopping, built at the heart of a satellite neighbourhood in Western Tehran, called Ekbatan. Habibi deconstructs the development history of Ekbatan to explicate how in the shopping centre in mid-century Tehran became the object of forceful crossings between European, American, Asian and (last but not least) Persian models and influences. Viviana d’Auria finally takes us to West-Africa, where she iterates the development of the main city centre of the new town of Tema, which was planned by the Greek firm of Constantinios Doxiadis. According to Doxiadis’ plan, the centre’s civic and
commercial activities were to be accumulated into a spine heading northwards, aligned with the ‘Ekistic’ growth of the city. D’Auria subsequently explains how the carefully planned figure of this civic and commercial ‘spine’ has since been ‘recentred’ by its everyday users through processes of selective appropriation, rejection and resistance. She thus illustrates the capacity of indigenous cultural practices to suspend models of development but also to intensify the infrastructure of the shopping centre beyond its projected intentions.

Papers in the final section, The Afterlife of Post-war Shopping Centres, seek to outline strategies for the redevelopment of shopping centres that have perished. By identifying ‘best practices,’ the papers in this part explore if for the increasing number of 'dead malls' there can be a new life after death. First, Gabriele Cavoto and Giorgio Limonta discuss the condition in Italy, where the transformation of vacant shopping centres and big box stores represents a new urban challenge that lacks precedents in terms of design strategies. Well aware of the specificities in terms of building size, urban planning legislation and contractual conditions, Cavato and Limonta propose to learn from the ‘dead mall’ experience of the United States to devise a new set of design approaches for the European shopping centre. Vittoria Rossi similarly investigates numerous projects that have been realised in the US to re-interpret the growing number of dead malls, the so-called process of ‘de-malling.’ Her study illustrates how the failure or success of a project is determined not only by its capability to respond to short-term (often commercial) objectives, but also (and perhaps more importantly) by its ability to offer a long term vision that takes into account the project’s potential to offer economic, social, political and natural resources for the local community. Rossi argues that the primary aim of de-malling is not (or should not be) to build, but to engage with specific contexts and intervene through the collaboration between public and private actors. Conrad Kickert’s paper finally studies the reciprocal relationship between suburban shopping mall development and department store transformation in the urban core. In a comparative analysis of the Northland Mall by Victor Gruen in Detroit and the Vroom en Dreesmann department store in The Hague, Kickert explores the resilience of the shopping mall when conditions of shopping and urban development change. He claims that the ‘heterotopia of the urban core’ seems to offer a balance between permanence and flexibility, which can prevent the inertia between the envisioned and real futures of consumer environments.

Together, these papers present a first attempt to displace the discussions on the role, character and performance of the shopping centre from its canonical North-American matrix - without discarding it as an important point of reference.

They illustrate that the paradigm of the shopping centre should be looked upon as a typologically more complex and performatively more diverse paradigm than the dumbbell mall. In addition, the different contributions start to suggest the necessity for a more sophisticated theoretical framework to conceive the spaces of appearance that the shopping centre articulates in cities and territories, as well as for the continuous acculturations, transformations and re-articulations of this ubiquitous collective architecture.

This conference was funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), as it is part of a research project, entitled ‘The Post-war European Shopping Centre: A Place for Encounter between Avant-garde Discourse and Daily Building Practices, 1945-1973.’ This research started in February 2013, and focuses on the cross-fertilization that occurred between the work of the avant-garde and commercial ‘day-to-day’ building practices in Western Europe in the early post-war decades. This study uses the shopping centre, a new urban figure of the post-war period, as the vantage point to research the interaction between these two ends of the architectural spectrum. The results of this research will culminate in a book, entitled Shopping Towns Europe 1945-1975, which will be published by Bloomsbury Academic in 2015.

Endnotes
THEME 1

Acculturating the Shopping Centre:
Timeless Global Phenomenon or Local (time-and place bound) Idiom?
Acculturating the Shopping Centre:
Timeless Global Phenomenon or Local (time-and place bound) Idiom?

Shopping centres vary enormously; from small urban entities made up of a cluster of retail stores to intensely fortified suburban big-box leviathans. However, despite their differences, scholars have qualified shopping centres as if they are essentially the same: enclosed spaces characterized by comprehensive surveillance, security and social segregation. Much of the literature seems to suggest that the American dumbbell typology has hovered over geographies and cultures, without losing its prime characteristics. Can shopping centres therefore be treated as a global phenomenon? Or should they rather be understood as geographically bound expressions of a negotiation between mall developers (representatives of a global logic of capitalist accumulation) on the one hand and local actors (architects/governments/citizens) on the other? The theme questions if ‘hybrids’ developed as the shopping centre concept encountered radically different socio-cultural climates, and if so, what region-specific typologies of this assumed ‘ubiquitous’ commercial paradigm can be identified? Also, as societies changed over the course of seven decades, did the concept – in a true Darwinistic fashion – similarly evolve over time?

Eastern Promises

Nicholas Jewell

Abstract

This paper explores the hybridization of the shopping mall as its international spread has mirrored the migration of global capital from the Western to Eastern hemisphere. Hybridization here consists of more than simply transplanting a pre-ordained building form into an alternate cultural context. Rather, the arrival of the shopping mall in these locales is accompanied by seemingly profound changes to its physical structure. At the nub of this process of hybridization is a change of situation. If the historic evolution of the shopping mall was largely enacted in American suburbia its present resides in Asia’s megacities – most notably the unprecedented urban expansion that has accompanied China’s ascent to global pre-eminence. Where the shopping mall was once a byword for a stretched-out, car-dominated physical landscape, the Asian hybrid responds to multi-scalar infrastructural pressures, urban connectivity and hyper-dense human habitation.

A critical exploration of the evolution behind this hybrid proposition forms the starting point of this discussion – from its arrival in Singapore as an object of quasi-metabolist experimentation; to its adoption in Hong Kong as an agent that manipulates the city section; to the synthesis of these propositions in mainland China where the shopping mall has become a keystone in the mixed-use expansion of its urban schema. Its relevance and adaption to the unique urban syntax of these cultural contexts will be explored in parallel with its ideological and social dimensions. An evolution of the diagram led architectural principles behind the shopping mall will be discussed – from figure-ground to complex three-dimensional interactions – exploring the meaning of these diagrams as existential constructs that reify or contest aspects of its pseudo-urban experience.

Keywords: China, Singapore, shopping mall hybridization, Asian megacities, urban syntax
Introduction
Over its brief life as a building typology, architects have struggled to find models of the shopping mall that have evolved beyond the classic suburban form pioneered by Victor Gruen in post-war America. Most typically, the physical materialisation of the mall has been governed by a devastatingly simple and effective plan form that was christened the ‘dumb-bell’. It consists of a single internal shopping street with two large ‘anchor stores’ acting as ‘magnets’ at either end of the route. Instantly beloved by developers everywhere, the giddy, weightless effect of this layout on the American consumer was named after its creator. Dubbed the ‘Gruen Transfer’ or ‘Gruen Effect’, the theory holds that shoppers will be so bedazzled by a store’s surroundings that they will be drawn – unconsciously, continuously – to shop. These innovations were consolidated in Victor Gruen’s major book and manifesto, Shopping Towns USA, published in 1960. It served as the benchmark for the evolution of shopping malls, and many of the planning innovations displayed in the book remain prevalent today.

While this insular, diagram-led approach to shopping mall design was a guarantor of financial success it resulted in a scenario that, for many years, consigned the typology to a stasis of non-evolution. As the typology was exported into Western economies looking to the USA for a cultural lead it became a byword for the suburban ‘placelessness’ that Gruen had hoped it would cure. Now widely discredited as the ‘slayer’ of the high street, the suburban shopping mall has been cast to one side as western development ideals shift toward a new so-called ‘urban renaissance.’ Governmental policy materialisation of the mall has been governed by a devastatingly simple and effective plan form that was christened the ‘dumb-bell’. It consists of a single internal shopping street with two large ‘anchor stores’ acting as ‘magnets’ at either end of the route. Instantly beloved by developers everywhere, the giddy, weightless effect of this layout on the American consumer was named after its creator. Dubbed the ‘Gruen Transfer’ or ‘Gruen Effect’, the theory holds that shoppers will be so bedazzled by a store’s surroundings that they will be drawn – unconsciously, continuously – to shop. These innovations were consolidated in Victor Gruen’s major book and manifesto, Shopping Towns USA, published in 1960. It served as the benchmark for the evolution of shopping malls, and many of the planning innovations displayed in the book remain prevalent today.

Where the shopping mall first made landfall in Asia is a question that does not have a straightforward or definitive historical answer. Rem Koolhaas has, however, identified the historical crystallization of the Asian sub-typology as it is understood today – within the half-century of self-governance and urban expansion that has defined Singapore:

‘In the late sixties, Singapore architects – savagely synthesizing influences of Le Corbusier, the Smithsons/Team X, self-consciously Asian speculations derived from Maki, a new Asian self awareness and confidence – crystallized, defined and built ambitious examples of vast modern socles teeming with the most traditional forms of Asian street life.’

In searching for an urban schema that embodies the ‘city as a machine’ or a realization of Le Corbusier’s ‘City of Tomorrow’ there can be few purer examples than Singapore. Unchallengeable political will and the tabula rasa conditions from which Singapore was born have allowed an uncompromising adherence to the key infrastructural characteristic theorized in Corbusier’s famous treatise – the total separation of the motorcar and the pedestrian. In doing so Singapore had to address Le Corbusier’s challenge that ‘we must create another type of street.’ For Le Corbusier this was achieved by giving the city section a weighting equal to the normally privileged city plan. Here vehicular and pedestrian movement patterns could be atomized – in theory ‘liberating’ the spaces of the city for the latter activity. As Fumihiko Maki points out, however, Le Corbusier’s rather limited notion of the human qualities necessary for modern city life failed to grasp the totality of the urban experience. Rather, as Koolhaas observes, the Metabolists’ theoretical explorations of new models of density in the proto-Asian city – spearheaded by the likes of Maki and Kenzo Tange – were the model for a richness of urban life that could sustain a modern metropolis.

‘Maki’s work is unapologetically concerned with “shopping” – in the Asian context not a simple consumerist frenzy but an authentic essence of urban life, its equipment Asia’s equivalent of the agora.’

A holistic understanding of the social practices that make the city tick provided the glue that held the Metabolist vision of the city section together. As Koolhaas notes, however, the work of the Metabolists remained largely on paper. It was the creation of instant chunks of urbanity in Singapore’s challenging sub-tropical climate that facilitated the transition from theory to practice. Koolhaas’s analysis focuses on two projects by DP Architects PTE. Completed between 1967 and 1973, the Golden Mile Complex on Beach Road and the People’s Park Complex on Eu Tong Seng (figure 1) are heroic formal experiments. They create the type of megastructure that Maki theorized as ‘city corridors, city rooms and transport exchanges at strategic points in the city […] these new focal points.
become urban energy generators. In both of these projects the manipulation of the city section delivers the interiorized domain alluded to by Maki. The atrium is the architectural device through which this territory is realized. This multi-level space becomes an urban nucleus. It provides a comfortably habitable public realm – one that the relentless heat of the city outside cannot. Furthermore, it efficiently combines horizontal and vertical movement patterns to process the multi-layered infrastructure of the machine city. Vehicular infrastructure arrives at ground level while pedestrian links are facilitated primarily at first floor level, or additionally in the case of People’s Park from the underground metro stop that has been retrofitted into the complex. At no point do these differing modes and scales of transport mix. Above and connected to the atrium sits residential accommodation. In the case of People’s Park this takes a simple compositional form – a slab tower sitting over a black podium that contains the atrium space. At Golden Mile the form is more complex – a stepped, articulated, arrangement whose echoes can be found in brutalist schemes as far-flung as the paper projects of Paul Rudolph or the realized (and recently refurbished) Brunswick Centre in central London. Despite these varied forms, the atrium in both becomes the favoured realm for social interaction, while shopping defines the blueprint of what social life may be in these urban enclaves, augmenting the atrium’s spatial potency. Shopping here is conceived along the lines of destination, utility, community and amenity. It provides multiple social and temporal emphases that mesh with a complex urbanity to theoretically defy the constraints of its Western forbearers.

While the two-dimensional diagram of the Western shopping mall can be understood with relative ease, these examples, present less readily apprehendable figures. Although the atrium functions as an orientation device, the legibility of each building’s plan form is obfuscated by pronounced changes at each level. Relative to the fixed footprint of its outer block the atrium, in each case, carves a complex three-dimensional path through the shopping mall’s podium. The juxtaposition of plan and section within the atrium reveals, on further analysis, the diagram that I am searching for. Like all shopping malls the trick is to retain bodies within this manufactured enclave as long as possible. To do so, a process of centripetal motion is created, defined at each level by the shifting form of the atrium. This frustrates the legibility of the complex as a whole while serving as a constant orientation device that offers tantalizing visual impetus to further exploration above and below. The vectoral emphasis of the traditional mall ‘street’ is rendered more potent and less obvious by the series of racetracks that circumnavigate the canyon form of the atrium. Its ever-changing section creates an internal coherence while distracting attention from yet another deadly equation between plan and profit.

If these examples appear to simply fall back into the agenda of coercion that governs the shopping mall in the West, there nonetheless remains a more potent germ of social production in their core form. To apprehend it we must move on from Singapore, however. Relocated to another entrepôt of culturally hybrid experimentation the typological innovations of the Singapore shopping mall were able to break further ground. And once again this was a typological leap borne of practical necessity.

**Hong Kong’s Skywalks**

Hong Kong’s extreme topography, and the question of how this can be tamed for human habitation, defines many of the city’s architectural qualities. Hugging the base of Victoria Peak, Hong Kong Island at street level can seem to be a complex, discombobulating experience. The city is necessarily narrow, its streets often defined by a contoured rather than a gridded reality. Moreover as the island slopes upward into the Mid-Levels, the gradient of the street becomes far too extreme for many pedestrians. Man-made interventions such as the extensive mid-level escalators go some way towards taming this topography, creating a more accessible pedestrian strata above grade. And as infrastructure
tames the city section the task turns to delivering a set of public spaces to accompany it.

David Graham Shane describes a scenario in which a ‘layered, informational, urban design approach to podium and tower megablocks demonstrates the creation of new, three-dimensional urban spaces that mix uses in previously unforeseen ways.’ In the case of Hong Kong this can be seen as the creation of a sense of urban utility that is borne out of necessity. In subscribing to the idea of city space as a ‘three-dimensional layered matrix,’ Hong Kong uses its shopping mall podiums to weave over and under the steeply sloping lay of the land. Manipulating the city section in this way delivers far larger chunks of flat, pedestrian friendly space than the naturally existing gradient of the city could ever allow. Hong Kong appears to use these ingredients to liberate, and render intelligible, the metropolis.

Continuity replaces the more typical experience of insularity associated with the shopping mall. At the points where one would normally expect the mall experience to terminate in an apogee of wanton consumption it continues, horizontally, into the wider world outside (figure 2). While this approach, on first inspection, appears to contravene the cardinal rules of shopping mall design, the key to its success is the manipulation of the city’s vertical dimension. This efficiently exploits the extended programme of mixed-usage patterns contained within the ‘bounded-city-block’ typology. While each corner of the mall infers horizontal continuity it also functions as a vertical ‘tether.’ Corners become complex three-dimensional junctions – filters that inform and activate the first set of choices that visitors must make as they exit the mono-functional enclave of the office or the metro. There is little need for retail anchors in the conventional sense. By ‘tethering’ the processes of working, living and commuting to the consumption driven amenity of the shopping mall, pedestrian movement is captured and intensified within its layered network. Accordingly, each ‘tether point,’ or filter, becomes a key nodal moment – as the individual is sucked up, down, or through this funnel – in negotiating a psychogeographic relationship with the city. It is a scenario that prompts some interesting questions. Kim Dovey observes that as ‘a collective dream world of mass culture, the mall at once captures and inverts the urban. It is a realm of relative shelter, safety, order and predictability which is semantically and structurally severed from the city.’ In Hong Kong, however, this is not the case. The mall is fundamentally, and literally, urban.

Pinwheeling out of International Finance Centre (IFC) onto one of the skywalks that, almost immediately, taps into the mall-podium of an adjacent block, there is a degree of choice, even competition, that the tightly controlled world of the Westernised shopping mall would never normally allow. One can transit from IFC to Exchange Square, The Galleria, Princes Building, The Man Yee Building, The Landmark and more on an artificially defined ‘ground’ that is effortless relative to Hong Kong’s challenging grade. Cumulatively, this extended ‘ground’ creates a consumption-based smorgasbord that is far more potent than any individual mall could ever be.

The Landmark is as typical as any. Built into a steeply sloping site, its section utilises this terrain to provide entry from the street proper at all levels. Access is generally from the corners – whether from the street, from a skywalk, from above or from below. Internal movement is centripetal, facilitated by a racetrack format morphed to a given plot. Movement between levels is positioned strategically, never in the same place on successive levels, and always on event within a central atrium. One is always moving past the maximum amount of shopfront possible. This dynamic thrust is enhanced by the skywalks entering and exiting the malls above grade, using the energy of the pinwheel plan form to engender perpetual pedestrian flux. And it is effortless on this ‘ground’ above ground. The linkage structures create a loose racetrack in themselves, running through all of the malls contained within the Central district. The malls function as events, or ‘vortices,’ en-route. A momentary distraction can spin you round...
and spit you out in a different direction, creating a feeling that remains soothing because of the sense of easy movement, not to mention distraction, relative to the outside world. Meanwhile the larger, perpetual loop always ensures that at some point you will end up back where you started. Breaking the closed figure-ground pattern of Western shopping mall development, the manipulation of the city section represents a ‘capture and inversion of the urban,’ which delivers a much larger spatial network, threading its way through central Hong Kong. And perhaps its most convincing impression is integration, that this expanded urban matrix may represent a truly inclusive space of the city.

‘Social inequality in Hong Kong is obvious and spatial segregation is an old story. The British, for example, chose to live on the Peak, distancing themselves as far as possible from ordinary Chinese and the diseases that plagued lower-elevation, less salubrious areas.’

Herein lies the fundamental conceit in the liberated ‘ground’ of this extended and privatized urban network. If the augmented city section is the device which emancipates a more hospitable pedestrian realm, it is also the mechanism that renders it a rarefied dominium. The difference between ground and ‘ground’ extends far beyond pedestrian convenience. Ground or grade is a bustling, noisy, fetid, sweltering experience. ‘Ground’ is air-conditioned, flat and appears consummately effortless. But its throng of luxury goods belies a price of entry that many citizens cannot afford. Perhaps a more satisfactory set of answers can be found within a socio-cultural context that has enshrined a layered concept of internalized public space within its historical patterns of human habitation.

**Shopping Malls Perpetuating the Culture of Walls**

‘Open space, weak in meaning, differs decisively from closed space with strong meaning.’

Dieter Hassenplug’s analysis of urban China provides useful insight into the syntax of its ‘public’ spaces. Similarly, Jianying Zha has observed that in Beijing, ‘the degree of maturity and sophistication classical Chinese city design had attained was so high, it had become a completely self-referential system.’ If we treat ancient Beijing as the ur-form of the classical Chinese city, the historical lineage of socio-spatial characteristics that influence its modern form can be understood. Again, Zha notes that ‘the culture of old Beijing was a culture of walls. Walls had everything to do with the city’s aura of mystery and grandeur, with Beijinger’s strong sense of direction, space and class, their notion of privacy, and their claustrophobic prejudices.’

If in a Western context the syntax of a wall most typically denotes the boundary between a public exterior and a private interior, the walled world of ancient Beijing represents a more complex process of striation. The habitat of everyday life existed ‘internally.’ ‘Publicity’ and ‘privacy’ were realized via progressively deep layers of internal striation – each layer defined by walled enclosure. The city, in this sense, was codified as an unfolding interior consisting of many grades of ‘public.’ This syntax, which inverts what we understand as urban space in the Western world, is critical to a meaningful exploration of the Chinese shopping mall. A highly idiosyncratic idea of urban space is enshrined in the morphological and psychological foundations of the Chinese metropolis. This defines the conceptual units of the city. And in transition to an urban modernity...
it is a question of evolution, from one model of interiority to another. Straddling the potentially awkward gradations between public and private or ‘open’ and ‘closed’ space, the shopping mall represents a near-perfect vehicle with which to modernise the Chinese city. Its conventional form is interiorized – one must breach its walls to enter (figure 3). Its ‘bigness’ allows it to exist autonomously – as Koolhaas notes ‘in the quantity and complexity of facilities it offers it is in itself urban.’ Most fundamentally its physical form is riven with hallmarks of the Chinese city’s morphological foundations while simultaneously containing the seeds of change – from the hardline Communism of China’s past to the nascent consumerism that heralds its future. So, what form(s) does the Chinese shopping mall take?

My moment of epiphany came in the cavernous Superbrand Mall in Pudong, Shanghai (figure 4). Superbrand Mall is like so many others, from the malls on the Xidan strip west of Tiananmen Square in Beijing, to the garish malls that line Shanghai’s premier strip of consumption, Nanjing Lu. It is a collage of fragments from the urban laboratory of Asia, rendered specific to the Chinese city.

First, the morphology of the city must be understood as one of ‘open’ and ‘closed’ space with different orders and scales of circulation. ‘Open’ space is now the vehicular order of the Chinese machine city, between which its ‘closed’ cells exist. Their interconnection may be facilitated across networks of ‘open’ space or via alternative networks of the ‘closed’ order. For the ‘closed’ order to function effectively it must negotiate its perceptual borders with the ‘open’ spaces of the city.

To do so an alternative notion of ‘ground’ comes to the fore. Unlike Singapore, whose internal ‘grounds’ exist because it is too hot to be outside, or Hong Kong where a flat pedestrian topography is hard to find, the ‘grounds’ of the Chinese shopping mall cannot pretend to be anything other than a ruthlessly efficient sorting device. There are several, and each facilitates an important transition. Firstly there is the true ‘ground’ of the city, the plane where ‘openness’ and ‘closure’ are defined. It is the initial moment of striation – presenting a formal façade to the outside world and an invitation to, or denial of, its smooth interiorized world. These moments exist before the coercive power of the mall diagram(s) can really get to work. It is a different idea of ‘anchor,’ or ‘tether.’ One that literally sets out the mall’s stall at street level. The net result is the presence of a global superbrand, given full license to express itself as loudly as possible in the form of sculptural protrusions and megawatts of neon light. It is the shop window in extremis. As arresting as this phantasmagoric spectacle may be, the

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Figure 4: Super Brand Mall in Shanghai.

Figure 5: Westfield shopping centre in White City, London.
purpose is to drag you inward. And the real aim is to drag you very deep inside. The first ‘ground’ of the Chinese shopping mall is a liminal moment between city and heterotopia. Once inside it is necessary to render the perceptual border that exerts the mall’s spell more powerfully. Entrance is accompanied by an event, typically within an atrium space, which draws the visitor away from the mall’s permeable borders and offers three-dimensional orientation toward the malls more pervasive ‘second ground.’ Sucked deeper into the plan, the visitor is quickly spirited up or down. And strategic placement of stairs and escalators means that it is much easier to navigate away from this ‘first ground’ than back to it. Removed by a vertical layer from the street the deadly configurational diagram of the mall can start to do its work. Typically a curving variant of the ‘racetrack’ comes to the fore, engendering perpetual horizontal motion and ensuring that movement between levels can only take place after traversing the maximum distance around each floor.

Things change again at the ‘tethers.’ Below grade, the city’s subterranean metro system feeds directly into the bowels of the mall. This can open into the above-ground space of the retail podium itself or be ‘zoned’ as a separate mall below ground, branded with a different aesthetic and targeted at a demographic. In such a way a greater density of retail space can be shoehorned into a given site and managed in ‘friendly’ scientifically sized parcels. Using the true grade of the city as a sieve, an existential schism is created between above and below. Once a visitor is bored or tired of one mall they are sucked into another, prolonging the fantasy of consumption that little bit longer.

At the top of the atrium – as the world of the mall again becomes liminal, bleeding into the mixed-use programmes of housing and office – lives the culinary smorgasbord of the food court. Typically this leaches into a series of al-fresco spaces adjoining a larger roof garden. As a point of transition it naturallyizes the idea of leaving one type of spatial programme to enter another without ever vacating the closed confines of the city block. Obviating the need to go outside, into the open spaces of the city, building occupants are instead acclimatized to a further grade, several storeys above the canyons of the metropolis.

The manner in which ‘express’ modes of vertical circulation bypass true ground to reach these tethers reinforces the manner in which the ‘open’ space of the city is excluded and a focus on the inward mall diagram perpetuated. Although the historic syntax of ‘closed’ urban space is theoretically continued in the Chinese shopping mall its nature is radically altered. While the hutong, siheyuan, shikumen, lilong, jingyu and danwei all exploited a ‘closed’ urbanity they existed at grade. ‘Open’ and ‘closed’ space could theoretically coalesce, even if a repressive state structure would never allow it to truly happen. In the here and now, the retail podium and mall basement render this possibility ever more distant. Functioning as a series of separating layers they push the locus of city life away from the street and into the air. They divide and conquer.

**Conclusion**

While the past of the shopping mall may belong to the United States, it would appear that its present belongs to Asia – a statement given credence by the manner in which these models of mall design are now metastasizing across cities globally. Architects have, by necessity, looked eastwards to understand how the infrastructural scales of suburbia could be incorporated into the modern Western city. These inter-cultural explorations are the Trojan horse that has allowed the shopping mall to exit suburbia and re-enter the city, under the banner of ‘urban regeneration.’ If the urban shopping mall provided a momentum to the physical and financial growth of the Asian metropolis, it could surely be availed upon in the Western world to regenerate the urban blight perpetuated by its suburban siblings.

Britain provides a number of examples that illustrate how the lessons learned from Asia are being assimilated into the typology as a culturally hybrid proposition. Four key projects – each of which has acted as a totem of urban regeneration – stand out. Birmingham’s Bull Ring, Liverpool One and London’s twin Westfield’s (Stratford and White City) exemplify how the typology has become a large-scale urban proposition (figure 5). This has been achieved by blending hyper-density with qualities that more specifically address the cultural and physical context of the cities in which these malls have materialized. Most typically this means that the density and mixed-use that are negotiated vertically in Asia are aggregated over a horizontal field in these lower-rise contexts. Liverpool One uses the pedestrian ground of the city to create a series of expanding centripetal circuits that, to a degree, fuse more cohesively with the grain for their urban context. Birmingham’s Bullring is much the same. The difficulty with each is the way that these circuits are used to feed a central armature consisting of multiple grounds that effectively deny connection with the outside city at their apogee. Despite their collagist hyper-modern appearance, echoing Asian preoccupations with contemporary architectural styles rather than the ‘post-modern’ qualities more commonly associated with
suburbia, it appears little has changed. London’s Westfields paradoxically appear to achieve further integration and further disconnection. Hovering parasitically over major transport interchanges they connect, in functional terms, with the city while using the creation of distinct ‘grounds’ and strategic relationships with the major infrastructure that borders these spaces as a means to cleave off areas that may be considered less desirable. An inward diagram prevails defining, in the case of Westfield Stratford, a spatial template for a far wider metropolitan area – the legacy of London’s Olympic Park. But if one thing can be understood from an exploration of the Asian shopping mall, it is that mixed usage and enforced interaction with the cityscape generate a more rooted proposition than the mono-functional enclaves of suburbia.

The typology has now reached a crossroads. If the particular scenarios presented here point towards the shopping mall’s endurance as an urban entity its present typological manifestations should not be seen as the end of the matter. The shopping mall remains hugely problematic as an architectural form because of the amoral base that continues to underpin its idealized spatial and social constructions. Sustained experimentation with the typology and its megastructural potential is necessary if its future development is to proceed along a more satisfactory path.

If the shopping mall is indeed here to stay and now penetrates every facet of the built environment – as Koolhaas and others have suggested – then critical theory needs to be mobilized to question the types of social space that it seeks to produce. What is at stake is the right to shape a free-thinking, progressive field of urban interaction. Only by fully understanding the machinery of consumption that permeates the shopping mall can its excesses be resisted, allowing the urban realm to be privileged as a more sentient, egalitarian field. The shopping mall must grow up, and truly fulfil the calling for which it was originally conceived.

**Endnotes**

9. Ibid., 122.
14. Personal interview with Jan Felix Closterman of Spark Architects in Beijing on October 22nd 2008. A number of diagrammatic permutations of Asian shopping mall design were explained at this interview, the most common of which is the ‘racetrack’ – effectively a continuous pedestrian loop ensuring perpetual motion and bypassing the problems associated with the terminal points of the dumbbell.
20. Ibid., 60.
22. Personal interview with managing director of Benoy Simon Blore at Benoy offices, Hong Kong on November 24th 2010. The idea of ‘two malls in one’ was used in the IFC mall in Pudong, Shanghai and was one that the practice intended to repeat in future developments.
Revisiting Jameson:
From Bonaventure to Istanbul Cevahir Shopping Mall

Esra Kahveci & Pelin Yoncaci Arslan

Abstract
In his seminal essay *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1984), Fredric Jameson picks The Bonaventure hotel in downtown LA as the discursive object of the postmodern condition. Designed and built by John Portman in 1977, this remarkable building employs many different theoretical aspects of the ‘hyperspace,’ which the author refers to as a ‘mutation in built space itself.’ This characterization corresponds to a new mode of interior where individuals move and congregate constantly, yet in a physically disoriented state caused by a certain unsettling architectural composition. The Bonaventure, therefore, marks an instance of the built environment of postmodernity. This approach has become influential in discussions of postmodern cultural theory as well as issues of architecture, especially in spaces of consumption. This paper addresses the Istanbul Cevahir shopping mall as a new object of study to investigate how the mall turns into a global phenomenon, leaving the user profile as the only remainder of local context, if any. Built in 2005 as one of the largest malls in the world with a total floor area of 420000 m², this building has important parallels to The Bonaventure including its disjunction from the city, its vast scale, its configuration of floors and escalators, its reflectivity, which is emphasized by its construction materials, and the particular emphasis it places on movement while experiencing the building. This comparative analysis will present the Cevahir as both a player in the global league of shopping centres, and analogously, as a signifier of an architectural mutation repeated in a remarkably different socio-cultural environment.

Keywords: the Bonaventure hotel, Istanbul Cevahir shopping mall, disorienting interior, reflective surfaces, megascale, public space

Introducing the Bonaventure
In 1984, seven years after its completion by architect and developer John Portman, the Westin Bonaventure hotel in downtown Los Angeles became the iconic figure of postmodernism through Fredric Jameson’s landmark essay on the cultural logic of late capitalism. Based on the literal and figurative inspiration he draws from the hotel, Jameson described the building as a paradigmatic instance of postmodern space, as ‘a mutation in built space’ (figure 1).

‘This latest mutation in space – postmodern hyperspace – has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world. It may now be suggested that this alarming disjunction point between the body and its built environment – which is to the initial bewilderment of the older modernism as the velocities of spacecraft to those of the automobile – can itself stand as the symbol and analogon of that even sharper dilemma, which is the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the greater global multinational and decentered communication network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects.’

Figure 1: The Bonaventure hotel in downtown Los Angeles.
(Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/sliepa/7227246565).
The Bonaventure, then overlooked by mainstream discourse, evoked a seminal discussion on the superficiality of the commodity in late capitalism. For Jameson, architecture of this building was neither mere style nor mere symptom. Rather, it was a world unto itself that created a spatial and cognitive disorientation. The Bonaventure, he wrote, "aspires to being a total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city" in which people move and congregate forming a "hypercrowd." It is composed of four mirrored-glass towers, with elevators rising up through the ceiling toward hotel rooms, an atrium surrounded by a shopping complex of approximately 20000 m², an indoor "lake," and a rotating rooftop lounge. There are three entrances, none of which is designed as a traditional, and mostly seductive, hotel entrance but rather as backdoors as if the building "ought not to have entrances at all." The one on Figueroa Street, which might seem to be the main entrance, admits you onto the second storey balcony while two entrances on the elevated Bunker Hill gardens admit you to the towers. In order to get to the lobby, which is situated several floors below any entrance; one is required to take elevators and escalators. The deliberate blurring of the entrances and exits seals the occupants into the hotel, and detaches the interior space, or commercial space as Jameson puts it, from the outside world. Jameson argues that elevators and escalators replace movement, and also designate themselves as 'new reflexive signs and emblems of movement proper.' Hallways appear never-ending as they twist around the atrium, leaving the visitor in a cul-de-sac of promenade. The materiality of the building's surfaces also confirms Jameson's diagnosis/analysis. The use of mirrored-glass constitutes a conglomerated symmetrical mass of glazed facades continuing ad infinitum. The facades merely reflect the surrounding city fabric by sending back its own image, and leave the Bonaventure placeless. With all these features lacking function/use value and depth, the building turns into a signifier without signified.

Jameson's essay marked a historical turn in the aftermath of architecture's becoming the cultural meta-narrative in the 1980s (as film theory did in the 1970s), and the Bonaventure became the most-quoted example of postmodernism. Edward Soja described it as a 'micro-urb,' an analogy to 'the sprawling manufactured spaces of Los Angeles,' in which everything imaginable appears to be available, but real places are missing in a 'pastiche of superficial reflections.' For Jean Baudrillard, whose analysis of the 'Beaubourg' echoed in Jameson's critique, the Bonaventure is 'ludic and hallucinogenic,' and it is like 'a box of spatio-temporal tricks.' According to Mike Davis, the Bonaventure's relationship with its urban surrounding -- the isolation of the hotel from the Hispanic-Asian neighbourhood -- reflects the systematic social segregation in Los Angeles.

Although Jameson's work was also an extension of such socio-political discourses, he began to look for solutions on a smaller scale and approached architecture from a personal perspective. He challenges conventional modes of interpreting the built environment, and, focuses rather on the experience of the building. His reading of the Bonaventure differs remarkably from, for example, Charles Jencks' use of Minoura Yamasaki's famous Pruitt-Igoe Housing Complex. The latter famously positions Yamasaki's project as the end of an idealized modernism and the beginning of a diverse postmodernism. Unlike Jencks, however, Jameson concentrates on perceptual aspects of the Bonaventure and never refers to historical references or the architect's intentions. Most significantly, he 'diagnosed' a new mode of interior where individuals move and congregate constantly, yet in a physically disoriented state caused by a certain unsettling architectural composition. This characterization, we argue, still resonates today, yet within another socio-political context and another direction of thought: in spaces of consumption of Istanbul. To be more specific, this paper presents a Jamesonian interior built inside one of Istanbul's biggest shopping malls, the Cevahir. Curiously enough, the Cevahir is another iconic project designed by Yamasaki Architects.

Istanbul Cevahir Shopping Mall 1988-2005

Commercial spaces and shopping has a long history. In The Harvard School Guide to Shopping, on extensive research on shopping culture and retail spaces, Rem Koolhaas traces the genealogy back to the city of Catalhoyuk in 7000 BC, the Greek agora, to the Markets of Trojan in Rome, and the medieval marketplace as a civic centre. The list continues with the Royal Exchange in London in the 16th and 17th centuries, the first arcade in Paris in 1786, the Crystal Palace in 1851, and the first supermarket in NY in 1930. The modern shopping mall was an invention of the 1950s by Viennese architect Victor Gruen who yearned to recreate the European city in America, and suggested that the mall would become the new city. He imagined the mall to become a suburban 'crystallization point' that provides the complexity and vitality of urban experience without the noise and the dirt. Premised in suburbia and relied on the motorized shopper, the mall was assumed to become the new urban centre in the aftermath of the urban sprawl. However, it could replace neither the complexity of the city nor its unpredictability. During the 1990s, the shopping mall became the architectural type to which all kinds of debates on architecture and consumer culture referred. While theme parks, Disney parks for instance, introduced a new urbanism converting the city from public to private, non-commercial to commercial, modern to neo-traditional, it was the shopping mall that translated this model into spaces of the everyday.
The historical development was no different in Istanbul. Besides the unique 15th century example, the Grand Bazaar, a maze-like Ottoman complex of 61 covered streets and over 2500 shops, the earliest modern commercial centre is the Istanbul Textile Traders’ Market built in 1967. Designed by the renowned Turkish architect, Dogan Tekeli, this privately funded market project is a group of six blocks with more than one thousand shops. In each block, the shops are organized around a multi-storey atrium and small alleys connect the courtyards below to each other. The composition, materials and the surface treatments has since been interpreted as regionalist in Turkish architectural historiography writing. Beginning from the mid-1980s, Turkey has witnessed a rapid transformation due to economic restructuring, which considerably reshaped the consumer culture, habits and markets. The first shopping mall, so-called Galeria shopping mall, was built in 1988. This building, in fact, initiated the proliferation of shopping malls as generic envelopes with its worldwide brands, chain restaurants, and movie theatres.

In 1988, the Cevahir family announced an invited competition with international participation of nineteen architects for a new culture and trade centre in Sisli, one of the central business districts of Istanbul. The brief called for ‘a prestigious business center’ that would create a landmark in the heart of the city. Minouri Yamasaki’s winning entry, in collaboration with the local architect Osep Saraf, proposed a total construction area of 544,000 m² with 150,000 m² retail spaces, two high-rise buildings of 45 and 31 storeys, five office blocks of 13 storeys each, a hotel of 30 storeys, theatre and conference halls, a sports centre with tennis courts, and carpark for 4000 cars. The scheme was developed in accordance with the urban characteristics of the neighbourhood, locating the twin office towers facing the main street and the hotel across residential buildings (figure 2). Planning the construction in several phases, using local materials and technologies, controlling the traffic flow, providing a flexible plan, natural light and air conditioning, and a certain symbolic value were the main design criteria. In 1988, one of the leading architectural magazines in Turkey, Yapı, published the drawings of the project. It was however never realized following this design. In 2005, however, the developers – the Cevahir family – reconsidered the project and built it as the second largest mall in Europe based on revisions designed and applied by the interior designer, Ayse Cevahir.

The new version of the project is a mutation of Yamasaki Architects’ 1988 design, occupying the very same floor area but replacing the multi-use programme by retail only, and neglecting all kinds of spatial variety. The current design adopts Yamasaki’s plan layout as an overall scheme, but reduces the tower blocks to the
same level as the shopping mall, which results in a giant total space lacking the atmosphere of a dynamic section on the inside, and a proportional silhouette on the outside (figure 3). In the original scheme, the shopping mall was organized as ‘a multi-storey arcade’ surrounded by office blocks and inner gardens. The programme involved stores and restaurants of various sizes and corridors connecting different levels. In today’s Cevahir, however, the central void becomes a vast atrium framed by thick floor slabs, mirrored columns, and gigantic rows of escalators. Unlike a regular small-scale atrium that is usually designed as a spatial instrument providing effective navigation for visitors, the atrium in Cevahir causes rather a sublime experience. While the former allows the customer to recognize and map the stores at the first moment, the unusually colossal atrium space in Cevahir evokes a sense of awe and then discomfort. Upon entering from Buyukdere Street, one suddenly faces the unprecedented scale that is dominated by the vast horizontality caused by the floor slabs. It is not just such grandiosity from the entrance that causes the sense of sublime. Also, the inclined lines of the escalators attached on the sides of the slabs or the passing crowd of people looking down from corridors strengthens the disorienting effect. In fact, several tragic cases that occurred between 2005 and 2014 reveal that the vast height of the atrium even provokes certain anxiety – almost similar to the French concept of l’appel du vide.

The choice of material in the redesigning process of Cevahir is based on an intended opposition between opaque exterior facades and reflective interiors. On the outside, the blind envelope remains indifferent to the complexity of the urban fabric and separates the building not only from the neighbouring street and residential blocks, but also from its own public square on Buyukdere Street. Inside, the reflective columns mirror the white slabs, white and shiny floor tiles, and the anonymous users wandering around stores on different levels (figure 4). The experience of the interior even becomes psychedelic as the user moves from the labyrinth of stores to the all-white atrium with a skylight that was re-designed as a giant clock. The effect is at once unsettling – the building seems to turn under one’s feet – but also graspable with everything meticulously bound together by the horizontal bands of the central atrium. This, in turn, almost promotes alienation from the stores and shopping activities lined up behind the corridors.

This brief description of the experience of the mall’s interior gradually takes us to our argument about similarities between Cevahir and the Bonaventure. In sharing the same disorienting features in the interior void, Cevahir evokes – on a conceptual level – an unexpectedly related architectural precedent, the
Bonaventure. First of all, there is an explicit disjunction of inside and outside in both cases. Cevahir is a colossal building located in the centre of one of the densest districts of the city. Similar to the Bonaventure, the mall has multiple entrances from the main street, the subway and the residential neighbourhood, yet none can be identified as the primary entrance or exit point. The reflective facades of Portman’s building are replaced here by blind surfaces, yet the essentially uncommunicative relationship between the building and the immediate context is still valid. Remarkably, suggesting Jameson’s arguments, Cevahir ‘aspires to being a total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city’.90 It does not connect to the surrounding urban fabric nor contributes to the life of the city, but rather, acts as a substitution for it and implicitly pulls the daily routine inside.

When inside, the atrium in Cevahir does not allow a complete mental image of the space to be formed all at once. Like in the Bonaventure, movement in Cevahir is the key concept experiencing the mall, both physically and perceptually. The edges of the floors coincide with the escalators, so that the ‘new reflexive signs and emblems of movement proper’ generate the essence of the mall’s main space. The horizontal lines of the atrium recall a depthless infinitude, which dissolves the spaces behind. Finally, beside the configuration of floors and escalators, the reflectivity was another key component. What emphasized Bonaventure’s exterior surfaces was taken inside in Istanbul. The atrium in Cevahir turns out to be a horizontally placed form of vertically stretched exterior surfaces shining in LA’s downtown. In fact, we would posit that the atrium could thus be contextualized as a volume itself; as a version of Bonaventure that was turned outside in. The escalator sequence that continues around the atrium directs the crowd in multiple directions, acknowledging such contextual shift where the core of the building, the atrium, expands outwards.

Conclusion
First designed as a centre for culture and trade by Yamasaki in 1988, Istanbul’s Cevahir shopping mall was transformed into the global phenomena of shopping mall in 2005 by the local architect and developers. The two decades that passed between its design and construction represent the summit of discourse on postmodernism and globalization. This project thus becomes a contemporary case for recent debates on the reciprocal transformation of architecture and the postmodern condition.90 This comparative analysis presents an architectural speculation dwelling upon Jameson’s reading of the Bonaventure’s spatial experience. It particularly aims to indicate an architectural moment of ‘translation’ that allows one to reconceptualise Bonaventure’s spatial qualities in Istanbul’s socio-political context.93 In this sense, Cevahir Shopping Mall appears as both a player in the global league of shopping centres, and analogously, as a signifier of a well-known architectural mutation first manifested in 1984 and repeated in 2005.

Recent socio-political conditions in Turkey and beyond, complicate Cevahir’s interior even further by provoking new questions about public interiors of the metropolis. In May 2013, the Turkish government attempted to demolish Gezi Park, one of the very few residues of urban park in Istanbul, in order to build a new shopping mall that would supposedly imitate the Ottoman barracks preceding the park. The incident caused much tension regarding the right to the common ground and elicited heavy criticism of privately developed shopping malls substituting public spaces (i.e. Zorlu Center by Emre Arolat Architects, 2013). In his commentary on the Occupy movement in Turkey, Žižek mentions the protests’ anti-capitalist thrust and claims it to be ‘a clear sign that the “eternal” marriage between democracy and capitalism is nearing divorce.’21 According to Rem Koolhaas, this argument was already enunciated in 1994: ‘In 1994, the mall officially replaced the civic functions of the traditional downtown. In a New Jersey Supreme Court case regarding the distribution of political leaflets in shopping malls the court declared that “shopping malls have replaced the parks and squares that were “traditionally the home of free speech”,’ siding with the protesters “who had argued that a mall constitutes a modern-day Main Street.” Joseph Sullivan, “Court Protects Speech in Malls,” New York Times, 16 June 1997.22

Interestingly enough, on June 16th 2013, Cevahir played the pivotal role in Turkey’s version of ‘divorce.’ The building witnessed a major incident as demonstrators first gathered at the public square in front of the mall, then escaped inside once the police started to use water cannons and pepper gas. A group of police briefly entered the mall until requested by the mall security to leave, and eventually continued to pepper-gas the demonstrators through the street entrance (figure 5). The diffusion of urban shock into Cevahir, despite its blind façades and hidden entrances, unexpectedly connects inside and outside, which differentiates Istanbul from Los Angeles. This instant transformation of the secured and monitored mall space into a vulnerable public space adds to Jameson’s experiential reading of interior space a layer of metropolitan dynamics.
The Boulevard Commercial Project of Manado, Indonesia
Trickled-down Globalization Versus a Catalyzed Super Local

Cynthia Susilo & Bruno De Meulder

Abstract
At the beginning of 2001, in the slipstream of decentralization and devolution policies, the sleeping, small, and relatively provincial city of Manado in East Indonesia suddenly (though not unexpectedly) witnessed the arrival of the first shopping mall. Modernity at last! Nothing hindered the import of the typical Jakartan shopping mall; itself a copy of the shopping model of Singapore and Hong Kong. Nevertheless, although the shopping malls of the BCP do exemplify a generic reproduction of foreign ideas in Manado, their spaces are socially reproduced by interactions between the malls and the Manadonese, who create their own spaces which are neither foreign nor completely local but both at once. The BCP thus becomes a scene that makes the ordinary larger than itself.

Keywords: shopping mall, local appropriations, (indigenous) modernity, public space, collective space

Endnotes
2 Jameson, “The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” 40.
13 Ibid.
16 Vapi Bl (1988): 44.
17 By 2014, Cevahir had witnessed six fatal incidents, four of which were suicides and two were caused by stairs and escalators. “Cevahir AVM’dede Bir İntihar Şoku Daha,” 30 May 2014, http://www.haberler.com/sisil-de-br-avm-de-intihar-soku-6091354-haberi/, accessed 29 May 2015.
19 For an account, see: Reinhold Martin, Utopia’s Ghost: Architecture and Postmodernity, Again (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), which investigates the link between utopian thought and postmodernism. Martin draws on Jameson’s assertion that architecture is the material evidence of the ‘cultural logic of late capitalism,’ but also challenges Jameson by the concept of ‘feedback loop,’ a cognitive model in which architecture also participates in the reorganization of life.
20 We coined the term ‘translation’ as defined by Esra Akcan in Architecture in Translation. Akcan shows how the concept of translation between countries, with transportation of people, ideas, technology and information, allows for the consideration of the sociopolitical context and agency of all parties in cultural exchanges. See: Esra Akcan, Architecture in Translation: Germany, Turkey and the Modern House (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).
Introduction

The arrival of the first shopping malls in Manado in 2001, immediately after the new decentralization policy was implemented, suddenly differentiated the BCP from the rest of the city. As no sites were deemed suitable in Manado’s relatively chaotic urbanity, the shopping mall was planned on a landfill, in the heart of the first urban scale commercial megaproject of the city - the Boulevard Commercial Project (BCP). This collection of shopping malls suddenly created the duality of new land-old city, which contributed to the potential of the shopping malls to become a mirror of development.

The advent of the Megamall and the Mantos Mall, the first two of seven, soon became the vibrant backbone of the BCP. Their opening transformed the area into the most prominent public destination of Manado, as it stole public presence away from the old city centre and transformed Manado’s coastal landscape into a pulsating urban centre. Copying the developmental model of Singapore and Hong Kong, nothing hindered the import of the typical Jakartan shopping mall from the metropolis to other cities in the region. All the elements were thus at hand to explain the malls of the BCP as an inescapable result of the trickle-down paradigm in urbanism; whatever happens in the capital sooner or later trickles down into secondary cities, eventually arriving in provincial cities and remote areas.

Despite the pride of local governments and residents about the BCP development, criticisms soon arose. Everything was of course in place to start the conventional judgment that these malls; the artefact of global capitalism, destabilized the structure and tissue of the truly urban society. The BCP malls were addressed as a ‘problem of the city,’ ‘the source of hedonism and individualism,’ ‘an environment that promot(ed) social segregation and exclusion,’ and ‘the cause of the loss of public space.’1 Theories of loss – loss of public space, loss of authenticity, loss of basically all the features of an imagined democratic, human scale, harmonious city – of course fit these preconceived analyses very well. Nonetheless, based on a post-realization occupation study and empirical data obtained during fieldwork at the Mantos Mall and the Megamall, this paper will argue the exact opposite. While Manado embraced the modernity of its new structures, Manado Manadonized the mall and cannibalised capitalism instead of vice versa. The Manadonese appropriated these spaces for a whole range of expectable and less expectable uses that actually generate an intensified public and vibrant collective life inside the malls; a kind of life that is difficult to imagine in the conventional public spaces of the city.

Introducing the Megamall and the Mantos Mall

Although the visual quality of the two fully operational shopping malls of the BCP is perhaps less spectacular than that of Jakartan malls, the Manadonese consider these shopping malls the most contemporary and spectacular built achievement in Manado. The Megamall was the first mall to be built at the BCP and adopted the typical design characteristics of a 1990s-era Jakartan malls. Covering 36000 m², it began operating in 2004 and targeted middle- and upper-class Manadonese. Its massive local and national multimedia advertisements promised a constructed ‘new world’ as a departure from the common world of Manado.

More complex layers of influence surround the introduction of the Mantos Mall in 2006. It differentiates itself from its predecessor through architectural image and programmed activities. Using Las Vegas pop-style, Mantos Mall simulates outdoor environments through its sky-patterned painted ceilings combined with its dominant restaurants and cafes, which evoke an imaginary town square and street cafes common to Western urbanity. Surprisingly, the concept of the Mantos Mall was directly taken from Jakarta’s Cilandak Town Square (Citos)
The Mantos Mall's image of a 'modern' environment is best expressed in its capacity to impose (unwritten) behavioural rules. Since both the facades and the interior of the Mantos express a more contemporary aesthetic when compared to Megamall, its weekend visitors voluntarily adjust their outfit and attitudes to fit this image. The mall's backside furthermore offers a newly added semi-outdoor area and glamorous cafes, which are generally associated with the middle and upper classes. They enter the building via the back atria, where their fancy cars queue up to drop them off. The more 'ordinary' classes conversely enter the mall through the front atrium, where public transport and motorbike taxi have stops.

To comply with the mall's modernity, most visitors feel compelled to wear their individual 'detachable masks' by dressing-up more glamorously than they do on weekdays. While the atria, retail corridors, and indoor cafés of this mall offer the perfect stage for both individual and communal window performances, the mall's restrooms have surprisingly functioned as something of 'a space of transformation.' Here, visitors change their image and adjust their detachable masks before entering the 'public' space of the malls. Some retouch make-up, while others deliberately change their work clothes for 'show-off' clothes before continuing their stroll. These restrooms thus play a role as a lock between different worlds.

Nonetheless, even though the malls' 'modern' image induces 'modern' behaviour in some visitors, local visitors also practice local conduct. The actions of self-employed, middle-aged men, who occupy several cafés in Mantos Mall while conducting personal business, for instance, reflect this practice. Inspired by the practice of the middle- to upper-class Jakartans who use cafés and restaurants as prestige spaces, these men select the 'modern' and 'prestigious' image of the Mantos Mall for polishing their own image when conducting business. They occupy select spots in a café at the mall for several hours to 'host' clients during a meeting. Only a few drinks and snacks are ordered during this time, thus offering an inexpensive meeting room/office simulacrum. Before the establishment of the Mantos Mall, such 'business' meetings usually took place at home. Through the assimilation of local conduct and the shopping mall lifestyle, a new kind of space is created that is neither local nor foreign but both at once.
Negotiation with Communities

To enhance its role as a melting pot for group activities, the Mantos Mall offers an array of indoor and semi-outdoor cafés, restaurants, and food courts that have been designed in a ‘living-room-like’ atmosphere. Furnished with comfortable and flexible sofa arrangements, they invite individuals and small groups to linger (figure 2). As the design of the front corridor’s cafés is very colourful and ornate, youths, teenagers and students seem more attracted to them. The newly added cafés at the back, which are less decorated and more sleekly designed, conversely predominantly attract young executives, wealthy teenagers and wealthy families. The two food courts of the Mantos Mall in turn provide a variety of stalls in spacious, more neutral spaces. These spaces resemble the classic food court that could be found on the top floor of the local supermarket from the previous era. The elderly, families, and those who come in big groups, tend to favour this area.

Unlike in the Mantos Mall, only two franchise restaurants exist in the Megamall. Nonetheless, its single food court – similarly to the food courts in the Mantos Mall – frequently accommodates group gatherings. During the 2010 Eid al-Fitr celebration, the residents of the Kampong Islam reserved part of the Megamall’s food court for their Eid lunch gathering. The former fishing communities of Wenang kampong who live across from the BCP, also favour the Megamall’s food court for regular and occasional communal dinners. On another occasion, members of a Minahasan family clan occupied parts of the upper food court of the Mantos Mall to host their big communal gathering. They did so without prior reservation, as the family assumed this space was unrestrictedly available to them.

All these community actions reveal a spontaneous, bottom-up appropriation of the BCP shopping malls – disconnecting them from their originally marketed scenario, in which they cater to the (generic) metropolitan middle classes of the global economy. This mixture of classes, cultures, and ethnicities forms an antithesis to the common description of shopping malls as an exclusive place, in which the presence of ‘real’ community activity is nothing more than a marketing ploy to optimize profit-making. Manado’s BCP malls thus do not comply with the identity of shopping malls as an artefact of a ‘modern’ consumerist environment.

The best example of this spontaneous bottom-up appropriation of the BCP malls is the rumah kopi community gathering in the Bambu Café in the Mantos Mall. Every Wednesday evening, a group of middle-aged men occupies the mall café for a political discussion and bargaining activities, in which other visitors are welcome to join. The original rumah kopi is located at the Jalan Roda. Over the years, the name of the rumah kopi has become synonymous with the name of that specific community. It is this same community, Jalan Roda, who initiated the gatherings at Bambu Café. As explained by one of the members at the Bambu Café:

‘We usually meet informally at least three times a week in Jalan Roda. Two years ago, we started organizing an additional meeting at Bambu Café once a week because we want to feel modern. But we also still regularly gather at the Jalan Roda.’

Although the participants mingle for several hours at the mall café, only a few of them order drinks. The Bambu café consequently loses potential spaces for other paying customers.

The carefully orchestrated artificial environment of the BCP shopping malls undeniably creates an effective magnet that attracts visitors both individually and in group. The way in which visitors interpret the space furthermore produces unpredictable diversions from the expected mall behaviour. The community...
appropriates the mall, and largely counteracts the ‘financial exploitation’ of visitors that this structure is designed to induce. The manager of the Mantos Mall and one of the restaurant managers address these growing community claims to space:

‘The gradual domination of these communal activities is beyond our expectation. They just came suddenly, occupied such a big space for longer times, and rearranged the seating layout without prior reservations. Most importantly, they do not order much food or do much shopping.’

While locals have brought the practice of rumah kopi to the Mantos Mall, the shopping mall’s environment has also influenced the event’s participants. To adapt to the glamorous interior atmosphere and the ‘middle-class’ lifestyle of the shopping mall, participants to the gathering at the Bambu Café always dressed up neatly and behaved more politely compared to their common habit when they attended the same gathering at the common rumah kopi outside the mall. The ‘modern space’ of the Mantos Mall appears to ‘mediate penetration of others’ into the lifestyle of the Manadonese.

Similarly to other profit-oriented developers, the owners of the BCP malls aim to create a distinctive environment that allows market operations to work. Nevertheless, the local context and its cultures are neither impotent nor passive. The culture of the citizen delivers a viewpoint from below; the viewpoint of the locals who inhabit and appropriate their urban space and transform it according to their own living patterns and demands. Despite the domination of privatization and the intrusion of globalization, the Manadonese community forces the managers of malls and cafés to adjust their ways to local needs and customs. Thus the ‘tango’ of dialectical adaptations begins; mall projection versus local realities, expectation versus existence.

From Marketing to Public Events

The Mantos Mall and the Megamall face a big challenge in gaining the capital returns that are due. This, in part, to the insignificant numbers of middle- to upper-class Manadonese. This challenge cannot be tackled with the ‘normal’ strategy of Jakartan malls counting on that same socio-economic bracket. The Mantos Mall (later followed by the Megamall) has initiated a unique survival strategy by forsaking the classic marketing method that only targets specific classes. Focussing on the trans-class nature of the Manadonese consumer lifestyle – which involves parties and socializing in public places – the Mantos Mall hopes to compensate for the scarcity of middle- to upper-class patrons.

Both shopping malls of the BCP host events that attract large numbers of visitors from all classes. A combination of entertainment and marketing events, in the form of concerts or other performances, generate a weekly scene found in both shopping malls. What makes them special is their evolution; from the stereotypical shopping mall event space, which controlled and organized by the mall’s management, to a space of ‘public’ events, organized by various parties and assuming various scales – from the family, to the neighbourhood and the city.

From Marketing Organized Events to ‘Bottom-Up’ Public Events

At first glance, nothing seems exceptional about the organized marketing events at the BCP shopping malls. Just like in most Jakartan malls, the atria of the BCP malls are the central event space. Their wide-open surfaces and subdued decoration provide the necessary flexibility to accommodate changing layouts and large audiences. The BCP malls marketing exploits important local, national, and religious occasions to initiate various thematic profit-oriented events. The national days’ celebrations, the anniversary of the city, Christmas, Easter, Eid ul-Fitr, and Eid al-adha are among the many holidays celebrated at the malls. To increase the attraction, the malls are usually adorned with specific decorations during these events, and often graced by the presence of famous Jakartan celebrities. On these occasions, the role of the malls as a place of socialization and a local recreation dominates over their commercial role.

Gradually, events organized by external parties other than the malls’ management are also increasing. The need to incorporate the non-threatening aspects of locals and appease the social pressure to sustain public sympathy towards the malls has motivated both the BCP malls to open its indoor space for these external parties. As explained by the manager of the Mantos Mall: ‘The social pressure in this city is very high. Local organizations and communities frequently ask to reserve our atria for their social events. We cannot ignore them; we do not want the Manadonese to hate us, so we open our space for their social or public events free of charge as long as the scheduling fits.’

In an attempt to accommodate local demands, the competition between the BCP malls has added pressure to the ‘localization’ process. Each shopping mall allows space negotiation to ensure its survival. The use of the atria by external parties increasingly masks the divide between public and private space. This ambiguity increases the perception of the malls as collective spaces rather than as a stereotypical product of profit-driven globalization.
The BCP malls, for instance, attract local politicians, who employ the malls setting as a place for gaining power in the public arena. The shopping mall’s perception as the powerful symbol of prosperity and progress motivates others to request the atrium for similar purposes. By manifesting their presence (power) in a popular place like the BCP, they wish to gain the attention of a wider audience across Manado. As a result, during national or local elections, political parties all want to hold their campaigns and social activities here to gain the greatest public sympathy (figure 3).

Since the Mantos Mall’s inauguration, the atrium has also gradually assumed the role of a town hall. In 2011 the Public Health Department of Manado frequently occupied the back atrium for public counsels, blood donations, and free vaccinations. The Manado Department of Culture and Education even organised a school competition at the back atrium of the Mantos Mall in March 2012. For this event, a temporary stage was installed, as thousands of students flooded the mall’s food courts, restaurants, and cafés. This crowd of students drastically transformed the commercial atmosphere of this mall into one of a school (figure 4).

Extended Indoor Space Through Outdoor Events
The increasing public attention for the BCP malls pushes them into tight competition with each other. Every fortnight they must host different events. Whenever one shopping mall organizes an event, the others prepare competing events. To gain ground in this competition, each mall is increasingly focusing on the potential of outdoor space to augment its magnetism. The BCP shopping malls have thus become ‘more of a spectacle than a consumerist market,’ especially when the malls host outdoor activities that traditionally took place in more ‘formal’ or ‘official’ public open spaces. The malls’ outdoor and vacant spaces are less defined in term of use and perception. Therefore, a greater sense of freedom and accessibility characterises their atmosphere. Outdoor events can be observed from outside, thus inviting casual passers-by to come inside and join the activities; from musical performances to acrobatic motorcycle acts, martial arts shows, etc. (figure 5).

During large events, the crowd of visitors transforms the adjacent Pierre Tendean Street from a typical car-dominated road into a festival street. Especially local residents, mostly the former fishing communities, have become loyal participants in such outdoor events. While they enjoy the free entertainment, the opportunity to earn additional income by becoming informal food vendors is also beneficial to them: ‘We now have frequent free entertainment, but we
can also make extra money from these events. 26 Such events of course further increase the familiarity of the citizens of Manado to the BCP.

The more frequent outdoor ‘public’ events occupy the space of the BCP malls, the stronger the public’s interpretation of the BCP malls as a real ‘public’ space becomes. This is apparent in the escalating requests from the community to use these outdoor spaces. At the same time, these mall sites remain a contested space. This contestation is however not so much about the global capitalistic conspiracy that sucks the blood out of the community, but rather about the traditional competition between church and mosque activities (hence the processions at BCP), city (hence the official parades), political rallies (that only make sense to organize if one is remarked, hence in the BCP area above all other areas). In short, all the existing, traditional forces are present in the malls and more prominent than ever before in this strange new decor that is amplifying their effect.

In 2010, for instance, the Muslim communities from the Sario and Wenang districts, which constitute a local religious minority, occupied the front open spaces of the BCP area to celebrate Eid and manifest themselves in the urban space. They built two stages, and all the Muslim residents from the nearby neighbourhoods joined the Eid prayers, which were led by an imam on the stage in front of the Megamall. On other occasions, the majority of the city, the Christian group, also frequently requests the rear outdoor space of the Megamall to hold Easter processions and other large scale religious events.

Because of all this competition for space, the malls, which originally introduced a ‘disconnected’ environment, now feel an escalating and continued need to build a better connection with the city and the larger public. Their efforts to accommodate external requests also surpass civic and city-scale public activities. The 2009 World Ocean Conference (WOC) was the first international event hosted by the city of Manado and took place in the BCP. The reason for hosting this event here was because Manado wanted to show its ‘modernity’ to the world and establish itself as internationally significant. In the local newspapers, the mayor of Manado unambiguously stated: ‘This is the time to prove to the world that Manado can handle this international event. We need a proper international location to host it; therefore, we choose the Boulevard. At the Boulevard, we already have the shopping malls, the hotels, and the convention centre. So we will not embarrass ourselves.’ 27 Both atria of the Mantos Mall hosted the public exhibitions of the WOC. Their restaurants catered for the international delegates’ lunches and dinners. In addition, the atrium of the Megamall was used for the event’s closing ceremony, which continued with a parade along Pierre Tendean Street. Following the success of the WOC, city events increasingly took place at the BCP area and the adjacent Pierre Tendean Street. 28 By the end of 2009, the mayor of Manado had officially moved the city’s Christmas event, which up to then had taken place at the Tikala Square, the plaza in front of the city hall, to the BCP (figure 5). Today still, the front and rear outdoor areas of the Mantos Mall and the Megamall function as official locations for such large annual event, and have thus partially taken over the role of the city’s ‘official’ municipal square.

Conclusion

The BCP has become a machinery that, while offering a new and inviting scene, intensifies and assembles the local, its representations, manifestations and demonstrations, and this in a proportion and at an intensity unseen before. Everything and everyone presents and projects oneself in this brand new showcase of modernity. Surprisingly, however, they do not do so to become instantly modern. On the contrary, they are reproducing their ordinary habits and daily life practices.

The shopping malls of the BCP offer a sophisticated form where the reproduction of foreign products and the local culture meet in a single space, creating reciprocity and co-influence. Instead of driving Manado towards an exclusive lifestyle, these shopping malls show that a local context has the ability to redress the unequal provision of (public) space, even when profit-oriented development threatens to dominate the city and its urban space. While the spectacular mall world introduces Manado to the ‘modern mall lifestyle’ of consumerism, the ordinary local Manadonese, who do not have decision-making power, modify the available space to accommodate their daily interactions.

The BCP shopping malls prove that these structures are not necessarily the fully disconnected environments that critics often make them out to be. The shopping mall’s survival in any urban context is often dependent on its (good) rapport with the locals. They cannot disengage themselves from their city, and are therefore not immune to the influences of the context in which they are set. Nevertheless, the more the BCP malls engaged with its local context, the stronger the influence of this local context has become. This strong correlation
has reconnected the indoor world of the malls with the world outside. The BCP has thus – perhaps because this is the first time that Manado has such an amount of proto-public space at its disposal – become the focal point of a super local urban culture. Who said indigenous modernity?

Endnotes


3 Based on questionnaires that were distributed in September 2010 to 217 respondents from various occupations, living areas, and ethnicities.

4 In Jakarta, cafés and restaurants in shopping malls are generally associated with an ‘exclusive, modern and elitist’ space of the middle and upper classes for socialization. See: A. Kenichiro “Only Yesterday”: 52; Mohammad Hasan Ansori, “Consumerism and the Emergence of a New Middle Class in Globalizing Indonesia,” Explorations 9, 1 (Spring 2009): 87-97; Lizzy van Leeuwen, Lost in Mall: An Ethnography of Middle-Class Jakarta in the 1990s (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011); Andy Fuller, “Asian Urbanisms and Mallness in Recording the Future:” Asia Research Institute Working Paper Series 183 (Singapore: ARI NUS, 2012); Regina Suryadinjo, “Jakarta’s Tourism Evolution: Shopping Centre as Urban Tourism,” 6th Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (Barcelona: IFU, 2012), 1-9. Also many local TV dramas use the activities of these cafés as backdrops, thereby transforming the café image into an imagined cosmopolitan lifestyle of Indonesians.

5 Eid al-Fitr (or ‘lebaran’ in Indonesian) is the biggest Islamic religious celebration and the biggest national holiday in Indonesia. Although the majority of Manadoes are Christian, Eid al-Fitr remains one of important religious celebration as 40% of its Muslim communities participate.

6 Interview by the author with Achmad Kuncoro, design manager of the Mantos Mall, Manado, 1 September 2010.

7 Interview by the author with Hartini and Ferry Karundeng, members of the former fishing community who live across from the Megamall, Manado, 14 July 2012.

8 Minahasan is the major native ethnic group of the Manadoes.


10 van Leeuwen, Lost in Mall, 195.

11 Interview by the author with Fernando Lomban, a 45-year-old public transit driver and member of the Jalan Roda, Manado, 12 April 2011.

12 Interview by the author with Achmad Kuncoro, 2010.

13 K. Dovey, Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form (London: Routledge, 1999), 159.


16 Madanipour, Public and Private Spaces of the City, 138.

17 Due to the former colonial stratification in Manado, the Manadoes greatly admire middle- to upper-class status. Jobs such of academics, military leaders, and officials of governmental and institutional offices are thus highly valued. In reality, however, the middle-class social status of Manado does not correspond with income capacity earned from these jobs that remains less difference compared to some lower-class’ informal incomes. It delivers the ‘middle-class’ outlook as a mere of lifestyle and pride symbol, which encouraged many ‘followers’ of middle-class lifestyle. See: Peter J.M. Nos, “Miniature of Manado. Images of a Peripheral Settlement,” in Reimar Schefold (ed.), Minahasa Past and Present: Tradition and Transition in an Outer Island Region of Indonesia (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1995), 58-71.


19 Interview by the author with Susilo, general manager of the Mantos Mall, Manado, 3-5 September 2010.


21 Interview by author with Henky Widjaja, director and owner of the Mantos Mall, Manado, 5 September 2010.

22 Interview by the author with Ferry Karundeng, member of the former fishing community who live across from the Megamall, Manado, 14 July 2012.

23 Interview by the author with Mima Tambayong, Communications Officer of the Department of Public Health, Manado, April 2011.

24 Based on observations from March to May 2012.

25 van Leeuwen, Lost in Mall, 177.

26 Interview by the author with Ferry Karundeng, member of the former fishing community who live across from the Megamall, Manado, 14 July 2012.

27 Ferdinant Ranti, Tribun Manado, 3 March 2009; Leriando Kambey, Berita Manado, 5 March 2009.

28 According to the statistical records of the Manado City Hall, thirteen official public events per year have been organized since 2009, eight of them took place in the BCP area.
Westfield’s Architecture, from the Antipodes to London

Scott Colman

Abstract
The two new Westfield shopping complexes bracketing central London receive thirty and forty million annual visitors respectively. Both are “hardwired” into the city’s railway system, both are located near major road arteries, and both occupy legacy sites of the industrial city. The two complexes form a pincer movement that isolates, up-scales, and antiquates the central city. They are the largest and most advanced investments of a retail conglomerate with over a billion customers a year. An Australian company that began with the importation of the American mall typology to Sydney in the late 1950s, the Westfield corporation has been savvy in the financing and ‘curation’ of its facilities and strikingly innovative in the realm of design. Their historic growth was born of a willingness to engage architectural experimentation within unique urban conditions. Realizing the importance of the nexus between public and private transportation in Australian cities with commuter rather than metro rail systems, Westfield capitalized on a highly regulated retail environment. They developed a dense, vertical shopping typology that has proven more successful in the contemporary city than its American cousins. A mutation of this model, the London complexes are paradigmatic of contemporary urban developments that, dependent on the legacy of the modernist city, constitute its apotheosis and exhaustion.1

Keywords: Westfield, Sydney, London, shopping typology, urban development

A Progressive Shopping Centre
In 1955, two recent Hungarian immigrants to Australia, opened a continental delicatessen opposite the railway station in the then peripheral Sydney suburb of Blacktown. On weekdays, following the arrival of each train, the store flowed and ebbed with commuters arriving home from the central business district thirty-five kilometres away.2 Frank Lowy and his friend John Saunders had realized the value of a well-located and pleasurable convenience. Situated at an intermodal transportation junction, at the interchange between locomotion and perambulation, and between work and home, the small delicatessen inserted itself into the everyday habits of this small suburban community. The corporation Lowy and Saunders would soon found, developed this geographic retail strategy into an art form. By 1960, when their company went public under the name Westfield, Saunders and Lowy owned two shopping centres and two residential investments. A half-century later, in 2009, the organization’s market capitalization was $29 billion and it was the largest retail property group in the world.3

The history of the Westfield corporation and the particular kind of shopping centre it developed, is inextricable from the development of Sydney in the second half of the twentieth century. Although the railway heading into the mountains west of Sydney had reached Blacktown by 1860 and electrification of the Sydney network had begun in 1926, when Lowy and Saunders opened their delicatessen, the rail line to Blacktown had only just been electrified. Between 1954 and 1961, the population of the area more than tripled. Many of the delicatessen’s customers were recent European immigrants themselves, drawn to the area by this newly efficient connection to the city centre, nascent industry, and relatively cheap, newly-subdivided land. Catering to the tastes of this immigrant community, the partners opened a coffee lounge a few doors down from the delicatessen and then leveraged these initial commercial successes into a number of speculative property ventures, initially residential and small retail, but then, most notably, the development of an open-air shopping mall, which opened in Blacktown in 1959.4

As a promotion for their ‘Progressive Shopping Centre’ makes clear, Lowy and Saunders conceived their development within the optimism of the late fifties. Australians, torn between colonial loyalties and their place in the Pacific during WWII, increasingly saw any turn to the United States as a shift to the future. Westfield Plaza was consciously and conspicuously an American import, centred on a garden courtyard, providing fifty parking spaces, accommodating two small department stores and twelve shops, and flaunting colourful ‘American’ plastic
became formidable players in the Australian market. Despite its modern
decades, maintaining a keen eye on emerging industry practices as they
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Both partners would travel across the Pacific on an annual basis in the coming

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travelled to the United States to obtain knowledge of precedents first-hand.
Both partners would travel across the Pacific on an annual basis in the coming
decades, maintaining a keen eye on emerging industry practices as they
became formidable players in the Australian market. Despite its modern
American styling, in its urban strategy Westfield Plaza was a hybrid. By financial
necessity more humble than leading US developments, it was neither an
autonomous suburban centre, nor exclusively automobile-oriented. Seeking to
repeat their initial commercial successes, Lowy and Saunders acquired land
near the train station, taking advantage of the patronage, the nearby station
parking, and the expanding bus network that ferried train commuters into
the burgeoning surrounds. Blacktown was a regional hub at the junction of the
western line and a branch to the northwest and it conjoined areas north and
south with the Great Western Road, the main vehicular artery into the western
hinterland. Depicted as a colosseum or theatre, alongside the post office, a
public school, and the rapidly growing suburb’s proposed civic facilities,
Westfield Plaza was not in competition with, or a substitution for, the historic
centre and the civic realm. It was integrated with them. Like the delicatessen
and café, Lowy and Saunders conceived commercial development connected
to a network of public infrastructure, complimenting public services with
socially-oriented retail activity.

In this respect, Saunders and Lowy may have been influenced by the two
earlier American-style shopping centres in Australia, both of which opened
in 1957. Australia’s first, Chermise Drive-In Shopping Centre, an internalized
air-conditioned mall, in suburban Brisbane, with 700 parking spaces, was sited,
like many of its American cousins, alongside one of the city’s principle road
arteries, as was the smaller, open-air development opened six months later,
with 400 parking spaces in the Sydney suburb of Top Ryde. Yet, like Westfield
Plaza, both were located at transportation nodes, proximate to growing suburbs
established at the termination of a spur in their city’s tram network.

While these early centres were tethered by public transportation to historic
urban cores, in the coming half-century, as the Australian suburbs rapidly
expanded, numerous new shopping centres were constructed beyond the reach
of the public transportation system, often on greenfield sites with convenient
connections to major roads. Moreover, as early as 1965, the most celebrated of
Sydney’s modern shopping centres, Roselands, developed by the department
store Grace Bros., and conceived as ‘a city in the suburbs,’ turned its back to
the two rail lines connecting the area to the central business district. Like the
Myer department store company, which had ignored nearby train stations in
the Melbourne suburb of Chadstone in 1960, Grace Bros. was embracing an
‘automobilised’ future, driving a stake into the heart of their struggling downtown
competitors. Grace Bros. executives returned from their US research trip with
the vision of an inward-looking community centre incorporating a three-storey
department store, a grocery store, ninety-seven specialty shops, childcare
facilities and other patron services, a cinema, doctor’s surgery and dental
clinic, post office, food court, restaurants and cafés, organized around a central,
double-height internal atrium, and featuring meandering paths, modern artworks,
aviaries, gardens, and fountains.

The Intermodal Model

In a car-oriented strategy, the shift from mechanized to pedestrian movement
had to be precipitated at a destination. In the investments that established its
dominance of the Sydney market, Westfield capitalized upon the intermodal
exchanges that already existed. Their first major investment as a public
company, a centre with twenty-two shops, and department, hardware, and
grocery stores, opened across from the train station in the northern Sydney
suburb of Hornsby in 1961. Like Westfield Plaza, it was organized around an
outdoor, landscaped, social space, now conceived as an internalized pedestrian
street, with wide openings that allowed views from the train station and passing
automobiles on the Pacific Highway, the major northern artery of the city. Deftly
establishing the emerging habits of the Sydney commuter, the Hornsby centre’s
ample circulation connected train commuters with its parking lot and the
surrounding residential fabric.

The centre Westfield opened near the Burwood train station in 1966, evidently
influenced by Roselands completed in the previous year, was entirely
air-conditioned and, despite its location on an existing commercial high street,
was conceived – at least in branding if not programming – as a self-contained
town centre. The new Brisbane centres in Toombul and indooroopilly, which
opened in 1967 and 1970, were built across from train stations, incorporating
regional bus ranks. Subsequent Sydney centres, whether new construction
at Liverpool (1971), Parramatta (1975), and Hurstville (1978), or the expansive
redevelopment of acquired shopping centres at Miranda (1969), and, more
recently, Chatswood (1987), Bondi Junction (1995), central Sydney (2001), and
Penrith (2005), all engaged and intensified an existing hub of transportation,
retail, and business activity.
Encumbered with a difficult geography and, by American standards, an undeveloped, chronically overburdened, and until recently, fragmented freeway system, Sydney, due to its well-established train system, is more frequently punctuated than its transpacific cousins with suburban nodes. Like other Australian cities, it has a ‘commuter train’ network, which by comparison with a ‘metro’ or ‘underground’ system, is characterized by less frequent, higher-capacity trains and larger distances between stations. Therefore, by comparison with London, Sydney’s manifold sub-centres are less evenly spread, more distant from each other, and more dominant of their surrounding fabric. There are fewer high streets in Sydney than there are in London, particularly toward the periphery, but they are relatively more significant, and, connected by public rail to the central city – even today the dominant site of business and employment – the destination of often privately-owned local bus routes and regional automobile traffic. Strategically located at these crucial junctions, Westfield’s Sydney complexes have grown and thrived as malls premised on automobile dependence, such as Roselands, have withered.

Westfield’s Sydney complexes were designed to encourage, attract, and attenuate pedestrian movement at these junctions. Sited as close to train and bus stations as possible, and often incorporating the latter, Westfield sought to provide large amounts of parking situated and accessed in ways that encouraged ‘footfall’ within the centre itself. Although there was little significant historical fabric offering resistance to development in these suburban centres, the extant commercial property – usually small, two- or three-storey shops and professional offices – was costly by comparison with peripheral development. The aggregation of capital and land was not particularly hard won on greenfield sites or when investment was still thin on the ground, but in these nodes, particularly as they intensified, in part due to Westfield’s own activities, development and growth was relatively difficult to fund, initiate, and manage. Intensified investment, higher costs, and engagement with nodal activity resulted in dense, vertical shopping centres, closely integrated with their surrounding infrastructure. In general, pedestrian entrances were oriented toward major intersections and train and bus stations and led into the depth of the building via internal ‘streets’ or atria. The lower floors, of which, unlike the prevailing horizontal model, there could be three or more, were devoted to retail and engaged in a delicate balance between the desire to internalize and a responsibility to engage the street. Additional amenities, such as community meeting rooms or indoor swimming pools, were sometimes integrated with parking, which could be located underground to save space or on the upper storeys and roof, allowing visitors to descend to the retail floors, activating the upper storeys, and overcoming the industry’s prevailing rejection of vertical schemes. In their Hurstville scheme, a continuous ramp led from rooftop parking to street.

The impact of Westfield’s developments on the existing retail fabric was often devastating. As much as these buildings engaged the street, the full range of offerings was only available from the interior. Decisions about the location of garage entries, loading docks, consolidated bus bays, and taxi stands, were contentious, with significant impacts on traffic patterns, local parking, the streetscape, and surrounding trade. Constantly updated and expanded, developments would leap from block to block, transforming retail streets into bridged service corridors. As Westfield’s developments grew, they became less an appendage to the main street than a gravitational force, attracting housewives, lunch goers from surrounding offices, children after school, and punters straight from the railway station. Whether picking up sundries on your way home, whiling away time, waiting for a bus or to be picked up by car, or actively shopping, Westfield centres, by dint of location and convenience, became integral parts of the social lives of their communities, their intense activity a relief from the suburban doldrums. Unlike the typical American mall, conceived as a biweekly or monthly destination, and historically relying on the department store as its principle attraction, integration within the fabric of everyday movement allowed grocery or even a tissue of staples – butcheries, bakeries, newsagents, liquor stores, etc. – to also function as ‘anchor’ tenants. Until the 1990s, restrictions in Australian states on retail trading hours meant this diversified, consolidated, and easily accessible ‘one-stop’ shopping, eased by additional services, such as in-garage parcel-pick-up, which had groceries packed and waiting as you left the parking lot, was highly valued. Westfield used extended programming, such as food courts, restaurants, and cinemas to legally extend trading hours and enhance the value of their social condensers. 11

The Effect of Architecture on Westfield’s Corporate Architecture

Overcoming the difficulties of realizing its intermodal model to a large degree constituted the basis of Westfield’s success, not simply because the strategy proved profitable, but because of the corporate intelligence and architectural models it produced. By comparison with greenfield sites, aggregating sought-after property next to transportation nodes required real estate acumen, greater capital acquisition, investment, and risk, and more sophisticated financing and corporate structures. Planning regulations were more restrictive, fostering expertise in dealing with politicians and regulators, including strategies for
providing community assets and services. Moreover, the shopping centres themselves, more compact, taller, and with less perimeter access, were more costly, more valuable, and more difficult to manage, renovate, and expand.

More complex than the cookie-cutter mall, the typology was more specific, and the architectural knowledge increasingly proprietary, leading the company to establish in-house architectural and construction management capacities that it would supplement as needed with external designers and consultants. These skills in planning, financing, design, construction, ownership, management, redevelopment, and marketing, well in excess of those obtained by the typical retail management or development company, combined with a sophisticated knowledge of, and strong relationship with a broad-range of clients, has allowed considerable innovations and market advantages, such as the provision of knowledge and design services to smaller or new retailers or a deeper level of coordination between retailer needs and store design. Unlike American malls and those of its Australian competitors, which, with few exceptions, simply carry the name of their location, since 1966 Westfield has given their centres a consistent identity – ‘Westfield Parramatta’, ‘Westfield Liverpool’, etc. – establishing the company as a reliable provider of retail content. In Australia, and increasingly in London, the word ‘Westfield’s’ is synonymous with a contemporary shopping complex, by which one understands a particular quality, look, and palette of goods, services, and activities. By concentrating on a cluster of properties in densely populated, and specific, geographically-focused markets – Sydney, then other Australian cities, then particular regions in the United States, and now Europe – Westfield has progressively established local brand recognition among customers and retailers alike. Branding allowed the company to market its stores collectively, and facilitated by the company’s vertical corporate organization, allowed it to leverage identity and success in one area of activity to others. As a consequence, Westfield’s has consistently resisted the trend toward the associative semantics of themed malls, preferring more affective minimalist and contemporary aesthetics that allow the registration of the individual retailers, without sacrificing the brand’s overall consistency. If, as David Smiley has argued, ‘modernist architecture was normalized and brought into mainstream usage’ in retail environments, then the contemporary shopping centre is increasingly a playground for contemporary architectural practices of digital formalism, material fetishism, and media integration.

This resistance to postmodern place-making is perhaps most apparent in Westfield’s engagement with the American market. Their current portfolio of thirty-eight malls is largely the result of a series of deals since the mid-1980s when the American model of post-war shopping centre development began to unravel. Spurred as much by tax incentives for new construction as suburban expansion, and the desire of the large department store companies to own their properties, speculative mall development in the US resulted in centres with a ‘complex mix of ownership structures.’ The often conflicting goals of a diverse portfolio of investors, meant malls were managed to maintain steady, low-risk income streams, rather than developing business concerns. By the 1990s, ‘just-in-time’ manufacturing had reduced on-site retail storage, leaving the large floor plates of older buildings inefficient and costly. Faced with competition from independent big-box stores and structurally unable to raise capital for redevelopment, the American industry was ripe for consolidation. The knowledge and capital base Westfield had developed in Australia, its geographic branding strategy – the efficient design and management of its centres, its experience with diverse programming, and its vertical corporate integration, which allowed it to coordinate all aspects of centre redevelopment and marketing – allowed its rapid expansion into the American market and the company’s rapid growth.

Most importantly, Westfield’s core model – their conception of the shopping centre integrated with everyday life – has suited emerging technological and socioeconomic conditions. Although they were directly influenced by Victor Gruen’s pioneering social vision, the political economic environment in which Saunders and Lowy operated was fundamentally distinct. The primary assumptions upon which post-war shopping centres were designed and developed – a segregated workforce and gendered clientele; an abundance of leisure time; an ‘automobilised’ and functionally-organized city; unionization and the forty-hour work week; even a civic vision – are, particularly in the Anglophone world, increasingly eroded, even as the cultural imperative to consume has only become more entrenched. As workforce participation and working hours have increased, society has shifted from being time-rich to time-poor, a condition for which Westfield’s intermodal model, unlike the destination mall, was conceived and refined.

An Urban Interface
Following the intermodal model, Westfield’s two new ‘flagship’ complexes in London, at around 170000 square metres, do not comprise a fundamental shift in size or number of retailers by comparison with Sydney’s largest stores, yet their degree of integration with transportation networks and the complexity and reach of those networks constitutes a qualitative transformation. While geographic disparities in workforce participation and leisure time now threaten the widespread application of Westfield’s Sydney strategy, as their complexes
are more seamlessly integrated into larger transportation networks localized function is supplemented, and, in effect, subsidized, by a metropolitan character. Each boasting a proximate catchment of at least four million people, these centres become, in addition to integrated local and regional centres, urban destinations in themselves.

These projects are the result of a real estate coup as Westfield strategically acquired properties already under development. But, initiated by planning authorities, they are equally the result of public policies that, seeking to increase urban density and spur economic growth, advocate mixed-use brownfield development on sites with good transport connections. Both projects leverage and extend extant public infrastructure — the legacy of the modern city — for the express purpose and perceived benefit of private profit and economic growth. They are a consequence of the belief that retail is the most rapid and fruitful seed investment for large-scale urban projects; both complexes constitute initial phases in developments that include office buildings, housing, and education facilities. With multiple overlaid systems and jurisdictions, ‘retrofit urbanism’ is complex. Executed through one-off, large-scale public and private partnerships, the stakes and expenditures are high. With their size, skill, and experience in development, planning, architecture, construction, and retail, with few peers, Westfield is well positioned for contemporary neoliberal city-building.

At White City, Westfield inherited a shopping centre beginning construction. In the planning permission, the bought-out entity had agreed to build a new public library within the complex, new stations at the existing Shepherd’s Bush and Wood Lane tube stops, and had received permission to construct an entirely new station on an existing line of the London Overground and Southern Rail services. With the nearby Goldhawk Road and White City tube stations, the complex is within minutes walk of four train stations, to which Westfield oriented its entrances and internal circulation. A new regional bus centre was erected at one entrance and new connectors from the ring road skirting London’s West End lead directly to the centre’s 4500 space parking lot.

Westfield acquired the Stratford City site, originally intended as a new town centre, as the master plan was being altered for London’s successful Olympic bid in 2004. This placed Westfield’s property at the nexus of the Olympic site’s connection to public transportation and the Olympic Delivery Authority’s planning for the games. With the option of seizing the land, games organizers sought to leverage Westfield’s delivery capacities instead. Nearly three-quarters of visitors to the 2012 games entered through the recently completed Westfield complex. Proximate to a major freeway with around 5000 parking spaces, the complex is serviced by two underground lines, the London Overground, the light rail network serving East London, a major station in the national rail system, and a regional bus station. The design organized pedestrian traffic between these services; the Olympic site, Stratford International, a station designed to accommodate future European and national high-speed train services; and the Olympic Village, which was repurposed as a new urban neighbourhood after the games. As the project manager delivering this ‘connective tissue,’ Westfield was able to design and construct the required bridges and train stations, such that they flow seamlessly into the project’s internal circulatory logic.

In both schemes, Westfield employed the pedestrian ‘street’ present in their Hornsby scheme a half-century earlier. At White City, a large digital display, built across the footpath to the public road, ‘orients’ commuters as they exit Shepherd’s Bush station, drawing them into a restaurant-lined lane that funnels into the heart of the complex. At Stratford City, infrastructural connectors plug into a complex of outdoor ‘streets’ and ‘squares’ and an air-conditioned three-storey galleria. Although the genealogy of such spaces is well-established, their particular form is most reminiscent of the dilated thresholds — the Venus fly traps — between the Las Vegas Strip and more recent casinos: narrow, lengthy, and subtly shifting direction to encourage discovery. Full of visual distraction, they are lined with fashionable brands for the mandatory chic and restaurants for the requisite hubbub. Once you’ve set out on them, there is no obvious moment or incentive to turn back.

But the attraction of these ‘flagship’ complexes is also aesthetic and programmatic. Costing around £1.5 billion a piece, and sporting contemporary digitally-enhanced design, such as White City’s undulating roof, bold patterns, modulated surfaces, and richly coloured accents, the effect of these projects is closer to a contemporary resort than the malls we have come to expect. These complexes extend a level of recreation, luxury, and service once only associative with upmarket hotels or casinos into the fabric of daily life. The term ‘shopping centre’ is no longer sufficient to describe a collection of over three-hundred stores, four department stores, seventy restaurants, two hotels, a gym, an office building, meeting rooms, a fourteen-screen cinema, bowling alley, ‘kid’s club,’ and the UK’s largest casino. Bars, restaurants, fountains, sounds and scents, purposely spill into public spaces transforming the mall into something more akin to a club or lounge. Westfield’s event programming, once parochial talent shows and Easter parades, has also become metropolitan, even international in scale. The theatrical stages, at the centre of Westfield’s projects since the
1970s, now host film premieres and international product launches. Programming has been extended to giant screens and constantly updatable digital hoardings. In Westfield’s London facilities, you can ask a chauffeur to drive you home, order a valet to park or clean your car, or now that you are outside the congestion-charge zone, hire one. The concierge will do your dry cleaning, mind your coat, carry your shopping, or shop for you. Adjacent to wealthy Notting Hill and Holland Park, the White City centre houses labels such as Miu Miu, Salvatore Ferragamo, and Prada, the latter never before incorporated into a shopping centre. Personal stylists are available in the ‘fashion lounge’ to recommend wardrobe solutions. Westfield’s next venture, in Milan, under construction near Linate airport and major autostrade, connected by a purpose-built train station to the Milan-Venice line, is billed as ‘a showcase for the world’s leading designers.’

While many of these products and services are unaffordable for even the average consumer, let alone the majority of East Enders living in the shadow of the Stratford complex, the impression of luxury, sociability, and service is an ageless staple of the retail landscape and the integration of these stores with the public transportation network theoretically places a certain level of amenity within the ‘reach’ of everyone. Whether you shop at Prada or the Waitrose grocery store, you emerge directly from your chosen conveyance into the same urban environment. As retail developments, like White City, diversify, incorporating offices and housing, and we work, live, study, and exercise within the shopping complex itself, with ever more seamless transactions, consumption becomes a gloss on our everyday activity. As these environments become ubiquitous, the problematic issues of privatized public space can only become more contentious and more relevant.

The Pervasive Megastructure

As a trusted medium for retailer and customer alike, prudently curating sophisticated adjacencies and a mix of international and local fare, one might suggest Westfield’s architecture constitutes for retail a physical version of Internet search. Grafted onto extant public infrastructure, the firm reorganizes multiple transportation networks into a platform that efficiently delivers customers and retailers to each other (and soon workers, tenants, landlords, and employers), as well as facilitating their exchange of objects, information, and services. Like a Google search page, their crisp white interiors offer a neutral interface for a constantly changing array of images and tastes. As they branch into Airport retail, and increasingly supplement physical spaces with digital enhancements, Westfield, adhering to our movement, skin our waking lives. Moreover, those lives, filtered through daily transactions and exchanges, generate data and the wealth that comes with its collection and analysis. Free wifi; credit card systems; smart phone tracking technology; integrated apps and other technologies produced by Westfield’s San Francisco-based research arm, Westfield Labs; and other information gathering mechanisms, such as the car finding service – which, upon entering your registration number, will send you a photograph showing where you parked – are components of an integrated information system that, in the context of massive visitation, has unprecedented capacity. Architecture in this context becomes a gathering and delivery mechanism for information, objects, experiences, and bodies, the manifestation of a system that is at once infrastructural, virtual, and perpetually open to redevelopment and reformation. The form of these complexes is premised on the capacity – be it through distraction or attention – to sustain our engagement with that interface. Whether the project is entirely indoors or outdoors, is many buildings or a single building, seems largely beside the point, when these environments are ingrained within the operative logics of the city.

The design review board established during the Stratford design and construction process, the initiative of the local borough, seeking to preserve the original intent of creating a new urban centre at Stratford City, was, from numerous perspectives, highly effective in its advisory capacity. Nevertheless, contemporary design thinking appears flummoxed by our contemporary shopping complex. The review board sought to maintain the sense and feel of urban space in Stratford City’s external spaces, even as they pressed the material quality, long-term appearance, and consistency of the project’s bounding architectural façade. Similarly, emphasizing the project’s urban aspect, they sought a core structure for the building that could be repurposed for new uses, while Westfield sought the same outcome for the flexibility of its future operations. Moreover, using their in-house expertise to coordinate and benefit from numerous architects, design specialists, and subcontractors, Westfield broke the project down to accommodate the tight design, construction, and delivery schedule. From both the regulator’s and the owner’s perspective, then, the project was conceived as both a composition of numerous buildings and, in Westfield’s description, an ‘iconic’ object.

The precedents for Westfield’s history of developments are diverse, attesting to the organization’s on-going willingness to absorb contemporary architectural ideas. Although I have not as yet pinpointed the specific precedents that Westfield’s architects embraced in the 1970s, the vertical mall, highly-integrated with infrastructure, is obviously, as David Grahame Shane has suggested, a
Obtaining the obligation.

impossible by recourse to traditional conceptions of public space and civic

contemporary political-economic and technological conditions, this seems

with consequences that require serious and urgent consideration. Yet, due to

Not least, that the megastructure has acquired new and more pervasive forms,

and Hong Kong were decisive. Nevertheless, to simply categorize these new

shopping centre developments as megastructures, misses, I think, a great deal.

and Roselands, see: Shirley Dobson, “Big, Bright, Beautiful: The New

Shopping Centres,” in Paul Hegben and Judith O’Callaghan (eds.), Leisure Space: The


Although a number of Westfield’s early investments strayed from train lines, some

subsequent centres, seeking new markets, were constructed where train, if not bus,

transportation was unavailable, and, in tightening its grip on the Australian retail property

market beyond Sydney in the 1990s, Westfield’s would acquire and redevelop a number of

automobile-focused centres, the basic logic of the firm’s architectural development, has

been consistently transit-oriented.

Westfield, Westfield, 44.

Westfield, Westfield, 76.

On Westfield’s branding strategies see


School Case 899-260, revised ed. (August 1, 1999); and André Sammartino and Frances Van

Ruth, “The Westfield Group,” in Howard Dick and David Marret (eds.), The Internationalisation

Strategies of Small-Country Firms: The Australian Experience of Globalisation (Cheltenham:


On this affective rather than thematic approach, see Anna Klingmann, Brandscapes:


David Smiley, Pedestrian Modern: Shopping and American Architecture, 1925–1956 (Minneapolis


Westfield, Westfield, 84ff.


Yorker, 15 March 2004.


See Paul Hegben and Judith O’Callaghan, “Leisure Capital: Sydney and the Post-war

Leisure Boom,” in Alexandra Brown and Andrew Leach (eds.), Proceedings of the Society

of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand 30, Open (Gold Coast, Queensland:

SAHANZ, 2013), 1: 125-137; and Hegben and O’Callaghan, Leisure Space.

See, for example, the report of New Labour’s Urban Task Force, headed by Richard Rogers,

Towards an Urban Renaissance (1999). Stratford City was seen to be exemplary of this


On the development process of the Stratford City site, see Pallister, Eastside Story.

Rudd, Poorvu, and Tedlow, “Westfield America,” 11, table D.

http://www.westfieldcorp.com/westfield-difference/

For a prescient assessment of the contemporary shopping centre prompting my remarks

here, see Sanford Kwinter, “Virtual City, or the Wiring and Waning of the World,” Assemblage

28 (April 1996): 86-101, and “How I learned to stop worrying yet still not quite love the

bomb,” (1998) in Requiem for the City at the End of the Millennium (Houston: Rice University

School of Architecture, 2010), 29-55.

See the design review board’s reports published in the insets of Pallister, Eastside Story.


Endnotes

1 This paper is an abbreviated, and first, tentative forwarding of thoughts on the history and

implications of Westfield’s engagement with architecture. It has not yet considered Gabriel

Kune’s biography of John Saunders or Jill Margo’s of Frank Lawy. It relies, in large part,

on my own thoughts on and memories of Westfield’s Australian shopping centres, visits
to the London projects, my reading of photographs and plans of Westfield’s buildings,
the cross-referencing of numerous newspaper reports, Westfield’s Annual Reports, and,
throughout, the following texts: Westfield Holdings Ltd., Paul McNally and Margaret Malone
(eds.), Westfield 50th Anniversary (Melbourne: Hardie Grant Magazines, 2010); and James
Pallister (ed.), Eastside Story: Westfield (London: Emap, 2012). Dates are those given by the
company. Details of Westfield’s existing stores are available at http://www.westfieldcorp.com

2 Westfield, Westfield, 6.

3 Westfield, Westfield, 6.

4 On these early investments, see Westfield, Westfield, 18, 22, 24.

5 Westfield, Westfield, 24.

6 Westfield, Westfield, 27.

7 Sydney’s tram system had been recently replaced by buses; a fate that would befall
Brisbane’s network over the next decade.

8 On Chadstone and Roselands, see: Shirley Dobson, “Big, Bright, Beautiful: The New
Shopping Centres,” in Paul Hegben and Judith O’Callaghan (eds.), Leisure Space: The

9 Although a number of Westfield’s early investments strayed from train lines, some

subsequent centres, seeking new markets, were constructed where train, if not bus,

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been consistently transit-oriented.

10 Westfield, Westfield, 44.

11 Westfield, Westfield, 76.

12 Westfield, Westfield, 148. Pallister, Eastside Story, 101. On Westfield’s branding strategies see


School Case 899-260, revised ed. (August 1, 1999); and André Sammartino and Frances Van

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Strategies of Small-Country Firms: The Australian Experience of Globalisation (Cheltenham:


13 On this affective rather than thematic approach, see Anna Klingmann, Brandscapes:


14 David Smiley, Pedestrian Modern: Shopping and American Architecture, 1925-1956 (Minneapolis


15 Westfield, Westfield, 84ff.


Yorker, 15 March 2004.


20 See Paul Hegben and Judith O’Callaghan, “Leisure Capital: Sydney and the Post-war

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21 See, for example, the report of New Labour’s Urban Task Force, headed by Richard Rogers,

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22 On the development process of the Stratford City site, see Pallister, Eastside Story.

23 Rudd, Poorvu, and Tedlow, “Westfield America,” 11, table D.

24 http://www.westfieldcorp.com/westfield-difference/

25 For a prescient assessment of the contemporary shopping centre prompting my remarks

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28 (April 1996): 86-101, and “How I learned to stop worrying yet still not quite love the

bomb,” (1998) in Requiem for the City at the End of the Millennium (Houston: Rice University

School of Architecture, 2010), 29-55.

26 See the design review board’s reports published in the insets of Pallister, Eastside Story.


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69
THEME 2
Building Collectives and Communities:
Shopping Centres and the Reform of the Masses
When the American-born shopping centre concept washed ashore in Western Europe, it encountered a peculiar socio-political climate. In the decades following the Second World War, and in part in response to the Cold War, governments across Western Europe had set out ambitious programmes for social welfare that aimed at improving the everyday lives of their citizens, thus facilitating the formation of a modern, socially responsible, culturally educated and politically responsive community. The construction of schools, cultural centres, sports facilities, holiday infrastructure, etc. was an important building block of this project. All these facilities provided spatial centrality, public focus and human density; characteristic that the shopping centre typology also possessed. This theme departs from the hypothesis that when Gruen’s commercial typology – the quintessential modern environment – was introduced to Western Europe, its underlying design principles were often consciously oriented towards eliciting a specific type of modern behaviour and building a modern community. Contrary to common belief, also in mid-century America the shopping centre succeeded in creating such a reformative, modern environment. In an article published in June 2014, The Guardian posited that ‘for mid-century Americans, these gleaming marketplaces provided an almost utopian alternative to the urban commercial district, an artificial downtown with less crime and fewer vermin … they were a place to see and be seen, something shoppers have craved since the days of the Greek agora … it used to be where [the] young, middle-class(es) …, wearing their Sunday best, would come for weekend outings.’ This theme focuses on the reformist underpinnings (or reality?) and socio-cultural ambitions (or functioning?) of shopping centres. It questions the role of shopping centres as new figures of collectivity in the post-war urban realm.

Gruen and the Legacy of CIAM
Mass Consumption, the Avant-garde and the Built Environment

Leonardo Zuccaro Marchi

Abstract
In 1964 Victor Gruen, the ‘mall maker,’ published The Heart of Our Cities: The Urban Crisis, Diagnosis and Treatment, a decade after the proceedings of the 8th CIAM The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanization of Urban Life were released. While CIAM 8 became a main reference for both Gruen’s theoretical and design work, CIAM’s president Josep Lluís Sert praised the shopping centre as an example of a humanizing trend in the built environment. This paper investigates the hidden encounters and influences between the avant-garde of CIAM and Gruen, including the need for centralization and the separation of vehicular and pedestrian flows, which had both a symbolic and a functional aim. This transatlantic flow of ideas and references developed until the 1970s, when Gruen published Die Charta von Wien. This new manifesto, based on his beloved Vienna, was an attempt to adapt CIAM’s Charta d’Athènes – nearly fifteen years after the organisation’s demise – to contemporary conditions. It developed commercial architectural principles into ecological urban planning proposals and paved the road for a possible continuation of the Modern Movement.

Keywords: Victor Gruen, CIAM 8, shopping centre, ‘Heart of the City’
Encounters and Emigrations

The institutional, high-cultural, elitist architectural-urban avant-garde of the Modern Movement and the new archetypical, more profane, shopping-oriented avant-garde of ‘mall maker’ Victor Gruen form a biunique correspondence. Even though Gruen ‘tended to distance himself from the debates of architectural circles,’ he often relied on CIAM as a reference or for direct theoretical support. Several CIAM members, including Josep Lluís Sert, were similarly attracted by the potential of Gruen’s shopping centre – the new consumption ‘Phalanstery’ – which according to David Smiley played a significant role in ‘normalizing modernism.’ These encounters and influences between CIAM and Gruen were the product of a transatlantic flow of ideas (and people) from Europe to USA.

In 1938, Gruen was forced to partake in the tragic – to put it in the words of Sibyl Moholy-Nagy – architectural ‘diaspora.’ Together with his wife, Elsie Krummeck, he left his beloved Vienna and moved to the US. In this period, also many important European members of CIAM decided to continue their careers in the Land of Promise. Overseas CIAM’s discussions continued within several prestigious universities, such as Harvard where CIAM’s President Josep Lluís Sert was appointed Dean in 1953. The sum of these emigrations gave momentum to the architectural practice, architectural education and architectural theoretical debate in the US. The ‘country of timid people,’ as Le Corbusier called it, thus became eager to give the commercial experiments of the newly arrived Viennese cabaretier-architect a try as it readily absorbed the expertise of the well-known European Masters of the Modern Movement.

The Austrian-born architect Victor Gruen was imbued with European culture. His city of origin, Vienna, which he called Europe’s ‘center of intellectual and cultural life,’ represented his professional background that he attempted to reinterpret and ground in the American context. In the US Gruen soon began to explore the dialectic relation between the architecture and urbanism on the one hand, and private commercial space and public space on the other. At the same time, he developed a crucial interaction between design and theory, which was imbued with care for the environment and ‘high-cultural’ modernist references, and significantly influenced his shopping centre ideas. Nonetheless, in contemporary history books Gruen’s shopping centre has almost ‘never escaped a second-class architectural citizenship.’ This stigma that the shopping centre typology transmits, negates the pivotal role that Gruen and his shopping centre concept played in the commercialization of the public sphere, and the ambiguity that this has created. While this story has become famous – already in 1987 Fishman announced that the future of the great metropolis ‘[…] will dwindle to what we would today call a massive shopping mall,’ a statement that Margaret Crawford corroborated only a few years later, when she wrote ‘the world of the shopping mall […] has become the world’ – Victor Gruen, and his ideas have been largely ignored.

In the US, Gruen developed both a theoretical and design interest for the shopping centre. This culminated in the publication Shopping Towns U.S.A., which he co-authored with economist Larry Smith in 1958-59. In this book, Gruen stressed ‘that the role of the new planning concept could expand beyond the goal of creating merely machines for selling, and could satisfy the demand for urban crystallization points and thus offer to the suburban population significant life experiences.’ Gruen thus conceived the commercial centre neither as a mere consumerist machine or a subdued political-economic weapon of America’s ‘irresistible empire,’ contributing to ‘the struggle for the peaceful [commercial] conquest of the world.’ Instead, the regional shopping centre he proposed was to offer a new type of gathering place that would structure America’s suburban society in ‘urban crystallization points’ and counteract urban sprawl.

This concept of a commercial ‘centre of social activity’ was strongly supported by Sigfried Giedion who counted Gruen’s Southdale Shopping Centre among the pioneer ventures of the last century in his book Architecture You and Me. After its opening in 1956, Southdale Centre became the paradigmatic example of an enclosed, ‘introverted,’ shopping centre where air conditioning guaranteed an internal ‘atmosphere of eternal spring.’ The constant agreeable climate inside this ‘pleasure dome with parking,’ as Time magazine dubbed Southdale, enabled social gatherings throughout the year and – according to Timothy Mennel – counteracted the chill of the Cold War. Other CIAM members also stressed the biunique influences and fascination between shopping and modern movement urban projects. Mardges Bacon highlighted the important role, which Sert also recognized in Can Our Cities Survive?, that the shopping centre could play in forging a neighbourhood community and also stressed the influence of this new North American commercial models on his Latin American projects. This resonance was already disclosed by Morris Ketchum, one of Gruen’s first partners, who praised the Cidade dos Motores (Motor City – 1944-47) project as a model for the proper integration of shopping facilities with other urban functions, in his book Shops and Stores.

Sert stressed the importance of the first shopping centre experiments as attempts to design new centres of community. At the Urban Design Seminar on ‘The Human Scale’ held at Harvard in 1957, he stated that shopping centres were the first ‘notable attempt in the United States to give the pedestrian a meeting place.’ The Spanish architect thus agreed with Gruen who in Shopping
Towns USA defined the shopping centre as a new contemporary archetype, ‘one of the few new building types created in our time.’ The aim of the shopping centre was to satisfy contemporary human needs thus becoming a new ‘urban organism’ or ‘shopping town.’ It should therefore not come as a surprise that the ‘shopping centre’ soon became one of the urban projects that was proposed as a theme to students at Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, both before and during Sert’s tenure as Dean. While the 1945-’46 student proposals for a commercial centre in Hingham still seem a little premature – they are more akin to small theatres, with shops and facilities than a ‘real’ shopping centre and did not even have car parking — the projects submitted during the autumn term of 1957-’58 were more interesting. This course, carrying theme ‘shopping centers,’ introduced a greater functional complexity and also focused on the study of pedestrian and vehicular movement, which became an important aspect in the design of urban civic centres in the following years.

The integration of different urban functions within the shopping centre became the main theme of the seventh Urban Design Conference, entitled ‘The Shopping Center as Nucleus of Inner-City Activity.’ This conference was held at Harvard University in 1963 and clearly related both to the architectural concept of the shopping centre and the urban ‘heart’ of the city. This intriguing appreciation for the shopping model was already highlighted in 1961 when Sert and Tyrwhitt praised shopping centres for offering ‘an idea of what these new urban cores might be like. Many of these shopping centers, though built purely for private profit, have found it worthwhile to provide a wide mall or plaza, well separated from car parking areas [...]’ Finally, they describe them as an ‘open expression of the new humanizing trend in the urban scene.’ Rather than a purely consumerist machine, the shopping centre was thus assumed to offer a plethora of intriguing devices that perfectly mirrored and responded to the needs of a humanizing process by ensuring a symbolic and functional split between humans and machines; between pedestrian and vehicular flows. In the 1950s and the early 1960s, the shopping centre was thus believed to have the same humanizing potential as the illusive concept of ‘the Heart of the City,’ the topic of CIAM 8.

From The Heart of the City to The Heart of (Our) Cities
CIAM 8, the 8th Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne (figure 1), was held in Hoddesdon, England from July 7th to July 14th 1951. The ‘Heart of the City’ depicted the passage of the Modern Movement as well as the urban condition, from an orthodox functionalism to an open humanism, from function to passion, or from the ‘abstract machine-age interpretations of the 1930s’ to the ‘regional variation, history, and politics as well as socio-economic and anthropological interpretations.’ The topic of the ‘Heart of the City’ was furthermore discussed from different viewpoints, given the difficulty to separate the functionalist organic metaphor of the presumed ‘correct’ physical form from the humanist symbol, ‘which springs directly to the senses without explanation.’ Within the productive ambiguity and complexity of the heart, several CIAM 8 participants referenced its commercial function. Giedion, for instance, reiterated some historical references to commerce and public space. He began his story in the fifth century B.C., when the Agora became more intermingled with commerce, and pointed to the ‘decay’ of the Roman Empire as a time when the public space turned into a market. Giedion used this historical narrative to emphasize the sacrosanct right of the pedestrian and the pedestrian’s separation from traffic. For the Swiss historian, this separation took on a symbolical meaning. He saw it as a part of a humanizing process taking place in the built environment; between the heart as a humanist symbol of the increasingly important ‘emotional life’ of ‘the human being as such – the bare naked man,’ which stood in sharp contrast to the symbol of the ‘tyranny of mechanical tools’ which had led to ‘the blood and horror’ of the Second World War.
The commercial aspect of the core was also discussed by W.J. Holford, who focused on the reconstruction of the commercial inner area of London that had been completely destroyed during the Second World War. Nonetheless, according to Sert, reconstruction was only one of the aspects that the heart discourse was to address. He added the dangerous negation of the urban centrality as a result of urban sprawl and the constant enlargement of city boundaries to the issue of the disappearance of city centres as a result of war destruction. From obliterated bombed centres to the infinite urban structure, the topic of ‘recentralization’ thus obtained a pivotal relevance in Sert’s discourse. This became evident in his introductory speech at CIAM 8, when he quoted the philosopher Ortega y Gasset who considered the urbs ‘like the comic definition of a cannon,’ with a well-defined boundary between an internal civic space and an external ‘geo-botanic cosmos.’ While the Italian philosopher Paci vehemently criticized this conservative metaphor of the city, because he thought that it could only cause the isolation of the city itself, Gruen praised Sert’s ‘recentralisation’ discourse, which he thought had the potential of reversing the trend of unplanned decentralization and explicitly referenced CIAM 8, in an article that he published the same year. The urbs as a ‘cannon’ and notion of the compact re-centralized heart were thus incorporated in the concept of the shopping centre, which was projected to function as an urban crystallization point in suburban areas. As Mumford put it: ‘CIAM 8 can be seen as a reference point for the new forms of public space, including Shopping malls.’

It is of course no coincidence that in the ‘Megayear 1964’ Gruen published The Heart of Our Cities: The Urban Crisis, Diagnosis and Cure (figure 2). Regner Banham described the book as a ‘fairly irresistible [...] apparent combination of commercial success and sound cultural preferences.’ Although Gruen did not explicitly refer to CIAM 8 in the text, the resonance was undeniable, and he did list the published proceedings of the CIAM 8 conference in the bibliography under the heading ‘Some Books of Special Interest.’ As far as the significance of the Heart was concerned, Gruen’s interpretation was entirely centred on the ‘core,’ the physical inner city, the ‘spot of origin’ of European cities or the CBD (Central Business District) in the US. Gruen’s interpretation of the ‘core’ had thus lost some of its original complexity, as he made abstraction of the importance of the heart as ‘element of urban culture.’ His discourse largely corresponded with Sert’s idea of the segregated recentralization of ‘tightly-knit cores [...]’ no matter how a city grows outwardly, but made abstraction of the civic values that Sert attributed to it. Gruen’s compact heart was predominantly concerned with salvaging the environment against rampant soil consumption and air pollution. The heart itself was a metaphor used to denunciate the bad health of city centres and focus attention on environmental issues. Gruen’s main aim was ‘to create environmental qualities that will help fulfill the human heart’s desire in the city’s heart.’

The convergence between Sert’s urban cannon and Gruen’s shopping centre concept became even more evident during the First Urban Design Conference held at Harvard in April 1956. Here, Sert once again stressed the importance of urban centralization, relying on the support of the younger, ‘urban-minded’ generations on the one hand, and on the ‘Heart of City’ discourse as the real ‘precursor’ of urban design in the US on the other. One of the projects shown at the conference was Gruen’s Fort Worth. This project represented, according to Bruno Zevi, a new ‘Downtown like San Marco’ as it dealt with the same functional and symbolic issues that recurred both in Hoddesdon in 1951 and Harvard in 1956; including the need for a pedestrian realm – la royauté du piéton – through grade separation to preserve the heart as the ‘proper place for human excellence.’ This was also the main topic of Fort Worth, the ‘first of the business-district-on-a-podium projects that inspired megostructuralists,’ which created a new artificial pedestrian ground level, separated from the underground
goods delivery space and the external parking areas. To safeguard the pedestrian centre from the tyranny of mechanical vehicles, Gruen referenced his beloved Vienna. The project reinterpreted the historical defensive walls of Vienna, which was used in the 17th century to defend the city against attacks from the Turks, as a system of concentric rings of highways – outer, intermediate and inner ones – preserving the central pedestrian nucleus. This was the first time that Gruen’s firm used such a system to (metaphorically) ‘repel the invasion of mechanical hordes.’ From the Turkish invasion of Austria to its metaphorical superimposition on American territory, Gruen finally converted this ideal model of the Austrian capital into a concrete and ambitious manifesto for the environment: Die Charta von Wien (The Vienna Charter) (figure 3). If Gruen’s most successful building in the US, the Southdale Shopping Centre, presented an innovative consumerist machine for utopian social control by artificially manipulating the climate, then Europe’s Vienna became an urban symbol for protecting society through defence of the environment.

From The Athens Charter to The Vienna Charter

Die Charta von Wien was a final attempt to appropriate and update the legacy of CIAM, at the very moment when Gruen decided to retire from his firm, Victor Gruen Associates, in Los Angeles and return to Vienna. The manifest showed a continuity of CIAM’s ideas, focussing in particular on the concept of the ‘Heart of the City.’ The new element that Gruen added to the mix was the emphasis on ecology, an increasingly popular theme in the early 1970s, in addition to the preservation of human values. The Athens Charter (figure 4), written by the CIAM founders in 1933, was not only conceived as a reference, but an integral part of the new charter.

Die Charta von Wien affirmed CIAM’s Charter power of foresight. Gruen was particularly interested in the 76th paragraph (figure 5), which related to the correct shape of the human environment: ‘The dimensions of all elements within the urban system can only be governed by human proportions.’ The humanizing process, which was so explicitly addressed during CIAM 8, also became the main theme of Gruen’s manifesto and was merged with a great concern for environmental planning, which addressed the changes that had occurred in the forty years since the Athens Charter was published. This environmental concern was already subtly present in some of the talks at CIAM 8. Gregor Paulsson, for instance, drew connections between ‘Habitat,’ ecology and the ‘Heart of the City’ during his lecture ‘The Past and the Present’ in Haddesdon. Moreover, the struggle between CIAM and TEAM X regarding the ideological content of a charter of Habitat already signalled the desire for a more complex and realistic
debate on the built environment. At stake was a definition of ‘Habitat’ as an ecological, socio-biological issue.

But the 1950s were too early for CIAM members to recognize environmental sustainability as a key theme for planning. Even Gruen had difficulty introducing it as the basis of planning twenty years later, as Alex Wall affirmed, ‘when the threat to the environment was neither widely accepted nor understood.’

Gruen listed compactness, maximum integration of human functions and maximum separation between mechanical/service functions and human functions as the fundamental conditions of his new charter. These three conditions corresponded to those pinpointed at both CIAM 8 and Sert’s lecture at the First urban Design Conference at Harvard. The aim of centralization and compactness of the urban structure had however changed from the protection of civic values (Sert) to the rescue of the environment (Gruen).

Finally, if in the 1960s Gruen re-interpreted the CIAM 8 theme through his book The Heart of our Cities, with his American shopping centre designs in mind, in the early 1970s he used the concept of the ‘Heart’ to re-vision CIAM itself.

The environmental interpretation of the ‘Heart of the City’ allowed Gruen to reinterpret all of CIAM’s principles many years after its decline and detect a possible continuity of the Modern Movement. Through transatlantic encounters between the Modern Movement and commercial design avant-garde, the foundations of CIAM were thus adjusted to contemporary urban-social conditions in order to reaffirm their validity.

Endnotes
4 Smiley, Pedestrian Modern, 12-15.
9 Smiley, Pedestrian Modern, 5.
12 The utopia of the world as a commercial centre was already proclaimed in 1900 by Bradford Peck who, influenced by the Utopian Socialism of Edward Bellamy, published The World a Department Store: A Twentieth Century Utopia in 1900. In this novel, the department store metaphorically incorporates the entire world, including all social and governmental functions. See Bradford Peck, The World a Department Store: A Twentieth Century Utopia (Leawston: B. Peck, 1900); see also Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward 2000-1887 (Houghton Mifflin Publication, 1888).
13 Gruen, Centers for the Urban Environment, IX.
15 Victoria De Grazia, Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe (USA: Belknap Press, 2006).
16 President Woodrow Wilson, Detroit, 10 July 1916, cited in De Grazia, Irresistible Empire, 1.
24 Ibid.
25 Harvard GSD Special Collection, GSD Student CA 182.
26 Harvard GSD Special Collection, GSD Student CA 184-185.
28 ‘The understanding of the core as a human heart emerged from an architectural debate
in which function seemed to have yielded to passion.' Ignasi de Solà-Morales, Differences: Topographies of Contemporary Architecture (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 49.
30 Giedion, Architecture You and Me, 127-128.
31 Ibid., 37.
32 Sigfried Giedion, "Historical Background to the Core," in Ernesto Nathan Rogers, Josep Lluis Sert & Jaqueline Tyrwhitt (eds.) The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanization of Urban Life (New York: Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1952), 17.
40 Banham, Megastructure, 76.
41 According to Tom Avermaete, '[t]he term CORE was not referring to a purely physical matter, even to a social issue [...] Briefly, it referred to an element of urban culture.' Tom Avermaete, Another Modern: The Post-war Architecture and Urbanism of Candilis-Josic-Woods (Rotterdam: NAI, 2006), 71.
47 Banham, Megastructure, 42.
52 Alex Wall, Victor Gruen – From Urban Shop to New City (Barcelona: Actar, 2005), 231.
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Introduction

The issue of consumerism in socialist society has for a long time been neglected by sociological and anthropological research. A possible explanation for this dearth may be found in the traditional view of consumerism as pertaining to the capitalist social context. Socialism, on the other hand, rests upon the ideological basis of social egalitarianism, implying an essentialist perception of human needs. In this there is a differentiation of those needs that are ‘true,’ human, and deeply authentic from those that are ‘false,’ imposed, and, as such, cannot lead to true human happiness. Such a differentiation legitimises the portrayal of the socialist economy as morally superior to the capitalist one, because it is supposed to be based on meeting the authentic human needs rather than generating profit. However, in Soviet societies, which are characterised by a powerful centralised control over production, the State actually determines the ‘real’ needs of the individual, thereby dictating the ways in which and the extent to which these needs will be satisfied. Feher, Heller and Marcus describe this form of political discipline as ‘dictatorship over needs.’

Consumerist culture, whereby values are determined by the purchasing power and material ownership, is therefore incompatible with the ideological premises of socialism. A wish to possess things, only because they are new, exciting, or modern, is simply neither morally or politically correct, whereas destitution and self-denial in the name of a ‘nobler’ cause in the Soviet-type societies seem to assume the effect of the so-called ‘social glue.’

However, Yugoslavia (of which Croatia was an integral part until 1991) represents a unique case for research, primarily due to its peculiar political position after the conflict of the Yugoslav President Tito with Stalin in 1948. Among other things, the conflict resulted in Yugoslavia being expelled from the Inform-bureau (the East European association of Communist parties) and its withdrawal from the Eastern Bloc. Subsequently, the Yugoslav society rejected the so-called ‘Soviet’ model which had, up to then, been uncritically adopted in all its aspects, from economy to culture, and replaced it with the concept of the so-called ‘self-management socialism.’ It was a peculiar sort of social experiment; an unprecedented idea that had neither direct models nor experience to which it could refer. It was at that time that a new philosophy emerged. This new philosophy undoubtedly differed from socialism, a system based on a perfectly organised and controlled society, governed from a single centre. As Boris Kidrić put it:

‘To think that the uncontrolled torrent may be eliminated...is a folly, idealism... the one to be able to do it would be – God!... Today we have to allow the onset of somewhat chaotic economic laws, as well a number of other laws...’

In the early 1950s Yugoslavia consequently witnessed the emergence of dictated social changes, transforming State property into social property, whereas the socialist economy started introducing elements of market economy.

Simultaneously with the internal reforms, Yugoslavia’s position on the international scene also changed. Following its separation from the Eastern Bloc, Yugoslav politics began to open up towards the West, and were granted abundant financial aid thanks to its important geostrategic position. Nevertheless, after Stalin’s death, diplomatic relations with the USSR were re-established. As such, Tito, by skilfully balancing between the East and the West, managed to position Yugoslavia in a politically exceptionally opportune place ‘in-between’. According to Time magazine, such a position meant permanent oscillating between ‘communist iron control’ and ‘flirting with capitalism,’ and was extremely problematic in economic terms. Tito, however, cunningly manipulated it for the sake of economic prosperity in the country, thereby effectuating a sort of economic miracle in the following decades. For official politics, Yugoslavia’s position ‘in-between’ meant taking the best of both worlds – socialist ideas and capitalist models. This position, nevertheless, implied a number of contradictions, consumerism being just one of many.

Emergence of Consumerist Culture

At the height of Yugoslavia’s economic growth, which resulted in an expansion of employment and an increase of purchasing power, the State’s highest political body, the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, decreed that the increase of the living standard should become a strategic part of the country’s economic policy. The basic guidelines of economic development were therefore the encouragement of personal consumption and investment in social standards. Furthermore, in 1958, this same political body drew up a programme envisaging a ‘more comfortable life,’ ownership over ‘various objects of consumption,’ achieving ‘better catering for the consumer’s needs,’ a concern for their ‘everyday needs and supply,’ and ‘rest and recreation.’ While this programme confirmed that personal interests could not be put above the common interests, it also posited that personal happiness could not be subordinated to the so-called ‘higher causes,’ which marked a certain loosening of the ‘dictatorship over needs’.

At the same time, consumption became a means of fighting in the Cold War, a cunning weapon in the superpowers’ fight for ‘hearts and souls,’ particularly...
as a part of American cultural imperialism. When America participated in the Zagreb Fair, it presented the symbols of the USA and included a supermarket as the central exhibit. This display found a huge response among Yugoslav citizens and also strongly influenced those in power, to such an extent that the Yugoslav Government decreed that sixty similar supermarkets were to be opened across the country (figure 1). Of particular interest in this symbol of American-style modernity was the fact that the customer (most commonly the housewife) him or herself was able to choose the item that she wished to buy. By exporting the supermarket, America really exported the idea of freedom, the freedom of choice. This feeling and symbolism were of special significance to the citizens of a country in which no freedom of choice actually existed.

Nevertheless, in Yugoslavia in the early 1960s, some goods that the countries behind the Iron Curtain could only dream of became available. Although immediately after the War it was the moral and political duty of Yugoslav citizens to reject consumerism and adhere to the official classification of needs and values, increasingly an awareness emerged that ‘quality of life’ was a human right. Consumption thus became a legitimate and desirable way of spending one’s free time, which complemented the programmed socialist leisure that up until then had consisted of cultural and political education and ‘uplifting’ sports, recreation, and socialising. As the State had previously invested in the so-called ‘homes of culture’ as places of political education, it now became imperative to create new facilities that would enable and stimulate consumption.

Shopping and City Development

In the early 1960s, as decreed by the State, a retailing network consisting of specialised shops, supermarkets, and department stores was set up. Its construction was financed by social funds and funds belonging to socially owned trading companies. By 1970 thirteen department stores had opened in Croatia, a number that by 1980 had increased to as many as sixty. Department store chains were locally recognisable by their names, generally acronyms: PRI-MA (Primorski magazin), DAL-MA (Dalmatinski magazin), NA-MA (Narodni magazin)...

In urban planning terms, within the shopping network retail was conducted in two basic ways, each of which represented by a distinct typology. The first typology pertains to the so-called ‘centre’ of the residential area or housing estate, designed as a separate spatial complex within new, State-financed housing developments, which were generally constructed on the city’s outskirts and invariably designed in accordance with CIAM concepts of urban planning (figure 2). Shopping centres that were thus conceived contributed towards...
If one were to assume that the ‘centre’ typology of new housing estates was to create an urban atmosphere *ab ovo*, the role of the other urban typology, within which shopping facilities in post-war Croatia developed, represented but an addition to a new urban layer, the layer of modernity, to the existing one. This typology emerged along with new regulations of city centres and, like elsewhere in war-torn post-war Europe, became an integral part of the process of re-urbanisation. These processes, based upon CIAM’s concept of the ‘core’ and Bakema’s theories aimed at the humanisation of the centre, a special role was assigned to the department store, which became one of the instrumental urban reconstruction tools. The department store was thus used as a sort of urban patch (the department stores Maja and Prima in Split or Korzo in Rijeka) or an urban magnet of new pedestrian zones (the department stores Prehrana in Osijek, Dalma in Split, Ri in Rijeka).

In the light of the political and economic discontinuity of historical circumstances in the post-war Croatia, it is interesting to note that some of the earlier designs were, in the course of their realisation, altered and converted, commonly to increase the capacity of shopping network, thereby even replacing some cultural facilities with commercial ones. One example is the ‘Regulation Figure 2: Nama department store in Trnsko housing estate, Zagreb, 1966. Architect: Aleksandar Dragomanović. (Source: The Croatian Museum of Architecture, Zagreb, Croatia).


Project of City Centre Extension’, which was drawn in the late 1950s by Berislav Kalogić. Kalogić’s proposal departed from the simplified CIAM’s scheme as it used to be applied in planning new housing estates. It utilised a wide range of elements, modern in their basic code, which by overlapping of volumes, designed passages, shaded porches, semi-covered and open network of pedestrian squares, interfered in the irregular structure of the existing urban tissue, imitating an unpredictable algorithm of the Mediaeval city core. By applying the same principle of applicability, business and trading facilities were arranged along the irregular pedestrian paths. Shopping was dispersed in its entire volume, with a higher concentration in its south part. The project also envisaged one new architectural typology, never before seen in Split: the department store, built on the very edge of the historical city core. During its realisation it became obvious that the department store featured at several other locations in the area. Apart from Prima, another three department stores were built: Maja, Salon namještaja Prima (Prima furniture store) and Dalma.

**Typology Development: From Department Store to Shopping Centre**

In the 1960s department stores gradually became a recognisable new urban layer, added to the existing city structure. An example of contemporary design approach in direct contact with architectural heritage can be found in the shopping complex featuring the Maja department store in Split, which was built into the Baroque city bastion of Priuli, connecting the old wall and the new construction by its position and architectural articulation. The building engaged in a pronounced dialogue with the external space, both by its recessed ground floor along Marmont Street and its upper storey opening onto a large terrace whose prominent horizontal line overshadows the ground floor, with the same element of the parapet recessed into the wall section line, thereby becoming a part of new architecture. The complex was to be connected with the remains of the bastion by a diaphanous volume, aimed at vaulting the void created by demolition, thereby plotting the wall onto the pedestrian map of the city (figure 3). This part, however, has never been realised.³

The other example of the same typology, the department store Prima which was located in its immediate vicinity, was originally planned to accentuate the entrance to the new shopping zone and envisaged as an extension of the city centre. It was built in 1966, on the site of the previously planned concert hall, where, with its porch and the public space in front, it played an ambitious and prominent role in the urban life; a role that had originally been attributed to the concert hall. A cinema was built in the department store complex as well.
interior design and equipment of this department store was created by a distinguished Croatian architect Bernardo Bernardi, who had earlier participated in some of the crucial projects of national significance. It was for the abstract, but powerful, well-proportioned, and subtly balanced architectural expression, that the author Antun Šatara was awarded the prestigious Republic prize of ‘Borba.’

It is rather peculiar that department stores were placed on exceptionally delicate and valuable urban locations and, that established architects were invariably commissioned for their design. Department stores were furthermore often the subject of major architectural competitions. This could be explained by the fact that in socialist Croatia the concept of the department store exceeded its commercial features, and was attributed a broader social and (albeit indirectly) political role. By solving architectural tasks in terms of functional disposition and programme, the architects were however forced to face a shortage in programme data, a lack of foreign professional literature, and investors unprepared for the task, leaving them largely to their own resources. In spite of these difficulties, or perhaps exactly because of them, they succeeded in achieving admirable results. Among the architects there was a clear awareness of the importance of an effective display of the product, but the success in this may be associated with the quality of the architectural and urban articulation itself:

‘With regard to the commercial function a freer and more richly articulated layout and composition of business parts of buildings were aimed at enabling their better utilisation in terms of displaying and presenting the merchandise. Frequent perforations of these parts and a free pedestrian communication between them were to contribute towards the attractiveness of space, and thereby a better marketing of the merchandise.’

Unencumbered with the dictate of profitability of the commercial contents, the designing discourse was determined by an awareness of the department store as a project of social significance: in administrative procedures it was actually treated as an important project for the city. This importance gave its authors architectural freedom, justifying even high construction costs. The architecture of department stores was characterised by modernist discourse, an almost Cartesian discipline in designing and the use of innovative building technologies (both in terms of materials and methods of construction). Some designs display regional features, even attributes of historical identity. Numerous realisations secured their authors most prestigious State awards (Prima in Split, Prehrana in Osijek, Nama Trnsko in Zagreb).16

During the 1970s these department stores grew into more complex shopping centres. They began to host a mix of facilities (clubs, conference halls, cinemas, banks, agencies, hotels, auction halls, underground parking lots, and the department store), thereby becoming predecessors of the contemporary shopping centre. An example may be found in a large complex of the so-called ‘Commercial centre’ in Split designed by Vuko Bombardelli. In terms of design, this centre ostensibly follows Kalogjera’s urban scheme, whose diverse functions are not located in one, but rather in a distributed and dispersed matrix of interconnected volumes. Entrances at several levels, porches, passages, and roof terraces embody the winning combination of a successful blend of modernist spirit and Mediterranean context. It is indicative that eventually only the Dalma department store should have been constructed, with a square whose urban role remained modest in comparison to the one originally envisaged, although nevertheless still significant in terms of urban character, as it extended towards the north of the city. On the other hand, an exceptionally ambitious and powerful project over the RI department store was realised in Rijeka according to the winning competition design of Ninoslav Kučan, Boris Babić, and Vjera Kučan. The department store is here used as an urban planning tool in connecting the old city, Rijeka’s main street Korzo, with the harbour, occupying two housing
blocks spanning the street and crossing the main thoroughfare between Korzo and Riva. Although this radical architectural and urban intervention was never fully realised, the department store and the attraction of shopping seems to have created a pedestrian link between the city and the harbour. In the spirit of the then topical architectural moment, in which pre-fabrication and industrial production replaced the traditional building process, the Ri department store was entirely pre-fabricated. The façade, plated in lacework of aluminium trusses designed for displaying large advertising boards, is evocative of industrial aesthetics, with the interior carefully articulated with pre-fabricated parts. Although the construction was accompanied by intensive public debate regarding its aesthetic principles, the opening of the Ri department store in 1974 received a highly emotional response from the citizens. 30000 visitors attended the opening ceremony as local newspapers expressed their admiration for the complex's technical composition. The department store thus became a symbol of the city's progress and prosperity.16

The most complex example at this time was however the Koteks shopping centre in Split, designed by local architect Slaven Rožić. It was inaugurated as the first shopping mall in Yugoslavia (figure 4).17 Located on a terrace of the former quarry, this shopping centre covers, together with the Gripe sports centre that Rožić designed in collaboration with Živorad Janković, an area equivalent to an entire housing estate of 1960s Split. By far exceeding the proportions of the existing department stores, the trading business at the Koteks shopping centre is carried out in a complex spatial dialogue between external public spaces with shopping facilities characterised by highly pronounced tectonics. The elements of the Mediterranean urban inventory (shaded terraces, pergolas, squares, flights of stairs) have been taken in hypertrophic scale, representing a public city space in the true sense of the word. However, since it was exclusively subordinated to the function of shopping, the dynamics of its use were reduced to the shops’ opening hours, and its urban dimension as a result never fully achieved. Nevertheless, the Koteks shopping centre remains an example of the local interpretation of the modern scenery of consumerist leisure.

Socialist Shopping Centres after the Political Shift
In the 1990s a change of social paradigm in Croatia brought about a collapse of spatial and urban planning policies, as well as a change in the consumerist culture and the chaos of privatisation. As a result, the department store fell victim to either second-rate architectural conversions commissioned by their new owners or closure and dubious long-term vacancy. In Split the Maja department store was re-constructed and converted, retaining only very few of its original urban qualities. The Prima department store changed its interior design to cater to separate tenants. The conversions, however, also included a roof extension for an oval café, commendable insomuch as it seems to have recognised, if not solved, a problem typical of many downtown department stores, namely poor circulation on the upper storeys. The interior of the Dalma department store has sunk into obscurity, having entirely lost the features of its open selling space. The Koteks department store is obviously decaying, thereby lessening the dynamics of the public space and contact zone. The Ri department store in Rijeka is being transformed into a number of small shops which have difficulties in surviving, while the department stores in Zagreb and Osijek share almost the same fate. At the same time, the construction of large shopping malls located out of town, characterised by the introvert typology of American origin, seems to be gaining traction.

Conclusion
Socialist Croatia was, under the influence of consumerist culture, made into a highly peculiar socialist society, ‘the children of Marx and Coca-Cola,’ as described by Jean-Luc Godard. By indulging in the joys of shopping, the citizens felt contented, thinking that they enjoyed much more freedom than the other countries behind the Iron Curtain. Thanks to consumer culture, common people more readily accepted Tito’s regime. Consumerism, in fact, served as a means of obtaining loyalty, as well as a method of pacifying the society. As a matter of fact, as observed by Patterson, in an almost diabolic turn, by applying the ‘carrot-and-stick’ method, giving the citizens a sense of freedom, consumerism...
actually turned into a means of control. The Architecture of socialist shopping however constitutes valuable architectural heritage. The social role played by architecture succeeded in making them an integral part of the city’s identity. Today these shopping destinations represent an urban potential for future reconstructions and renovations.

Endnotes
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6 Bilandžić, Hrvatska Moderna Povijest, 387.

Guerrilla Picnicking: Appropriating a Neighbourhood Shopping Centre as Malleable Public Space

Jennifer Smit & Kirsty Máté

Abstract

Shopping centres are often maligned as undemocratic spaces, with a problematic relationship between private ownership and public participation, between private commercialization and public consumption, yet are offered here as a case study for everyday but significant urban experiences. Shopping centre interiors provide uncanny opportunities for public participation that can be seen to point to new concepts of citizenship. Through an act of ‘guerrilla picnicking’ within a shopping centre, this paper provides a provocation for examining the possibilities for spatial appropriation and public freedoms offered by a neighbourhod shopping centre - opportunities for civic liberties that are often forgotten both within discourses on quasi-public space, and in these conditional spaces of our city interiors. By populating the quasi-public interior of a shopping centre with active citizens rather than obedient subjects, greater opportunities for human connection and participation are offered in an urban realm that continues to reduce and control these occurrences.

Keywords: shopping mall, public space, guerrilla urbanism

Introduction

The shopping centre exhibits a monumental, solid and immutable façade, yet in spite of this apparently inflexible archetype, offers some moments of civic possibility and a provocative tableau for orchestrating an inquiry into the possibilities for, and the conceptual reconfiguration of, public life in a quasi-public space. Neighbourhood shopping centres are a significant part of our everyday routines - entering their realm presents a series of dualities: placed and placeless, local and global, privately owned and managed and yet with a negotiable set of public freedoms. The neighbourhood shopping centre in
regional Australia is replete with these doubled qualities and also tinged with a specific Australian flavour as these sites attempt to translate ‘a sense of place’ yet often miss this opportunity as the commercial logic of this generic type resists local specificity.

On offer within the neighbourhood shopping centre are goods for consumption, but also on offer is an interior in which we may as citizens gather, linger and communicate. The public status of the space is ambivalent in an interior constructed for consumerism: What length of stay is tolerated? What is permissible beyond shopping? And conversely, what is unacceptable? As a quasi-public space, the shopping centre interior provides a field of uncertainties and also a matrix of possibilities. Uncanny behaviours that appear to challenge social norms require both the management and the users (citizens) of the shopping centre to negotiate social codes that organise and provide permission on how the spaces may operate.

This paper promotes the notion that we may adopt shopping centre interiors as places that could accommodate a greater variety of public behaviours and uses: that they could be more available or ‘loose’ in terms of public freedoms than they may appear to be at first inspection. By conducting a guerrilla action in a neighbourhood shopping centre on the fringes of a the regional town of Launceston, Tasmania we are attempting to not only embrace this archetype as a significant public space, but to reveal a more nuanced understanding of shopping publics that is supported by contemporary public space discourse.

The Rise of the Shopping Centre as a Dominant Part of Suburban Life

The development of internal shopping spaces has been shown to have undergone a formal evolution from the semi-enclosed marketplaces and bazaars to arcades, department stores, supermarkets and shopping centres/malls; each development having greater autonomy from the connections and limitations of urban constraints and the unpredictable nature of climate. Since the first European arcades and department stores of the 1880s, this growing internalised retail form, enabled through new technologies (such as air conditioning, lifts and escalators) and materials (such as sheet glass and steel construction), spread across the globe, creating architecturally grand spaces for a ‘growing middle class that marked itself through conspicuous consumption. Shopping centres created a space for consumerism in one large controlled and climatically conditioned interior space: the private was now folded in with the public. Public streets of former shopping precincts, now conditioned and conditional interior arcades, created ambivalent and enigmatic spaces, where behaviour as well as climate were increasingly managed and restricted by privatisation.

Today, the interiorised environment of the shopping centre is synonymous with suburban life, where often, it is the only civic place for entertainment, social gatherings and cultural enjoyment. ‘Shopping is arguably the last remaining form of public activity. Through a battery of increasingly predatory forms, shopping has been able to colonize – even replace – almost every aspect of urban life.’ This global permeation of the shopping centre has had significant impact at a local scale, privatising and internalizing civic and social spaces as well as colonising the city’s public institutions – museums, libraries, transport hubs, universities, hospitals and even churches. Shopping spaces might be seen, within these particular discourses as a form of civic space.

Shopping centres have evolved in size and complexity to allow dispersion throughout the urban landscape, from vast super centres providing products for sale and entertainment for the consumer, to small neighbourhood centres whose major function is for everyday convenience of daily living needs. Our interest in neighbourhood shopping centres is as they are often the only local place to shop in regional areas while providing the sole local ‘public’ space for social interaction. While the term ‘neighbourhood’ might well be an anachronism in many of our cities, in shopping centre discourse it is imbued with a reassuring sensibility, suggesting a familiarity with a community; a sense of belonging or perhaps even a citizenship beyond that of ‘regional’ or ‘super’ shopping centres which makes the focus on the neighbourhood of particular interest as we investigate the potential for public occupation of these spaces. Given their local sensibility and scale, it was thought to be more likely that a guerrilla action may be tolerated with their boundaries.

Quasi-public Space: Negotiating Publicness in an Indeterminate Public Realm

Quasi-public space (the indeterminate ‘publicness’ of private space) and shopping space discourses have focused on the degree of liberty offered citizens to enact community rituals or behaviours within specific shopping spaces. At stake here is the democratic right to access, act and be safe within this ‘new’ public realm. It has been argued that this private ownership of a public space necessarily creates an authoritarian use of these civic spaces, the users acting as passive, obedient subjects, reducing their ability to act as ‘true’ citizens. Such theories promote a fixed rather than fluid idea of the effects of ‘quasi’ or ‘new’ public spaces, and tend to focus on how these spaces
should operate rather than how they are actually experienced. highlighting the lack of literature on specific positive public engagement in these new public realms, tyndall has suggested that a focus on the privatization of urban spaces has ‘left the social in the shopping mall largely unwritten and closed off to opportunities to re-imagine and re-engage such spaces with a more progressive public ethic.’

the theoretical ‘backdrop’ of much of this recent urban literature is imbued with an identifiable stream of consciousness that laments the apparent demise of public space within our cities. the privatization of the public realm has been presented as a dark and dangerous narrative that threatens both liberal enjoyment and access to city interiors. davis and sorkin among others have written prolifically since the 1990s on the continual sublimation of public space by the forces of ‘savage fanatical capitalism.’ citing the emergence of gated communities, mega-malls and the rolling out of regional shopping centres across suburbia, the contemporary city is almost fictionally recounted beyond recognition as a city ‘under attack.’

watson, however, embraces a more nuanced idea of city ‘publics,’ where a more useful consideration of the ‘everyday’ occupancy of cities, and possibilities for diversity are available within specific micro-environments. watson writes from a place of delight in the chance encounters within city spaces, and her book *city publics* reveals a more fine-grained analysis of how citizens negotiate lived spaces and ‘rub along together’ in the face of varying subjectivities and contingencies. central to her thesis is the belief that ‘the specificity and contingency of difference as lived in particular socio-spatial configurations has to be central to urban analysis.’

‘loose space’ and quasi-public space

in the book *loose space*, franck and stevens advocate for a quality of looseness in the public spaces of the city. according to this measure of publicity, spaces within the city exhibit looseness if they offer the triad of public opportunity: possibility, diversity and disorder. entertainment, self-expression, political expression, self reflection or non-orthodox modes of social interaction, art practice and installations; these spatial practices are outside the everyday routines for most people, and it is the right to be able to exercise these freedoms in urban space that frank and stevens are exploring in their support of loose space.

the authors suggest that small add-ons to our urban environments can contribute to ‘spatial looseness.’ they propose that ledges, niches, recesses, and hard surfaces may all serve as ‘props’ to an (exterior) public realm, yet not only is the physical arrangement of a public space a major factor in its looseness, and that people’s belief in the general freedom of public space is an essential prerequisite to their acting out that freedom through use. thus it is the degree to which it is co-optable by the public that determines the looseness of the space. or as the authors express this issue, ‘activities generate looseness, rather than the spaces themselves.’ that is to say, what we ‘think’ we are able to do in a given space will have a major impact on its apparent looseness.

this idea of the perceived rules of public behaviour within a public space becomes decidedly unclear when we begin to analyse quasi-public spaces generally and neighbourhood shopping centres specifically, as rarely are these codes of behaviour articulated in these smaller scale centres, and if they are, they can vary significantly between establishments. if we accept that looseness of a shopping space is reduced by controlling authorities - evidenced by signs that exclude behaviours, surveillance cameras and security guards - the degree to which a space offers malleability is more positively influenced by the physical provision of interior ‘props’ into the shopping space to ‘enhance’ looseness.

we make the claim that it is precisely because of the ambivalence and indeterminacy of the neighbourhood shopping-scape as a quasi-public space that we may be able to appropriate these interiors at all. their indeterminate circumstance in fact ‘creates’ looseness. moreover, by bringing certain ‘props’ into these everyday spaces, we can enact interior appropriations: new surfaces for public exchanges to occur.
Social Activism and Guerrilla Urban Practices

Popular within the tide of social activism in the 1960s and 1970s guerrilla activities – or public acts of resistance in urban settings – appear to have made a comeback. Lee Stickells addresses this resurgence of interest in what he terms ‘social architecture,’ reminding readers that the idea of the ‘Right to the City,’ was first proposed by Henri Lefebvre in the late 1960s in his provocation to *citoyens* to take up the call to use (both in terms of occupation and appropriation) the public domain.21

Essentially an optimistic act in support of new possibilities for public space, guerrilla actions seek to ‘better understand the everyday and not-so-everyday making of public space that defies the conventional rules, regulations and wisdom.’22 Art practices, social theory and urban installation, architects and ‘interiorists’23 have all variously engaged in these ‘on-the-ground’ activities and evoked a range of unorthodox urban practices in order to do so. ‘Tactical urbanism,’ ‘user-generated urbanism’ and ‘emancipatory practices’ are just some of the terms used to describe these activities, and typical events may include occupying the streets at peak hour with bicycles, as in the ‘critical mass’ initiatives that now have a global presence, or public space sleep-overs such as ‘nappenings’ on inner city sites, or spontaneous plantings and harvestings such as ‘guerrilla gardening’ in New York. 24

Guerrilla actions provide a performative means to assert a public consciousness into quasi-public spaces, and are the means by which we seek to explore the public terrain of a neighbourhood shopping centre. By holding a picnic in a shopping centre, we enact a questioning of allowable public behaviours by performing a non-commercial public activity. Through introducing temporary interior ‘props’ integral to our guerrilla event (picnic blankets, napkins, etc.) we have found the means, to appropriate these spaces, to increase the degree of ‘availability’ and thereby shift their social relations in new and productive ways and find out more about the nature of ‘shopping publics’ in the process. Interestingly, it is this combination of being able to introduce small props and elements, and the creation of the possibility of interactivity and engagement that may break habits and conventions, and allow for events that change effectual states (surprise, quizzicality, embarrassment) all of which need to be performed. The guerrilla picnic provides the mechanism to engage in these spatial disruptions, and enact these shifts in social relations in the shopping centre interior.

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**Figure 1:** Signage at a neighbourhood shopping centre indicating exclusionary behaviours. (Photo: Jen Smit)

**Figure 2:** The Kingsmeadows neighbourhood shopping Centre. (Photo: Nick Tantaro)
The Guerrilla Picnic — Laying Claim to the Private Realm with a Public Ritual of Informal Dining

Conducting a public picnic within these suburban interiors serves to test out the extent of public freedoms, and stake a claim for the right of citizens to occupy these ‘quasi’ public spaces in an unconventional manner. Recalling nostalgic practices of a mid-19th century recreational pastime, the picnic provides a disarming method of laying claim to the ambiguous public territory of the shopping interior. The surface of the blanket provided an invitation to shoppers during our action, to reconsider the opportunities for personal occupancy of a privately owned space. The act of picnicking, more usually enacted in the outdoors, and most unusually within the boundaries of a shopping centre precinct, thus provided a surprising disruption to the usual modes of civic deportment in these spaces.

Four picnickers were involved in the guerrilla picnic that took place at the Centro neighbourhood shopping centre in Kings Meadows (a peri-urban locale on the outskirts of Launceston, Tasmania) in December 2013. Each picnicker had their own picnic-blanket, napkin and food and sought a space within the shopping centre interior separately to the others. Prior permission from centre management was not sought, as part of the research was to gain all peoples reaction to this challenging act, including management. If asked to leave by management the picnickers were to say that they were part of an art project, seeking reactions to picnicking in unusual places. After the picnic, picnickers were asked to write up a short reflection on their experience.

From these reflections it is evident that the appropriation of space was experienced not only physically, but also emotionally and socially. Physically, the picnic blanket provided a demarcation of a specific personal space within the quasi-public realm providing a sense of security for the picnicker but an insecurity from onlookers – could they intervene – was this a private picnic?

‘My lovely green picnic sarong, was artfully placed in the middle of a corridor... I had stated my claim, squatting if you like for a brief period in an untenable position.’

Some of the picnickers engaged in impromptu social interaction with other shoppers and with each other at various points of the guerrilla picnic. Some of these engagements were short, answering questions from interested passers by and others were more involved with one visitor joining the picnicker in yoga mediation.
‘A lovely older man, with a wicked grin, asked me as to how I was enjoying my lunch? Few stopped to question my intentions, but many passed with acceptance of my act of picnicking.’

‘An elderly gentleman asked if I was going to pray. “No,” I said, “I am going to eat my lunch!” “Good on ya!” he replied, in a tone of approval that perhaps recognised my act of rebellion by “picnicking” within a shopping centre precinct.’

‘A middle aged yoga aficionado, after watching me for a while, sat on my rug in a half-lotus position and we talked about why I would choose to have lunch in the shopping centre. He closed his eyes for a while and said he was conducting an “open-heart meditation”.

This provocation provided some insight into opportunities for appropriation of a neighbourhood shopping centre - eliciting surprising negotiations between the shopping centre users and the picnickers. While issues of privacy and publicity, personal and public were not seamlessly negotiated, what did occur was an opening up of a field of publicly acceptable identities within the shopping environment from public as ‘consumer’ to identities of picnicker, reader, artist, researcher, performer and meditator. While the provocation was to test the possibility of physical appropriation within the interior of a neighbourhood shopping centre, unbounded by the stricter managerial laws and design of the larger regional and city shopping centres, the research began to indicate that the space of the neighbourhood shopping centre is perhaps a ‘looser space’ than might have been anticipated. That the picnickers could lie out a blanket, and adjust the quality of the ground to suit their purposes is further ‘evidence’ that the interiors are malleable: physically, emotionally and socially. Laying this claim to space seemed to also shift the sociality of the shopping public - to literally open up space (the ground) to adjust social relations around the picnickers. This became a new ‘centre of gravity’ for social interaction, quite uncanny within shopping-space, and an invitation for shoppers to stop, chat, and even sit.

‘The key-cutter in the booth next to me keep spying over the top of his island-shop counter seeing if I would “do” anything…’
‘A few elderly passers by looked at me for longer than might be considered polite, as you might stare affectionately at a chimp in a cage, and grinned. A few asked why there were so many pic-nickers in the mall today. Surely it couldn’t be a coincidence?’

Further guerrilla picnic events are planned to investigate the possibility that the gender of the picnickers may have influenced the apparent acceptability of our action on the day. While the picnickers were asked by security personnel to leave the shopping centre after thirty minutes of occupation, we wonder if that time may have been reduced had some or all of our guerrilla-picnic participants been male. Cultural historians have noted that shopping space is (predominantly) a female domain and a focus of everyday spatial practices an allied feminist project. As such, a feminist reading of the nature of shopping space - and the social and historical specificity of the picnic - may well elucidate further productive readings of the public interactions that occurred during the event. While a feminist analysis of this guerrilla-picnic is outside the scope of this paper, we acknowledge that this requires further reflection and research.

**Conclusions**

Shopping centres provide us with interior spaces that are commonly thought of as highly authoritarian in their division between public and private, but can be shown to be ambivalent on closer inspection. This is an contentious characteristic of a particular interior space that is the result of consumerism and capital combined with recreation and sociality: all ingredients that lead shopping centres to become default places for people to meet in neighbourhoods that lack established public spaces. As more of our public urban environments become privatised it is imperative that we reconsider the potential of these quasi-public environs to provide interiors that are not the ‘oppressive, overly managed and surveyed spaces’ that some urban theorists claim them to be. The quasi-public interior of the neighbourhood shopping centre may offer a quality of ‘looseness’ if we resist the passivity these spaces engender in shopping publics, provoking a more heterogeneous citizenry, creating spaces that engage rather than seek obedience.

In our analysis of neighbourhood shopping centres we have relied on the writings of contemporary urban theorists to reveal a more nuanced understanding of shopping publics. The performative act of the guerrilla-picnic provoked public engagement and shifted the shopping centre ‘users’ from a more passive role as ‘shoppers’ to active public participants in a public performative ‘event.’ Following Tyndall, we concur that a redefinition of the idea of ‘publicness’ is required; one that reaches beyond nostalgic definitions of public space as a terrain of free and democratic exchange, to validate the emerging forms of public space that arise under the influence of commercial or private ownership. In these emergent interiors actual ‘publics’ still walk, talk, play and relate, unconsciously negotiating the supposed limits to public freedoms, as well as go about their everyday routines.

The guerrilla picnic was an initial step to finding a more progressive public ethic creating opportunities for questioning the singular act of consumption in shopping-space, and the more orthodox social relations within quasi-public interior space. By ‘loosening’ the terrain of shopping space during the picnic, both the picnickers and the ‘shoppers’ manifested an increase in the options for belonging by a non-purchasing public, affirming the potential of guerrilla practices to provide ‘momentary ruptures’ to the more orthodox view that shopping centres only provide for relatively fixed, tightly regulated and commodified identities.

**Endnotes**

1 The term ‘shopping centre’ as defined by the International Council of Shopping Centers is ‘...a group of retail and other commercial establishments that is planned, developed, owned and managed as a single property, typically with on-site parking provided, http://www.icsc.org/srch/lib/SCDefinitions.php, accessed 15 February 2013. In the USA and parts of Asia the term shopping mall is used for an internal street of shops usually with an anchor store such as a department store. This same form is called a shopping centre in Australia, the UK and Europe. For the clarity of this paper, shopping centre will be the term used.'
2 Relevant authors on the evolution of the shopping centre include; Paul Glennie, “Consumption, Consumerism and Urban Form: Historical Perspectives,” Urban Studies 35, 5/6 (1998);


5 Jayne, Cities and Consumption, 43.


8 A neighbourhood shopping centre is defined by the Property Council of Australia as a local shopping centre comprising a supermarket and approximately 35 specialty shops. Total GLAR will typically be less than 10,000 square metres, PG007 Shopping Centre Classification, accessed 15 February 2013.


12 Ibid., 133.


17 Ibid., 3.


19 The idea of spatial appropriation has been researched in exterior urban realms yet little is written on this subject in the interior realm. Here we have borrowed the term to examine the idea of ‘loose’ or malleable interiors - or the degree to which interiors offer the freedom to be reshaped to meet the needs and desires of the inhabitants.

20 Franck and Stevens, Loose Space, 11.
THEME 3
From Node to Stitch:
Shopping Centres and Urban (Re)Development
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From Node to Stitch:
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Victor Gruen’s initial shopping centre proposals had clear urban ambitions. He envisaged the shopping centre to become a ‘suburban crystallization point’ or ‘satellite downtown’, which would not only conserve the viability of the (traditional) city centres by reducing the pressure inflicted by increased motorized traffic, but which would – when combined on a large scale – also develop into a network of nodes, able to protect the American population in the event of nuclear attack. While his dream never became a reality in the United States, the shopping centre’s urban potential was acknowledged in Western Europe. When the shopping centre was introduced to Western Europe in the post-war period, it was not only used as an urban expansion model (or a model for structuring suburbanisation), but it was also employed as a tool to stitch war-torn urban fabrics back together – as exemplified in De Lijnbaan by van den Broek and Bakema in the Netherlands. This theme addresses the role that the shopping centre has played in urban planning from 1943 to today; connecting its development to urban reconstruction and revitalization efforts on the one hand and exploring the role that this commercial typology assumed in (post-war) urban expansion and structured suburbanization on the other.

The Role of the Shopping Mall in Urban Planning and Design as a New Mixed-Use Mega Structure in 21st century South Korea

Il Lee & Joo hyun Park & Hyemin Park

Abstract

Until the 1990s, the South Korean retail market was dominated by department stores and large discount stores, barring any sign of the American style dumbbell mall. Since then, the arrival of online shopping and changes in consumer needs have restructured the Korean retail system, leading to the development of mega shopping malls. This new type of shopping malls differs from existing retail facilities in two key ways. Since they are often developed as multi-functional places that incorporate cultural and leisure facilities, such as multiplex theatres and various food and beverage stores, they have emerged as new urban anchors. Another difference lies in their generally sizeable development, which by far exceeds the scale of existing retail centres. Such large shopping complexes have a great impact on neighbouring areas; they require the local urban context to be taken into consideration and provide public spaces for adjoining neighbourhoods.

This study aims for an overall understanding of and discussion on Korean shopping malls in terms of their urban planning and design during the last fifteen years. Thirty-three shopping mall cases are analysed according to (1) their location and site, (2) the relation that they have with neighbouring urban tissues, (3) the characteristics of the developers involved, and (4) the degree of public intervention. Based on this analysis, the paper puts forward three key findings. First of all, large-scale shopping malls have been developed both as an urban revitalization strategy and as centres of structured new towns. They are therefore often located in derelict places, such as post-industrial sites, idle sites and residential improvement sites as well as at the heart of new suburban areas.
Secondly, at the neighbourhood level, large-scale shopping mall developments on the one hand have a positive impact on their environment but on the other hand also display certain limitations in terms of coping with surrounding areas. Finally, the type of developer involved and the degree of public intervention play key roles in defining the character and role of each shopping mall within its urban planning and design context.

Keywords: multi-functional shopping mall, urban entertainment centre, locational characteristics, relations with neighbourhood

Introduction

This study aims to examine nationwide patterns that are emerging in South Korea’s physical environment due to the increasing numbers of multifunctional shopping malls (MFSMs), and discuss the role of such malls in urban planning and design. MFSMs differ from pre-existing retail facilities in two ways. First, they are developed as multifunctional complexes, which include entertainment facilities such as multiplex theatres, performance halls and diverse food and beverage services. Offering commercial facilities as well as leisure activities, they thus invite visitors to stay longer. These complexes are also larger in scale than the existing ones, thereby having greater effects on their surrounding urban environments. Focusing on the latter phenomenon, this paper argues that there is a need to examine MFSMs from the viewpoint of urban planning and design, which includes considerations of the existing environment context as well as the provision of public spaces.

This paper aims to understand and interpret the MFSM, which emerged as a physical manifestation of a new pattern of consumption and leisure in South Korea, through a cultural-landscape analysis. We consider MFSMs as a spatial phenomenon that mediates the culture of consumption and leisure at a certain time and in a certain place. We try to understand its physical manifestation and also examine the stakeholders involved in its development process. MFSMs are analysed following two factors: planning and design. In terms of urban planning, the characteristics of their location and site are analysed to determine the role that shopping centres play in South Korea’s built environments. These structures are often used as mechanisms for urban expansion projects or as tools for urban regeneration schemes. In terms of urban design, the public nature of MFSMs as leisure and cultural spaces for urban dwellers, and its problems and prospects with regard to their relations with the surrounding areas, are examined.

This study has looked at MFSMs that are strategically developed to combine cultural and leisure functions with retail uses on large-scale sites, and also incorporate a pedestrian mall as a major spatial element. Also, the facilities that Urban Land Institute (ULI) specifies as ‘Urban Entertainment Centers’ (UECs) or retail-entertainment destinations have been included. A total of thirty-three such facilities nationwide (as of December 2014), which have emerged since 2000, were examined. The basic building information of the cases was obtained from registered building data, and the building drawings were obtained from the developers and designers directly. In some cases, the images of drawings obtained from existing literature were used. The digital maps of the surrounding areas were provided by the Korean National Geographic information Institute. The developers’ and the public sector’s involvement in the development process was determined based on press materials, urban planning reports and other literature, such as periodicals, collections of case studies. Interviews with various private companies’ staff and government officers were also conducted.

This paper consists of four chapters. First, the development process of retail facilities in Korea is delineated. Then, we examine the background leading to the emergence of MFSMs and show how they differ from existing commercial facilities. The second part analyses the locational characteristics of MFSMs, both at the national and regional level. The relations between the site characteristics and the location are also discussed according to the development background. The third section analyses the massing, accessibility, pedestrian connectivity and connection to outdoor spaces at the neighbourhood level to define relations between MFSMs and their surroundings. Lastly, the nature and roles of the various participants in the development process are addressed and their relations with the spatial characteristics of MFSMs are discussed.

Emergence and Development of MFSMs in South Korea

Changes in the Socioeconomic Environment and Consumption Patterns

The 1950 Korean War devastated South Korea’s economy, but the country achieved rapid economic growth from the 1970s to the 1980s. Even though economic growth decelerated during the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the 2008 international financial crisis, the country’s economic growth remained steady. In 2002, the automobile penetration rate exceeded 60%, in 2006, the per-capita gross national income (GNI) reached 20000 USD and in 2012, the population exceeded fifty million. South Korea thus entered the ‘20-50 Club’ as the seventh member. These economic indicators have had significant implications for the national retail distribution. In the US, the automobile penetration rate exceeded 60% in the 1950s, when shopping centres emerged to absorb the demands of the suburban middle-class people. In Japan, the automobile penetration rate exceeded 60% in the 1970s, when shopping malls emerged. After 1988, when
the per-capita GNI of these two countries exceeded 20000 USD, they witnessed the emergence of MFSMs. Similarly to what happened in the US and Japan, South Korea also rapidly developed MFSMs after the mid-2000s. Over the past sixty years, with higher incomes and greater purchase capacities, South Korean consumers needed one-stop shopping, in accordance with the consumer trends in developed countries. Until 2000, department stores and large discount stores met such needs, but the consumers expanded their shopping needs to include not only their existing product purchases but also their leisure and cultural consumption, such as eating, watching performances, education, entertainment and even walking. Such a life of consumption and leisure boomed after 2000 when MFSMs started to be developed. In addition to the economic changes that transpired, also the implementation of a five-day-workweek has given South Koreans more leisure time during weekends, enabling them to spend more time in shopping spaces. Additionally, a family-oriented shopping culture has been spread, thereby increasing the consumer needs for shopping spaces suitable for families, such as dining and leisure facilities. In response to these needs, developers are endeavouring to develop MFSMs, which include culture, art, and entertainment facilities in addition to the retail and food oriented components.

Changes in the Distribution Markets and the MFSMs’ Development Process

In South Korea, department stores and large discount stores, which led the country’s retail market during the period of economic growth in the late 20th century, experienced decelerating growth in the 2000s. After the 2008 international financial crisis hit the country, the middle-class people’s consumption sentiment was reduced, and the government regulated the business of large discount stores in a bid to revitalize the business of small and medium-sized merchants. As a result, the growth rate of existing large retail stores has since declined continuously. Distributors that led the development and operation of department stores and large discount stores thus began to transfer to new business types, such as non-store retailing, outlets and MFSMs. The changes in domestic and overseas commercial environments, such as the emergence of new consumption trends, and increased shopping mall contents such as global specialty retailer of private-label apparel (SPA) brands and category killers, all prompted not only distributors but also diverse developers to start developing MFSMs. In South Korea, however, the initial shopping malls were different from the ones in Western countries in terms of types and operation methods. Shopping malls that emerged in the country’s central business districts in the mid 1990s were developed to combine retail and entertainment functions. Their physical structure however consisted of single-unit high-rise buildings, which were much more akin to the department store typology than to the American paradigmatic dumbbell mall. As for the system of operation in real estate; after the mall’s construction, developers generally sold individual store spaces. As a result, it became difficult to develop a holistic and detailed management of the entire shopping mall. This realty development strategy involving the individual allocation of stores continued after the emergence of Western-style shopping malls, which have pedestrian malls between anchor tenants. However, an oversupply of these individual store-sale-style shopping malls and a lack of detailed management led to an array of failures. After the mid 2000s, Western-style MFSMs began to be developed in earnest based on a rental real estate strategy. Over the past fifteen years, thirty-three MFSMs have been developed on large-scale sites covering areas ranging from 20000 to 200000 m², taking their cue from diverse development backgrounds by various kinds of developers nationwide.

Large-scale MFSMs are developed based on large consumer demand, making them a metropolitan phenomenon – they are expected to emerge in large cities or metropolitan areas. Also, for diverse reasons, large-scale sites are created inside...
and outside cities, a trend that is linked with the development of the locations of MFSMs. The next part of this paper examines these locational characteristics of MFSMs on both the national and regional level.

**Locational Characteristics**

**At the National Level**

In terms of population, of the thirty-three MFSMs currently existing in Korea, twenty-one are located in the Seoul metropolitan area, including Seoul, Incheon, Suwon, Goyang, Hwaseong, and Gwangmyeong. Another nine cases are located in provincial cities with a population of one million. In Korea, a department store and a large discount store usually exist in an area with a population of 400,000 and 100,000, respectively. These facilities are developed based on a thorough analysis of commercial power. By contrast, MFSMs are not strictly associated with population; this might be because the opportunity to generate large-scale site differs in each city. In areas with a smaller population, such as Cheonju, Cheonan, and Gwangmyeong, MFSMs were developed because such areas have Korea Train Express (KTX) routes running through them. In cities where KTX stations have been constructed, new towns (large-scale planned cities) were developed around the stations and offered opportunities to develop MFSMs. In areas with a population exceeding one million, available large-scale sites or the development of a KTX station, created an opportunity to develop MFSMs.

**At the Regional Level**

At a regional level, the debate whether a shopping centre should be located in central districts or in suburbs has been going on for a long time. In the US, as suburban residential areas expanded after the Second World War, shopping malls were rapidly and increasingly developed in suburban areas beginning with Victor Gruen’s Southdale (1946). In the UK, as consumption surged, property transactions boomed and development regulation were eased in the 1980s, suburban shopping centres were briefly developed, but shopping centres were generally developed in urban central districts as part of post-war restoration efforts or as an urban regeneration tool in line with government policy. The expanded suburban area development for the US and the urban regeneration policy for the UK formed the background of the development of such shopping malls. The characteristics of the sites on which they were located, were idle suburban areas that could easily be secured and former-industrial facility sites in the urban central districts respectively. Also in South Korea, a range of large-scale sites was created under the influence of the aforementioned changes.

**Figure 2: Basic information of thirty-three multi-functional shopping malls**

In the distribution markets, the government’s supply of new residential towns, the emergence of multiregional transport modes, and changes in the industrial structures. According to their characteristics, sites are classified into those for new-town-centred commercial zones, post-industrial sites, unused areas in old-towns, sites for residential improvement and those in close proximity of transport facilities such as train stations and bus terminals. As such, over a short period of fifteen years, MFSMs with different site characteristics and backgrounds have been developed in both suburban areas and inner cities. Since the 1990s, the government has started implementing residential development projects nationwide to supply mass housing. Central business districts in large-scale suburban new-towns offered good locations and the appropriate size for MFSMs. Accordingly, several MFSMs were developed in Goyang and Hwaseong. Residential development projects were however not only implemented in suburban areas but also in undeveloped areas within existing cities, such as Gangnam and Jamilsil in Seoul, Haeundae in Busan, Yulha in Daejeon and Suwon in Gwangju. In 2004, when the KTX opened, the station areas of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Facility name</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Site area</th>
<th>Floor area</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Site characteristics</th>
<th>Developer types</th>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Lotte World</td>
<td>1989</td>
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<td>New town</td>
<td>Distribution industry</td>
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<td>1996</td>
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<td>New town</td>
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<tr>
<td>03</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2003</td>
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<td>New town</td>
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<td>07</td>
<td>Western Town</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>Goyang</td>
<td>New town</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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<td>635,397</td>
<td>Suwon</td>
<td>Site</td>
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<td>Victor</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6,305</td>
<td>33,041</td>
<td>Uijeong</td>
<td>New town</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>Changwon</td>
<td>Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Strega</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>Site</td>
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<td>New town</td>
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<td>Doksan Mall</td>
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<td>Site</td>
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<td>Site</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>1,647,631</td>
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<td>80,500</td>
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<tr>
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<td>80,500</td>
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<td>Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Seoul City Mall</td>
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<td>80,500</td>
<td>Daegu</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Retail developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Arario small city</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>25,706</td>
<td>550,051</td>
<td>Cheonan</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Retail developer</td>
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<tr>
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<td>66,000</td>
<td>Cheonan</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
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<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Lotte mall Gimpo</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
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<td>Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>EC mall</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>53,485</td>
<td>503,216</td>
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<td>Site</td>
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<td>Square mall</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>48,734</td>
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<td>Incheon</td>
<td>Site</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Jeongseon mall</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>26,426</td>
<td>140,400</td>
<td>Goyang</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Retail developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>One square</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>48,823</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Immersum mall</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>35,188</td>
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<td>Suwon</td>
<td>Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Goyang mall</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>70,491</td>
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<td>Gwangju</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Lotte mall Gwangju</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Enocity mall</td>
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<td>26,426</td>
<td>140,400</td>
<td>Goyang</td>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Retail developer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gwangmyeong and Cheonan were developed as multiregional transport hubs along with other undeveloped areas within the exiting cities as new-towns. As such, the large-scale sites in the centre of new-towns which were located in suburbs or in the inner city and which were created by the government offered a good opportunity for the development of MFSMs. New town centres surrounding MFSMs in existing cities, which were created to form sub-central districts, in particular changed the urban spatial structure and attracted the population, thereby expanding the entire urban area. Examples include the cities of Busan, Gwangju, and Cheonan.

Meanwhile, inner-city areas have a more diverse development backgrounds. With a changing industrial structure, manufacturing activities were relocated from the city to the suburbs, thereby vacating large areas in the late 20th century. These areas were mostly developed into residential complexes to respond to the increasing housing demands and some of them in Yeongdeungpo, Seoul were developed into MFSMs following the local government’s policy for maintaining urban central function. Also on the idle sites owned by public agencies such as the Korean Airports Corporation, school corporations and dilapidated residential areas in need of redevelopment, MFSMs were developed in the form of residential-commercial and office-commercial mixed-use facilities. MFSMs were furthermore also developed in connection with the construction of infrastructural facilities such as train stations and bus terminals. This diversity of sites for the development of MFSMs emerged simultaneously in Seoul megacity, which had an interesting effect on the urban spatial structure. Although their development backgrounds and site characteristics are all different, most of the MFSM development cases are located in central business districts (CBDs), sub-CBDs and station influence areas, which play an important role in consolidating the urban central system. A few MFSMs, however, are located in the urban boundary and do not have strong central-area characteristics. These MFSMs, although located in the edge of Seoul, attract the residents from neighbouring cities from Seoul and are becoming new central areas. The Seoul Metropolitan Government paid attention to this phenomenon and designated such areas as multi-region hubs in terms of urban structure when presenting a new urban plan in 2013. The suburban new towns which were developed together with regional shopping malls in the UK in the second half of the 1980s, were regarded as the apostles of a new urban form – following Joel Garreau’s ‘edge cities’ concept.6

Relation with Neighbourhoods

Today it is a global trend to consider the conditions of the area surrounding the shopping mall. The CEO of Liverpool Vision, which developed the shopping mall ‘Liverpool One,’ said that to achieve successful urban regeneration, it is important that the entire neighbouring area is made into an attractive space rather than making single-unit projects successful. To this end, projects need to be pursued with the surrounding environment in mind.7 This holds true not only for the development of shopping malls as part of an urban regeneration project; the recent urban design paradigm also demands consideration of surrounding context. Because the project plot is a part of this context, the environmental characteristics should be well understood before starting development, so agents do not only pay attention to the site itself but also to the changes of the surrounding area.8 As such, with regards to urban design, the consideration of neighbouring contexts is becoming a standard that should be applied in a wider range of situations. When high-rise shopping malls emerged in South Korea’s CBDs in the 1990s, they were criticized as having been developed without any
linkage with surrounding pedestrian network; presenting a huge mass with only a few useless public open spaces. The recent MFSMs, which are much larger than these older shopping malls, are expected to influence the surrounding areas significantly, and their relations with the surrounding areas are the key to discuss the role that MFSMs can play in terms of urban design. Public paths, the number of entrances, the design of the entrances, open spaces, access roads and the use of lower floor areas should be analysed.

Most cases have multiple entrances for convenient access and entrances were designed on pilotis or as an air podium to be easily noticed. As Carmona states, the same level of consideration for the surrounding area is not demanded from every site; each neighbourhood has its own context and more careful investigation and design is demanded when small grains and intricate urban tissues surround the site. The cases in which public actors intervened to optimize the connection with surrounding areas, or in which the developer had a strong desire for creating an integrated design that included the neighbourhood commonly resulted in a better physical output. Some cases, including Times Square, which are managed by city governments through the District Unit Plan (DUP) have public passageways that connect with surrounding areas. Also, open spaces around them with proper size and location act as a buffer area between MFSMs and the neighbourhood. In the case of ‘D-Cube City,’ the project has changed the whole neighbourhood by planning the front park integrated with subway station and an adjacent stream. Though these cases caused conflicts among stakeholders and officers during their development process, they did provide a satisfactory external environment and connectivity. There are, on the other hand, other cases that show little vitality and poor accessibility (DUP) have public passageways that connect with surrounding areas. Also, open spaces around them with proper size and location act as a buffer area between MFSMs and the neighbourhood. In the case of ‘D-Cube City,’ the project has changed the whole neighbourhood by planning the front park integrated with subway station and an adjacent stream. Though these cases caused conflicts among stakeholders and officers during their development process, they did provide a satisfactory external environment and connectivity. There are, on the other hand, other cases that show little vitality and poor accessibility (DUP) have public passageways that connect with surrounding areas. Also, open spaces around them with proper size and location act as a buffer area between MFSMs and the neighbourhood. In the case of ‘D-Cube City,’ the project has changed the whole neighbourhood by planning the front park integrated with subway station and an adjacent stream. Though these cases caused conflicts among stakeholders and officers during their development process, they did provide a satisfactory external environment and connectivity. There are, on the other hand, other cases that show little vitality and poor accessibility

### The Developers

In South Korea, boosted by the continued economic growth and booming property markets until the late 20th century, the space allotment and sole-based real estate development strategy prevailed for a long time in the residential and commercial-property area. As a result, there was nearly no specialist developer of commercial-property development in the area. In the early 21st century, however, when the distribution market changed because of economic recession, changes also occurred in the industrial-structure and challenged diverse developers to try commercial-property projects. Although there are still only a few exceptions, the developer has been introduced to make the commercial property market a means of designing commercial areas

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handful of specialist developers in South Korea, unlike in the Western countries and Japan, various kinds of developer groups with different backgrounds endeavour to develop shopping malls. Physical outputs differ according to the characteristics of each developer groups, as the buildings vary in terms of shape and contents.

South Korean developers can be classified into three types. The first one is the distributor-developer. Large distributor companies such as Lotte, Shinsegae, Hyundai and AK, which had led the construction of department stores and large discount store markets, developed MFSMs using their respective distribution structures as a survival strategy, when the business growth of the existing commercial facilities slowed down. These companies, which had a long experience in MD strategies, tenant arrangement, and spatial composition – all crucial factors in the development of MFSMs – combine their expertise and the shopping-mall spatial-composition methods focused on street malls. Distributor-developers are the most aggressive developers of MFSMs in South Korea. Of the thirty-three MFSMs currently existing in the country, this type of developers participated either fully or partially in twelve cases and they have also made their large discount stores a part of most MFSM projects, as the anchor tenants. The MFSMs developed by these developers provide efficient and pleasant shopping environments for the consumers, but the inward orientation of the department store’s spatial structure that was applied, has lead them to have less communication with the surrounding areas.

The second type of South Korean developer is the manufacturer-constructor. Kyungbang Group and Daesung Group, who respectively initially established a textile factory in 1919 and a coal briquette factory in 1959, later developed MFSMs, along with housing, offices and hotels, in their post-industrial sites. They are furthermore now also taking care of the operation of these centres as their manufacturing businesses receded due to the industrial changes and as their factories were relocated to suburban areas. Constructors such as GS E&C and POSCO E&C, which developed and supplied apartment housing during the country’s fast-economic-growth period, grew into large companies and joined the development of MFSMs after the 2000s, when the residential demands declined. When developing MFSMs, they deployed shopping in the entire lower-story area and residential functions in the upper-story area. These developers positively referred to Western cases of MFSMs in the process of developing shopping malls, and employed overseas companies for their spatial design and MD strategies, endeavouring to make their shopping malls meet international standards. As a result, they designed the boundaries with the surrounding areas in detail, and gracefully embedded MFSMs in their surrounding contexts, thus contributing to and enhancing the image of the whole community.

Lastly, there is a new group of developers who aim to build Western-style MFSMs. Compared with the two aforementioned types of developers, these new developers have small operations and short histories, but they have begun to develop MFSMs as new shopping spaces in South Korea, with much passion. They also aim to develop MFSMs that meet international standards, but they are experiencing difficulties to do so because of their small-scale operation and limited capital.

Conclusion

From the perspective of South Korea’s commercial-facility development history, MFSMs with large sizes and multiple functions have the distinct nature of leisure spaces that differentiate them from shopping spaces in cities. They serve as both commercial spaces for selling and buying products and leisure destinations.

In terms of urban planning, MFSMs in South Korea do not only form nodes for suburban towns planned by the public sector and play a key role in the expansion of existing cities, but they are also located on large-scale sites in inner city, thus injecting new life into these cities. In this process, unlike in the UK in the 1980s, suburban shopping malls do not pose threats to the CBDs and do not risk damaging the urban structure. Moreover, such shopping malls are accepted to function as the central facilities for local communities. Regarding the characteristics of inner city locations, MFSMs located in the traditional city centre, play an important role in regenerating the community. At the same time, those located in the peripheral areas of large cities function as new central hubs.

In existing cities, the locations with both commercial and leisure functions were the traditional street mall in the urban centre or commercial areas featuring clusters of theatres, restaurants and other shops. These continued to exist in the already-formed urban structure, thereby naturally having connections with the surrounding areas and becoming open spaces that can be used by anyone. Meanwhile, MFSMs created under consistent plans, have more inward-oriented spatial characteristics, which are quite typical of existing large-scale commercial facilities, and yet succeed (to a certain extent) to forge open relations with the surrounding areas; this of course depending on the degree of involvement by the public sector and the intentions of the developers. MFSMs, new commercial urban spaces, are similar to the traditional urban commercial streets in terms of function, and have competitive or alternative relations with the latter; thereby calling for a discussion on how to secure public interests like urban commercial streets. Finally, the location and characteristics of MFSMs differ according to the type of developer and its propensities.
Endnotes
1 The '20-50 club' relates to countries with a population surpassing 50 million and maintaining per capita income of 20000 USD. 
7 Y.K. Kim et al, Urban Renaissance and Revitalization of Central Area (Paju: Hanul, 2009), 41. 
9 Lowe, "The Regional Shopping Centre." 452.

‘Life Revolution’ by a Modern Shopping Centre
The Sewoon Complex in Seoul, South Korea

Joonwoo Kim

Abstract
After the Military Coup of 1961, the South Korean military government stimulated industrialization to expedite the country’s development. In this context the careful management of urbanization was considered a conditio sine qua non. In its modernization campaign, the Junta also propagated the idea of ‘life revolution,’ and important component of which was the modern shopping centre. As a result, the fast and massive development of a modern retail sector legitimized the military government, who introduced several modern shopping centres in the inner city of Seoul. The Junta strictly controlled these operations through financial institutions that controlled private construction companies and steered the union of merchants.

The Sewoon Complex was one of the Junta’s key pilot projects, developed on a site cleared earlier on by the Japanese colonial government as a fire corridor, which had since become flooded by squatters. The slums were erased and the colonial history was banned from collective memory by means of a brand new modern iconic building complex that supplied parking, commercial functions and housing. The planned complex was integrated into the existing street system, segregating pedestrians and vehicles by means of a one-kilometre long pedestrian skywalk, connecting eight massive buildings in a continuous chain.

When completed in 1968, Sewoon Complex instantly became the icon of the ‘life revolution,’ an emblem of modernity, which provided a giant surface for urban shopping in the centre of the inner city. Although public interest in the Sewoon Complex was rather low during the rebuilding of Seoul, the complex has exerted a strong influence on the capital city’s centre. The following paper focuses on the introduction of the ideas underlying the modern shopping centre and the way in which it forged a new relation with the inner city.
Introduction
In 1961 South Korea’s military government began to use the slogan ‘life revolution’ to promote modernism. Under this banner, the military government pushed many development projects, attempting to show their legitimacy through increasing industrialization. The slogan of ‘life revolution’ represented a strategy that advertised modernization to promote a new lifestyle for the Korean people, focusing their attention on an economic development agenda that advocated for industrialization, instead of one that focused on political and social issues. The military government needed new development projects to demonstrate the effectiveness and to garner tacit agreement for their focus on economic development.

The Sewoon Complex was a pilot project, one part of a larger urban redevelopment project in the inner city of Seoul in the late 1960s. On a site of fifty meters by one kilometre, the military government set out to develop a mega complex that included a giant space for urban shopping, public functions and apartments. Elevated decks linked eight massive buildings on four linear blocks, making it look like one mega structure that stretches for one kilometre. The density of the buildings is about three FAR (floor area ratio), and the building height is eight to seventeen stories. The lower floors, below the fifth story, are reserved for shopping, while the upper floors house apartments (figure 1). The construction of the buildings, which started in 1966 and finished in 1968, was overseen by eight different developers, of which six were construction companies and two were unions of merchants. While the military government supported the project through a relaxation of regulation, a sale of public land, and simplification of administrative procedures, the construction was funded by private capital. New modern architectural ideas were applied in the design of the Sewoon Complex, to such an extent that the complex differed substantially from its surroundings.

The Sewoon Complex was advertised as the biggest development in Asia. Many mass media outlets introduced it as a new model of modern shopping and housing. In the first phase, the complex provided modernized services, which targeted Seoul’s new upper-middle class. However, the fame of the complex as the icon of modern development was short-lived due to market changes and political decisions. The Sewoon Complex and its neighbourhoods has faced many crises resulting from both external and internal factors. Because of these drastic changes in the market, the complex and its surrounding neighbourhoods were able to develop new interconnections in the inner city.

This research introduces the life of the Sewoon Complex as a shopping centre in the inner city of Seoul. The paper analyses these modern buildings in their urban context, always relating their development to their contemporary socio-economic and political context. First, the background of modernism in the development of the Sewoon Complex and the hidden intentions in the development of the mega structure will be investigated. While the design of the complex exemplified the modern ideals for the city, the actual plan had significant problems when realized in the inner city of Seoul. The paper will demonstrate how in spite of these challenges, the Sewoon Complex has integrated with its surrounding neighbourhoods, adapting to changing market forces, and resisting the attempted inundations of both private capital and politics through redevelopment. To do so, the process of transition as well as the changing relationship between the complex and its neighbouring area will be discussed. Finally, the text will argue that this historical modernist shopping centre not only demonstrates various aspects of a mega structure on an urban scale but also diversified the life of the shopping centre.
‘Life Revolution’ under Modernism

The Military Government and Modernism

Modernism has been influential since the late 19th century and the early 20th century in Korea. The use of modernism was however very limited between the Japanese colonial period and the end of the Korean War. Modernism was recognized as a social trend from the West, and there was a huge gap between ‘ideal’ modernism and real life until the mid 20th century in Korea. Also after the end of the Korean War in 1953, the independent government focused predominantly on rebuilding the national system and on post-war recovery. Politicians were thus unable to align their agenda with the tenets of ‘progressive’ modernism. The military coup of 1961 occurred after an unstable period, caused by the citizen revolution of 1960, which was brought on by the fraudulent election of the first independent government. The military government therefore sought to base their rule on a new vision, one that highlighted ‘modern’ economic development and supported South Korea’s anti-communist rhetoric against North Korea. Modernism, the junta realized, could be one of main propaganda ‘tools’ able to emphasize the differences between the states. ‘Life revolution’ became the catchphrase to propagandize modernism, advocating the shift to a modern lifestyle, in spite of its disconnect from the traditional Korean lifestyle. Widespread acceptance of this shift allowed the government to further other goals, such as encouraging the move toward modern housing (such as apartments) that could resolve the explosive post-war urban growth and meet the pressing housing demand of Seoul. Images of the modern lifestyles of the United States and Europe were shown to promote the concept of ‘life revolution,’ a propaganda strategy that further strengthened the position of the military government and encouraged citizens to accept modern development projects such as the Sewoon Complex. Life thus seemed truly revolutionized, at least for some.

Democratic countries, especially the United States, encouraged this strategy of modernism as ‘developmentalism.’ Western nations viewed modernism as the new agenda for developing countries with whom strong alliances could be forged against Communism and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The US often seduced developing countries into embracing modernism, even though these countries had insufficient resources and limited institutional structures. Traditional systems were abandoned in favour of more economical and efficient means of development, and official propaganda encouraged an anti-traditionalist mentality by promoting modern development projects with modernist buildings, along with factories and infrastructures. In the 1960s and 1970s the South Korean military government was similarly encouraged by the West to follow the model of modernism as ‘developmentalism.’ However, the military government had insufficient finances for the plurality of projects that lay before it. Leaders therefore decided to focus on economic development through industrialization rather than on improving the living environments in cities. They believed that private investors should manage the problem of housing and infrastructure in cities, with the institutional/governmental support. The catchphrase of ‘life revolution’ was thus effectuated with private capital, but credited to the military government in broadcasts and newspapers. The introduction of a modern lifestyle through development projects was realised through public-private co-operations and presented to South Korean citizens via government-controlled mass media. As a result, the public began to accept modernism and long for a modern lifestyle. Additionally, commercial functions were also embedded in the promotion of modernism. The military government presented shopping as the main activity of modern life. A plethora of goods seduced people to change their lifestyles, and appropriate ‘shopping’ locations were needed to fulfil the promise of this new lifestyle. The military government thus started to build new markets and shopping centres. These shopping facilities were of course realised with private capital.

‘Life Revolution’ in the Sewoon Complex

The Sewoon Complex was a pilot project that contained various strategies to showcase the promoted ‘life revolution.’ This massive multi-purpose building included apartments, a new model of housing, a multi-functional shopping centre, a showroom of modern life, and was largely built with private capital. The original plans also included several public facilities such as a police station, a community centre, a post office and an elementary school.

Before the 1960s, the apartment as a housing type was unknown in South Korea. The first apartment complex was constructed in 1962. Six years later, the Sewoon Complex was built. Seventeen storeys high, it was the first building in South Korea to have elevators. As apartment living was only very slowly accepted in the early 1960s, the Sewoon apartments presented the next experimental phase to further promote apartments as the new modern lifestyle. The Sewoon apartments were advertised as the new model of housing for the middle class, which had larger living areas, that ranged from 90 to 200 square metres. Incorporated in the first multi-purpose high-rise complex of its kind, these apartments were well-located and offered the newest facilities, such as Western-style furniture, showers, standing kitchens, and a central heating system with a radiator (figure 2). In addition, the military government planned to include elevated gardens, playgrounds and public services, such as an
elementary school in the buildings. Many movies and television shows portrayed the modern life in the Sewoon apartments and many celebrities and politicians even lived in the complex.

Also various commercial functions were embedded in the Sewoon Complex. Although some department stores and traditional markets existed in the central area of Seoul, these were unable to meet the increasing commercial demand. The Sewoon shopping centre’s prime location gave it a leading position to accommodate various functions and appease commercial demand. The Seoul metropolitan government also supported service education for sellers and demanded a fixed-price system to make the Sewoon Complex a role model of shopping centres. Each building of the complex had some variation in the organization of its commercial functions, but the ground, first and second floors were invariably rented as individual shops for specific goods, such as groceries, imported products, housewares, stationary, clothing, jewelry, etc. Businesses, such as public bathhouses, restaurants, wedding halls, sport facilities, and exhibition halls, that needed larger floor plans were housed above the second floor. Here also innovative stores that targeted specific groups were provided: large scale snack bars and stationary shops for students, self-service supermarkets for housewives, luxury sauna and sport facilities for women, modern-style markets by cooperative associations, and large entertainment facilities for adults (figure 3). The complex also absorbed governmental offices, such as the members’ offices of the National Assembly. The Sewoon complex, which juxtaposed housing, recreation, commerce and business, became a showroom of modern life and encouraged people to accept modernity and its promise of financial prosperity.

Most of the Sewoon buildings were constructed by construction companies or unions of merchants, who then sold many of the stores and apartments to individual owners. Private capital thus realized this mega project, effectively demonstrating a new business model for economic success, given the institutional support from the government. The architect of the complex tried to meet as many market demands as possible, and thus differentiate the Sewoon Complex from the more traditional markets by utilizing modern notions of space and economy. Private investors were thus the biggest supporter of the Sewoon Complex and of the government’s ‘life revolution’ propaganda.
Mega Complex and Urban Development

New Ideas of Urban Development

The site of the Sewoon Complex was an urban evacuation corridor cleared between April and August 1945 – shortly before the end of World War II and independence from Japan. Urban evacuation corridors were designed to reduce fire damage from bombing – such as the extensive damage sustained in the bombing of Tokyo in March 1945 – and was also the primary reason that an elongated empty space was created in the centre of Seoul. The Japanese colonial authorities felt no compulsion to compensate the citizens who were displaced to clear the corridor. After independence and the end of the Korean War, the area was destined to become a boulevard, but was soon filled with refugees and became a famous red light district – a slum area in the inner city of Seoul. The Seoul metropolitan government conceded the necessity to improve this area by clearing the slum and redeveloping it.

District official, Joong-gu first proposed the idea to construct a new road, twenty-metre wide road in the centre of the stip, and using the rest of the space to erect to two rows of buildings. However, the new road could not service the existing buildings that faced the site. An alternative plan was developed by HURPI (the Housing, Urban and Regional Planning Institute) under the department of the central government. HURPI proposed two roads on either side of the site and new buildings in the central area, in-between the roads. This plan, however, left too much open space and resulted in a too low a population density.

Finally, architect Kim Swoo-Geun proposed by to build a linear mega structure of fifty metres wide and one kilometre long, which would comprise eight different buildings linked by elevated pedestrian decks. The architect also proposed a redevelopment plan for the surrounding area, which was filled with old buildings with inadequate infrastructures and characterized by poor living conditions. This redevelopment plan used the linear megastructure as a catalyst to redevelop the neighbourhood area by creating various connections and improving the roads in the area to a grid pattern with a block system. The two anchors of North and South were expanded with a new pattern of urban design (figure 4). This plan was however not accepted by the Seoul metropolitan government, developers and local residents. As a result, the Sewoon Complex was designed to occupy the maximum area of the linear site without including the surrounding area.

The Sewoon Complex planned to make a strong north-south axis from the northern historical and green space, Jongmyo Shrine, to the South Mountain. The elevated decks, which were planned at 75 metres high (at the second floor level), nine metres wide and one kilometre long, were an important design feature for the complex, allowing for a pedestrian shopping mall that was protected from vehicles on the ground. This plan also expected to increase the efficiency both of the streets and of the pedestrian walkways. The vehicle lanes on the ground were designed to be two one-way streets on either side of the site, nine meters wide, just like the pedestrian deck that passed overhead. In addition, the ground floor of the main building was designed as a parking area (figure 5). This design anticipated the increase of car use in the future, and tried to blend into Seoul’s existing street plan. It was the first example of grade separation applied on an urban scale in South Korea. The Sewoon Complex also included other innovative ideas, such as an elevated ‘ground’ on the fourth floor where various ‘open space’ functions could be accommodated, an atrium at the centre.
of the complex to allow for natural lighting and ventilation, and irregular building heights and mass changes that generated a varied urban skyline. The Sewoon Complex was integrated with other modernization plans for inner city Seoul, such as the project to build high-speed elevated motorways. Even though many researchers criticized this plan insisting that a subway was more urgently needed than elevated motorways, the Seoul metropolitan government nonetheless insisted. The system of elevated motorways intended to construct several lines as circulation and penetration ways, which were designed to pass through the inner city without crossing and extend to the outside of the city. Like the Sewoon Complex, this plan also revealed its modern idealism. One of longest elevated motorways, the Cheonggye motorway that was completed in 1969, crossed over the Sewoon Complex (figure 6). These two radical projects forced a new modern vision upon Seoul’s citizens and were intended to prove the benefits of the government’s propaganda. The modern ideas of the two projects imposed themselves upon the urban space. Elevated motorways were constructed from the 1970s to 1990s, and Korean cities were optimized for speed and efficiency, with a car priority policy. The Sewoon Complex was also copied as a modern shopping complex at other sites in the inner city, such as the Nakwon shopping centre, the Daewang shopping centre, the Yoojin shopping centre, and the redevelopment plan of the Namdaemon market during 1970s. However, the success of these modern ideas was short-lived as the rapid pace of societal change revealed their limitations and unpleasant side effects not long after their completion.

Mega Complex as a City Wall

The Sewoon Complex, the biggest complex in South Korea with eight buildings in four linear blocks, presented a huge construction challenge especially given the limitation of technical knowledge and the shortage of construction materials. Nonetheless, by pushing the major construction companies and incentivizing them with permission for future projects, the Seoul metropolitan government was able to complete four blocks in two years. The concept of this multi-functional complex was based on the desire to maximize density and followed an international trend to combine programs in one modern mega structure. This maximization of land-use and density was possible by the implementation of a tabula rasa, which understood the site as a context-free space throughout the Korean War and Japanese colonial era. Politicians and even architects agreed that the site needed to be cleared in order to make new modern buildings. Illegal housing in the site was demolished, and residents were relocated within two months. The plan of the Sewoon Complex was not concerned with the existing context of inner city. In addition, the redevelopment plan also proposed to demolish old buildings in the surrounding area to institute a block system based on car traffic. The inner city was seen as chaotic area, with only a few roads, a high population density and an unorganized land use. The architects therefore aimed to apply the new logic of modernism by constructing the mega structure and spreading this logic throughout the inner city of Seoul. The design of the Sewoon Complex also followed imported modern architecture ideas; thereby abandoning styles native to the contexts of Seoul and Korea. Several of these ideas were applied to the complex: the segregation of pedestrian and vehicle, mixed-use buildings, elevated decks, a roof garden and an atrium. Unfortunately, the architectural design team did not understand very well how to apply these design ideas in real buildings, as they lacked the time to do research because of increasing pressure from the government to complete the design. So the imported design elements were copied directly in the buildings without sufficient adaptation to the urban context and cultural climate. They thus designed the shopping mall and apartment complex as an independent and ‘pure’ model of modernism.

The elevated decks separated from the ground plane aimed to implement
a new system of vehicular and pedestrian traffic without incorporating the surrounding area. The plan required people to walk up the stairs to the second level, thereby removing them from the motorized traffic on the ground and from the surrounding area. The ground itself was planned as car parking and the roads were strictly reserved for vehicles, excluding a few pedestrian passages. This plan effectively and possibly intentionally tried to disconnect the complex from the unorganized neighbourhood by creating vertical barriers in the form of elevated decks. The developers however changed the original plans; the ground floor, for instance, was transformed from a space for parking only, to an area with commercial functions, while the elevated pedestrian decks were not fully connected from first block to the fourth block, largely due to financial reasons. This external and internal disconnection rendered the traffic system of the Sewoon Complex insufficient, both in terms of the connections between the buildings and also vis-à-vis the surrounding area.

The power of the private capital should grant the ability to change some parts of plan, and the government should support the shareholders in constructing buildings quickly and with financial success. The developer, however, had to create all of infrastructure, including the elevated decks, the bridges and the public facilities, without financial support from the government. As a result, they asked to change the ground into a commercial area, and most of public facilities such as the elementary school, the community centre, and post office were cancelled by either insufficient public funds or too restrictive regulation. After the complex was completed, the developer sold the building to individual owners and left. This of course affected the quality of construction, the quantity of public spaces, the logistics of the complex’s structural maintenance, etc. Without the necessary public investment, it was difficult to improve the quality of the public space, as the developer did not care about creating connections with the surrounding neighbourhoods or about providing facilities for the public good.

The linear mega structure was planned as the frontier of modern development, but instead functioned as a city wall, disconnecting the surrounding neighbourhoods and prohibiting the development of the surrounding areas. The Seoul metropolitan government attempted to increase the scope of regulation. After the complex was completed, the developer sold the building to individual owners and left. This of course affected the quality of construction, the quantity of public spaces, the logistics of the complex’s structural maintenance, etc. Without the necessary public investment, it was difficult to improve the quality of the public space, as the developer did not care about creating connections with the surrounding neighbourhoods or about providing facilities for the public good.

Nonetheless, in spite of these political decisions, the Sewoon Complex retained many of its special electronic stores and adapted to accommodate new functions following changes in the market. The shopping centre spontaneously made strong connections with the surrounding area, which supplied basic materials, electric components, as well as offered special techniques and producing facilities. These supporting businesses were able to settle around the Sewoon Complex thanks to the low rent fees. Many businesses surrounding the Sewoon Complex have specialized in CCTV, lighting, sound systems, game

The Shopping Centre and Its Transitions

For the first five years, the Sewoon Complex was famous as a high quality shopping centre, which offered a variety of products and goods such as jewellery, modern clothing, stationary, home appliances and groceries. In addition, the complex offered elite services for the new upper class, like a sauna, an indoor golf range, a fitness gym, and a cabaret. These functions were selected and decided by the developers for sale to individual owners. Most of the developers therefore tried to design stores and apartments that they could sell upon completion, relinquishing the maintenance of the buildings to separate associations of storeowners. This method of shopping centre management differed from the system of a department store, which was organized by one company to increase service and operated under a fixed price system. The vendors of the Sewoon Complex tried to improve the quality of service and apply a fixed price system, but it was difficult to organize merchant associations. This difference of operating system allowed upper-class customer attention to shift to the high-quality department stores in the central area, altering the focus of the goods and services of the Sewoon Complex.

At the beginning of the 1970s the reputation of the Sewoon Complex changed by a political decision of the military government that focused on the development of the southern area of Seoul, in order to decentralize the main functions from the northern area of Seoul. The government developed apartment complexes in a newly expanded area in the southern section of Seoul, also building government offices, schools, a bus terminal, and commercial functions. At this time, the government also disapproved applications for new investment in the old centre of Seoul to be able concentrate completely on this newly expanded area. In addition, electrical and electronic manufacturing were deemed undesirable functions for the central area in 1977, so the main functions of the Sewoon Complex were forced to move out of the inner city of Seoul in the 1980s. After this, the Sewoon Complex lost its position as an influential shopping centre and electronics market.

Nonetheless, in spite of these political decisions, the Sewoon Complex retained many of its special electronic stores and adapted to accommodate new functions following changes in the market. The shopping centre spontaneously made strong connections with the surrounding area, which supplied basic materials, electric components, as well as offered special techniques and producing facilities. These supporting businesses were able to settle around the Sewoon Complex thanks to the low rent fees.
machines, and karaoke machines. The Sewoon Complex has similarly diversified its functions and now includes finance and insurance offices, a tourist hotel, a horticulture cluster, printing offices, and design stores. In addition, many of the apartments have been adapted to office and storage units, which are linked with stores in lower floors of complex.

The initial layout of the Sewoon complex attempted to create a new city structure, which differed from its neighbouring areas, within its physical barriers. Nevertheless, the mega complex made strong connections with the small plots and old buildings surrounding it. The commercial functions of the complex have been transformed through co-operation with neighbourhood businesses. When the Sewoon Complex faced a huge crisis because of changes in demand and policy, the complex was able to overcome these setbacks by intertwining with the production in the inner city. Although this network appeared to move in the opposite direction of the original plan, it became a valuable legacy of this mega shopping centre. In spite of many redevelopment and regeneration plans, the Sewoon Complex still exists and Seoul’s citizens become increasingly aware of the value of its hidden networks within the city’s industry.

Conclusion

The Sewoon Complex was planned as mega structure under the military junta’s new propaganda of modernism as ‘developmentalism.’ The military government attempted to use the construction of the Sewoon Complex to legitimize their vision of modernization as ‘life revolution’. The slogan ‘life revolution’ powerfully advertised the new modern lifestyle with high-density development as a means to manage disorderly urbanization. The citizens could experience modern life in the Sewoon Complex, which included an upscale shopping centre and high-rise apartments with elevators. This mega structure succeeded in validating the military government’s propaganda and attracted urbanites to adopt modern lifestyles and support economic development.

The design of the structure also incorporated modern ideas of architecture and urbanism. The site was considered a tabula rasa, awaiting the creation of a new mega structure, which was not concerned with the surrounding neighbourhood or urban context. The elevated decks for pedestrians formed strong physical barriers between the complex and its surrounding area, just like the motorized ground plane did not intertwine with the adjacent neighbourhoods. The complex aimed for a clear disconnection from the local context in favour of creating a new, independent inner logic. The original plan was however altered by the wishes of private investors who valued financial success over the common good. The modern imagination of the Sewoon Complex was therefore degraded, making it into a city wall.

Nonetheless, against all odds, the complex has generated connections with its neighbourhoods in spite of the obstructing physical barriers. Several industries that support the complex are now located in old lots and buildings nearby. The Sewoon Complex, though constructed according to the tenets of modernism, has been modified by the practical demands of city. In spite of its physical barriers, the mega complex plays a role as a hub in the city’s industry, while the old buildings in its outmoded surroundings have become important ‘feeders’ supporting its functioning. The shopping centre as an icon of modernism was short-lived, but its transition demonstrates the dynamic vitality of the city and suggests new possibilities for shopping centres. Finally, the Sewoon Complex has become a stitch binding together various neighbouring areas, allowing them to bloom as industrial clusters that in turn protect the area and the complex from redevelopment pressure.

Endnotes

1 This is a translation of the junta’s slogan from the Korean original.
The Domesticated Shopping Mall in Modern Tehran
The 1975 (Re)Development of Ekbatan

Rana Habibi

Abstract
The large-scale housing estate of Ekbatan was realized in Tehran in 1975, following the guidelines set out by Victor Gruen and Aziz Farmanfarmaian in their comprehensive plan for the city. The plan of Ekbatan, which was one of the first satellite neighbourhoods realized in western Tehran, contained traces of two distinct urban models; Marcel Breuer’s 1930s X, Y and U-shaped superblock studies for New York on the one hand and Victor Gruen’s model for satellite neighbourhoods surrounding shopping malls on the other. Gruen conceived the shopping mall as a new type of centre that would organize these satellite neighbourhoods around it and was connected to the rest of the city by a network of highways. These western models were however not coldly transplanted in the Middle East, but carefully adapted to the Iranian context, in which the figure of the bazaar traditionally represents the key retail paradigm.

Ekbatan was built in three Phases and had three designs with three distinctive compositions. Phase one and three were designed by the Iranian architect Rahman Golzar, while phase two was planned by the South Korean designer Kim Swoo Geun. Golzar’s interpretation of Victor Gruen’s shopping centre concept consisted of a two-story linear building, one kilometre in length that offered subterranean parking and shopping on top. This shopping strip was intermittently interrupted by openings reminiscent of the traditional squares (meydan) in bazaars, while the geometry of the pathways leading to the ‘shopping centre’ followed the pattern of a traditional Persian Garden. Kim’s design for the second phase, conversely, consisted of three freestanding buildings in the middle of a park. The third shopping mall typology developed in Ekbatan consisted of a building where cars literally drove through; an uncompromising adaptation of Victor Gruen’s mall.

This paper deconstructs the development history of Ekbatan to explicate
how in post-war Tehran the shopping centre became the object of forceful crossings between European, American, Asian and (last but not least) Persian models and influences.

Keywords: shopping mall, transnational model, Tehran, Ekbatan, 1970s

Introduction
International Cooperation and Transformation of a Model
By increasing the oil booming and augmenting the rate of petro-dollar in the mid 1960s, Iran became the second largest oil exporter globally as well as one of the richest countries in the world. As a result, from the mid 1960s until the Iranian revolution in 1979, most Iranian cities faced a rapid urbanization and modernization. The petro-dollar money and the desire for development lured many international companies to Iran.

In 1964, the Ministry of Housing and Development and the Ministry of Planning and Budget approved a law requiring ‘foreign partners’ for housing construction and urban planning. According to this law, each Iranian architectural firm had to collaborate with one international architectural-construction firm when executing a mass-housing project. This collaboration was an important part of the modernization process for the entire country. It went hand-in-hand with the state’s initiatives towards private sector investment and free market policies. Iran’s law regarding foreign partnerships and policy to encourage private investment in housing development occurred concurrently with the onset of the Kennedy Doctrine. Kennedy and his advisors set out to build entirely new nations while promoting a liberal agenda in response to a perceived Communist threat. American foreign aid initiatives escalated during this so-called ‘decade of development’ and the nature of many lending institutions changed, as organization disbursed more loans than grants. This encouraged stronger rapports between American firms and local investors, particularly in the housing sector.

The world oil market provided a flow of ‘transnational events,’ which was paralleled by a flow of architectural ideas and concepts into Iran. These transnational events created a new set of ‘institutional connections’ with industrializing nations, which took the form of international architectural congresses and new urban planning and housing projects. Mass housing projects, which were one of the main grounds for exchange, had a specific role in the creation of a new urbanity. In 1970s Tehran, these became a hot topic as well as an important part of practice for Iranian modernists, many of whom had spent several years of their professional lives abroad. Such projects were of course equally important for international architects who came to Iran to complete internships or established international architects in pursuit of interesting commissions. They were the outcome of imported ideas adapted to local Tehranian realities, ‘transferred models’ based on contemporary global models, re-interpreted in their new environment.

Tehran’s Comprehensive Plan, Satellite Cities and the Idea of the Shopping Mall
At the end of the 1960s, a comprehensive master plan of Tehran was commissioned. It became an ‘umbrella plan’ under which many new plans for residential quarters and urban renewal plans were coordinated. Tehran’s Comprehensive Plan was prepared as collaboration between the Iranian firm Farmanfarmaian Association, the first architectural consultancy firm in Iran, and Gruen Associates from the United States. After his return to Iran in 1950, Abdal Aziz Farmanfarmaian, who had graduated from the École des Beaux Arts in Paris, soon became a prolific architect of high repute thanks to his designs for several modern houses and corporate high-rises. Victor Gruen, an Austrian-American architect and planner had, in turn, built his reputation on the design of shopping malls. He was known as ‘the designer who gave architectural shape to American consumerism.’ The comprehensive plan that he and Farmanfarmaian developed addressed several of Tehran’s major problems, including housing shortages, overcrowding, inadequate services, unemployment and incessant migration. It proposed to create ten central urban units: The urban centers were to be connected by public transit lines, and large green areas separated the districts. The design of the urban centers resembles Gruen’s designs for shopping malls and renovation plans for city centers in the United States. The Comprehensive Plan, however, not only proposed new spaces and a new urban structure, but also aimed to introduce a new domestic culture:

‘The habit of the people of the United States of America is that women usually take their husbands to work, then drop off their children at schools, and go shopping on their way home. The same trend is gradually becoming evident in Tehran, and the degree of its success at the end of the plan depends on the efficiency of the public transportation network. Yet, in terms of planning, the use of private vehicles should be the basis of future developments.’
The plan was designed to accommodate commercial markets and facilitate vehicular movement, following a strong linear expansion of the city westwards, towards Karaj (an industrial city), with a more limited growth towards the east. Overall, the plan would expand the size of Tehran to ten times its original size through the development of ten new districts. It offered new residential complexes that were developed around shopping malls or other kinds of retail shops. These new centres were linked together by highways and metro lines. Each district was composed of a range of housing typologies, distributed over different density zones. The density of the zone in the north was lower, as it comprised single-family dwellings. The density in the south was much higher due to the construction of high-rise housing slabs. In addition to these residential areas, each of the new districts contained new commercial and cultural sub-centres to accommodate ‘everyday life.’ Between the districts, Gruen and Farmanfarmaian designed large green areas to provide leisure and sport facilities.

Ekbatan: A Suburban Middle Class Neighbourhood
Ekbatan was one of only a few middle-class mass housing high-rise complexes in Tehran. Built in 1976, it provided apartments for 15,500 middle-class families on a plot of 240 ha. It is located to the east of the Mehrabad Airport in West Tehran and not far from the Shahyad (now Azadi) monument. Ekbatan exemplifies Tehran’s new urbanity in the 1970s. According to the Comprehensive Plan of Tehran, West Tehran was defined as an industrial zone where a mix of new commercial and cultural sub-centres to accommodate ‘everyday life.’ Between the districts, Gruen and Farmanfarmaian designed large green areas to provide leisure and sport facilities.

Structurally, Ekbatan is divided into three sets of buildings (called ‘Phase’), built in two periods of time. Within each construction phase, each building set has its own series of independent building blocks. The first ‘Phase’ was constructed in 1976, and the rest was completed after the revolution of 1979. The second phase was modified from the original concept and plan. ‘Phase 1’ and ‘Phase 3’ consisted of a double row of apartment buildings with a U-shaped plan. The buildings, built on pilotes, slope down towards a central spine along which a shopping centre is created. This linear shopping centre measures one kilometre in length. The space between the U-shaped blocks is landscaped by a chain of gardens, which are connected by the open ground floors produced by the pilotes. The architecture of Ekbatan, with its exposed rough concrete and very large modernist block forms, is undoubtedly largely derived from brutalism. Situated in a park, the design combined the rough concrete, continuous ribbon glass windows, and pilotes to reproduce the icons of modernism.

At second glance, however, it is striking how much Ekbatan resembles model plans of residential neighbourhoods in 1940s New York that experimented with Y-, U- and X-shaped building blocks, as well as the well-known prototypes developed by Marcel Breuer for the notorious Stuyvesant competition. The multiplication of the pattern of buildings in an island of green generated a condensed ‘towers in a park’ image that had earlier been envisioned by Le Corbusier for his Ville Contemporaine. From the outside however, one sees the image of the superblock. This hybrid ‘superblock-tower in a park’ combination was indeed the most economical solution to Tehran’s housing shortage. It provided mass housing for the city’s middle classes. Breuer’s studies for the
Stuyvesant site illustrate how the Y-shaped buildings located in the park provide light and insulation, while optimizing exposure and vistas. The continuous green space generated by the pattern of Y-shaped buildings provided a park in which schools, community centres and playgrounds for children could easily be accommodated. The Stuyvesant site was developed with a series of 15-storey tall Y-shaped buildings to accommodate 8,000 households. These buildings were linked together so that their wings created a series of conjoined central yards. A rectangular park was situated at the centre and delimited by the north-south streets. At the north-south border of the complex, parking was provided to realize pedestrian-only settlements, an idea that modernism had inherited from the Garden City (or Model City) movement and that had found its way into the planning of suburbs. Breuer called this mode the ‘Future Garden City.’ The new model, however, proposed a new urban block morphology with different proportions, density and materials. Breuer’s Garden City used three basic architectural elements: (1) Y and Siamese-Y shaped assemblages of buildings, (2) twentieth century building materials, such as reinforced concrete, and (3) construction technology made possible by poured concrete and prefabrication, which applied well to the Stuyvesant site. The three elements of Breuer’s Garden City were soon transferred to other countries, including the U.S., where it can be found in Ithaca, New York and other cities.

These ‘towers in the park’ and Y-shaped buildings, that were popular in 1940s New York, served as the prototypes for solving the middle-class housing shortage in 1970s Tehran. Although it might seem that the New York models were literally transferred and copied, the execution of the Y-shaped building typology in Tehran was quite different. For example, sometimes the Y is reduced to a U. Other times the composition is an incomplete Y-shape. The typology and morphology was adapted somewhat freely in relation to the demands of local housing. At the neighbourhood level, the examples from 1940s New York and the residential complex of Ekbatan share the concept of generating an independent neighbourhood that would provide for all the needs of the residents. Consequently, shopping centres, schools, a hospital and post office, swimming pools and sports centres were integrated in the neighbourhoods’ plans.

One of the most significant elements of this housing complex is its commercial centre. In phase 1 the long linear form of the shopping centre references the traditional form of the bazaar in Iranian cities. The function of this commercial centre, however, which was to cater to all of the residents’ needs and ensure that the satellite settlement could operate independently from the rest of the city, brings to mind the idea of the American shopping mall. As people left the cities for the suburbs in post-war America and shopping centres were erected to cater to the American suburbanites needs, so to was Ekbatan’s bazaar supposed to become a central place for shopping, walking, meeting neighbours or just spending time. The shopping centre of Ekbatan was thus not merely a place for commerce but also an active public space – a straightforward representation of what Victor Gruen had initially defined as a shopping centre; neither a ‘machine for selling’ nor a ‘nostalgic reminiscence of the village green’ but an essentially urban environment. Ekbatan furthermore shares other similarities with Gruen’s original shopping centre concept; most notably the way in which it merges retailing and automobiles. Ekbatan shopping centre in phase 1 is a two-storey building with two-storey underground parking spaces. The main idea is to provide a green pedestrian space for the residents. The parking space has six main entrances from bordering streets which run underneath the linear shopping centre. The entrances of the parking spaces in the roof defined the opening spaces of the linear shopping centre. As mentioned before, the linear shopping centre also brings to mind the traditional bazaar. Bazars, the backbone and economic heart of Iranian cities, include primary and secondary linear circulation spaces called Rasteh – these consist of open and closed spaces, indoor and outdoor spaces, beautiful arches and skylights along the fixed axis or multiple branches.

In Ekbatan shopping centre, architects tried to modernize these traditional spaces by cutting the linear form to develop triangular plazas for gathering and light catching purposes. In traditional Iranian cities, the bazaar was a place for economic, social, political, cultural and civic activities. Historically, the bazaar began from the city’s downtown and continued to the suburbs, shaping the neighbourhoods along its path. The bazaar was the heart of the city, and the plaza connected to the bazaar changed into a place for socio-economic activities. In Ekbatan, the commercial centre similarly linked housing blocks by pedestrian ways in the continuous gardens. Like traditional bazaar, it also connected different blocks in phase 1 together. Therefore, the adaptation of the modern model of the satellite city with a commercial centre at its core as a new form of middle-class neighbourhoods in Tehran also derived from the existing patterns of the bazaar and its surrounding neighbourhoods.

The spatial relationships between residential buildings, shopping centres and the character of the green spaces in Phase 1 and 2 demonstrate different understandings of space, which seem to be related to the respective architects’ backgrounds. Phase 1 integrates conventional elements of Persian urban composition, such as the garden and the bazaar. In Persia, gardens were always
defined as geometric and enclosed spaces, while traditionally the linear bazaar is the main urban structure. One could argue that the designers (perhaps unconsciously and almost compulsory) incorporated these compositional rules while implementing modernist housing estates. While undergoing a form of modernization, they nevertheless remain recognizable as conventional urban language.

Phase 2 on the other hand provides a vast open park, in which three freestanding commercial buildings are positioned in the middle. Here the modernist concept of a vast landscape with freestanding buildings is more visible. Ekbatan, therefore, is the outcome of international ideas, on one hand, and the Iranian concept of mahalleh (neighbourhood) on the other. The result is a site-specific and yet international manifestation of the modern neighbourhood.

Conclusion
Wishing to be modern – or to make others modern – often leads to investigations of other people and places for practices that can transform one’s own environment, or that of others. Internationalism practices in 1970s Tehran show how the world’s oil trade led to transnational ideas and inspirations that directly affected architecture. Ekbatan, as an indicator project of internationalism, illustrates how mass-housing construction worked as a web of transnational connections. It also indicates how the ‘towers in the park’ concept of 1940s New York, along with mass ‘brutal' housing models of 1960s Europe, transformed and informed the shape of a middle-class independent satellite neighborhood in Tehran. Ekbatan reminds us of the high level of hybridization of sources, of the adaptation of models, and of how the regurgitation of images can occur decades after their inception.

Endnotes
2 Interview by the author with Abdollah Khasravi, former Senior Engineer of the Ministry of Housing, at the Faculty of Urbanism - Tehran University, April 2012.
4 S.M. Habibi, De La Cite a La Ville: Analyse Historique de la Conception Urbaine et Son Aspect Physique (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1999), 37.
5 The Kennedy Doctrine, based on theories of ‘modernisation,’ heavily impacted American foreign policy starting from the early 1960s. The American social scientists who substantiated the Kennedy Doctrine believed that modernization theory would define the nation’s historic accomplishments, identify the deficiencies of an ‘emerging world,’ and allow them to respond to the needs of the state in a time of crisis. See: M.C. Latham, Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and ‘Nation Building’ in the Kennedy Era (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
6 Kennedy articulated his approach boldly before congress in 1961: ‘We live in a very special moment of history. The whole southern half the world - Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia - are caught up in the adventures of asserting their independence and modernizing their old way of life.’ Source: Congress, Senate, 87th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record, 1 June 1961, vol. 107, pt. 7: 9302.
7 Latham, Modernization as Ideology, 4.
14 A. Modani-pour, Tehran: the Making of a Metropolis (Chichester: John Willy, 1998), 43.
15 Gruen & Farmanfarmaian, Comprehensive Plan of Tehran.
16 ‘Ekbatan’ also refers to the ancient Persian word Hegmataneh (commonly spelled Ecbatana), which was the first city at the time of the Medes located in Hamedan, in western Iran.
17 During the 1970s, most of the residential high-rise buildings in Tehran were intended for upper class residents. High-rises, still new to Iran, were a symbol of progress and development.
18 Now it is called Azadi Square.
20 After graduation he established his own private office, Golzar and Partners.
21 Interview by author with Rahman Golzar in Leuven on 20 August 2014. Golzar explained that he gradually succeeded in buying the land and that to gain the building permit for land outside the legal building zones of Tehran, he had to pay the Municipality of Tehran and Housing Ministry.

23. The Gruzen Partnership was originally founded as Kelly & Gruzen in 1936. They were a staunchly modernist American firm with a legacy of federal housing projects. After graduating from MIT and spending his internship in Italy, Jordan Gruzen started work at his father’s firm. In 1967 fellow MIT graduate, Peter Samton, joined him, and the name of the company changed to Gruzen and Partners and then to Gruzen Partnership. Peter Samton explained in an interview with MIT Graduated Journal how they became involved in the design of Ekbatan: “We had a small but very international class at MIT. One student was Kyu Lee, an architect from Korea by way of Japan’s royal family. He was pretender to the throne of Korea. He was my roommate and a very good designer. Another classmate was from Tehran. When we did work for the Shah in 1976, the four of us had a reunion in Tehran. The internationality of our class opened our eyes to the larger world.” The interview is published on http://loohooloo.mit.edu/resources/portfolio/samton_gruzen/, accessed 15 August 2014.


25. Le Corbusier had visited New York City in 1935 and with a flourish of salient observations, advocated transforming Manhattan into his ‘city in a park’ image.

26. If before the war ‘low-cost’ had been the ideological preference, after the war it became an economic necessity. In fact, low cost was to have an incalculable effect on the large number of public housing projects planned for the future as well as those constructed contemporaneously. See: Plunz, A History of Housing in New York City.


28. During his two years as a partner of British architect F.R.S. Yorke and before immigrating to America, Marcel Breuer designed a large demonstration model to represent a segment of what was called the ‘Gorden City of the future,’ an urban plan based on utopian ideals for living well socially, physically and architecturally. See: A. Von Vegesack & M. Remmele, Marcel Breuer Design and Architecture (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Museum, 2003), 368.

29. Ibid.


Re-Centring Tema
From Isotropic Commercial Centres to an Intense Infrastructure of Street-Vending

Viviana d’Auria

Abstract
As a major exponent of welfare urbanism in West Africa, the new town of Tema could not but feature a main city centre, inclusive of shopping and entertainment. Doxiadis Associates (DA), authors of a first plan for Tema’s Town Centre while they acted as consultants for the entire master plan, followed the credo of the day: separating vehicles from pedestrians, with over-bridges that signalled the importance of the central mall developed around a sequence of differentiated car-free squares. Retail commerce was to run in an unbroken spine while connecting and opening out into three plazas, dominated respectively by government administration functions; tourism and culture; main market and commerce. Moreover, each new community class sector in town was expected to thrive as a residential unit based on a local commercial centre combined with civic, education and leisure activities.

The 1960 proposal by DA marked a clear move from late colonial town planning, which accumulated neighbourhood units without advancing a fully-fledged main town centre. DA by contrast, extended the centre’s civic and commercial activities into a spine heading northwards, aligned with the ‘Ekistic’ growth of the city. Nonetheless, when visiting Tema’s ‘downtown’ today, one finds sinister skeleton structures dominated by an immense tree-deity known as Teeshi. The legend explaining the centre’s aborted development – recently reiterated as Malaysian investors withdrew from new regeneration plans – is that Teeshi’s home was unsettled. However, the stalled development of commercial activities is not limited to the main pedestrian mall, but also to the articulate system of commercial spaces scaled to income and size of each planned community. Rather than filling-in the carefully conceived stall systems, today auto-constructed kiosks line the over-sized street network, disregarding the hierarchically organized urban tapestry imagined by Doxiadis’ ‘integral urbanism.’
This paper compares initial proposals for the main mall and neighbourhood commerce with the re-centring of Tema by its everyday users. Space for exchange has been systematically transformed, illustrating the entangled construction of modernity in Tema. Selective appropriation, rejection and resistance have further converted spaces designed for retail and consumption, illustrating how indigenous cult has suspended development, and cultural practices have intensified infrastructure. Through more than one transaction, the mall has been stalled only to reappear in transmuted form.

Keywords: Ekistics, Doxiadis Associates, Tema new town, commercial centre, street vending

Introduction (By Way of a Preamble)
Tema’s ‘downtown’ is bound to strike anyone visiting Ghana’s best-known expression of welfare urbanism. Dominated by the ghastly concrete skeleton of an unfinished building, the city centre is otherwise characterised by a plethora of glossy decorated sheds that host banks and little more. To those who have already sauntered around the rest of the town at least two other features appear as exceptional when exploring Tema’s core: on one hand the almost complete absence of bustling street vendors and ingeniously-built mobile stalls, on the other the remarkable presence of a colossal tree. The latter stands sturdily rooted and hovers over its neighbours somewhat ominously, including the incomplete building structure erected by its side. When approaching passers-by with questions on this peculiar assemblage of extraordinary vegetation and unfinished artefact, these interrogations remain for the large part unanswered. At best, they trigger elusive responses that may obliquely lead towards the articulation of a research agenda. More particularly, because of Tema’s position as a cornerstone project intrinsically tied to the aspirations of the newly emerging nation-state of Ghana, an inquiry into the city centre’s incompleteness seems inescapable. As an unfinished project, the city centre of this Ghanaian new town offers fertile terrain to apprehend the almost complete absence of bustling street vendors and ingeniously-built mobile stalls, on the other the remarkable presence of a colossal tree.

The emergence of the port town of Tema, eighteen miles east of the main coastal outpost of Accra, was intensely linked to British late colonialism. As one of the major components of a river basin development scheme considered as early as 1915, the installation of a novel harbour was part of an agenda based on the extraction of natural resources, in turn motivated by the growing significance of aluminium. Following 1957, the year of Ghana’s independence, priorities moved from bauxite deposits to industrialisation and the mechanisation of agriculture to halt the prior reliance on a cash crop such as cocoa. Before DA’s solicitation, the development of Tema as the first port of the Gold Coast colony had been under the responsibility of the Tema Development Organisation (TDC). Management also followed the British statutory standards; with large acquisition areas and specially instituted corporations town planning could confidently proceed.
Designing Dynamic Town Centres for Ever-Expanding Metropolises

The Town Planning Department of the TDC drafted several master plans between 1951 and 1959, an interval largely corresponding with the diarchy. While the idea of a town centre was featured in most of them, its actual delineation as a well-defined entity in its own right would only appear in the later proposals by the end of the 1950s. By contrast, the concentration of city centre functions in one clearly bounded area was dismissed by DA as a major hindrance to the ‘natural’ development of the settlement. The reports produced by the working team on the topic emphasised rather the fundamental principle of considering the centre’s development as part of the overall framework elaborated for the Accra-Tema Metropolitan Area. In this vein, the metropolitan concept developed for Tema’s city centre noted the town’s position in relation to Ghana’s capital city. It underpinned the evolution of both Tema and Accra into a single region, where mutual influence and complementarity would eschew haphazard urban development. More specifically, the dynamic growth of Tema’s centre was scrutinised vis-à-vis the factors and features that were likely to circumvent its northward expansion, such as landscape features or the installation of large mono-functional industrial areas.6

The commissions for Tema’s master plan and town centre development coincided with DA’s elaboration of ‘growing centre.’7 The latter was premised on the guided parabolic expansion of the urban fabric in one direction only, allowing for the centre’s ‘free development.’ The concept was best expressed in a frequently reiterated diagram which illustrated a series of overlapping circles of increasing size along an axis, with a proportionally intensifying central area. This illustration was commonly shown in contraposition to a static radial city scheme and its overburdened core presented as the inevitable result of concentric rather than dynamic growth. As part of DA’s proposals for the master plan for the Accra-Tema metropolitan area, the axial expansion of the city was considered feasible for both new and existing conditions. While this was most evident in the axis overlaid on Accra’s radial layout, the consulting engineers from Athens proposed the same for Tema, over-ruling earlier master planning ideas. In one of the chief illustrations for the Accra-Tema metropolis three axes of dynamic progression are placed at regular intervals as the organizing principles for urbanisation (figure 1). Their unhindered but gradual expansion was supported not only by the road network that expressed a clear reliance on car-based development, but also by a linear spine that allowed all neighbourhoods to be within short distance of crucial community buildings and services. Most significantly however, the proposal was not one of simple linear extension; rather, the city centre was expected to widen as the city expanded. This conceptual model would be elaborated in practice for cities as far as Islamabad, Washington DC and Riyadh as DA broadened their consultancy activities across contexts and cultures. It would become known as ‘Dynapolis’ and was at the core of the Greek architect’s ‘City of the Future’ project funded by the Ford Foundation that would find various applications over the following decade.

Superregional Urban Form

Doxiadis’ elaboration of ‘Dynapolis’ would contribute to the vivacious debate on regional planning and decentralisation in the United States - and well beyond - from the early 1960s onwards. Moreover, the interest in guiding exponential urbanisation would lead to a significant conversion of interests with Jean Gottmann, whom Doxiadis would meet in New York City in 1960. By that year the French geographer had secured funds to pursue his research on the Megalopolis of the North-eastern Seaboard of the United States, while the Greek architect was a regular lecturer at the American Institute of Planners and the MIT, in addition to regular visits at the United Nations as key participant of technical assistance missions. In 1961 both Gottmann and Doxiadis would advance reflections on the elaboration of a superregional urban form and the conceptual models that would enable it in practice, since the Greek architect would have the opportunity to apply the ‘Dynapolis’ model to Washington DC. It is in this context that Victor Gruen would shortly thereafter advance his critique of Doxiadis’ expanding city.
centre, ironically termed ‘More Miracle Miles’ because of the looseness and largeness of the downtown being proposed.5

However, while Gottmann’s Megalopolis was mostly an appellation for an actually occurring phenomenon along the US East Coast, ‘Dynapolis’ was a projective concept accompanied by a rational strategy for its implementation. This methodology largely overlapped with principles from Ekistics - the science of Human Settlements – that would later find official coinage by Doxiadis as part of his concerns for the relevance of con-disciplinary thinking in urban development.6 Ekistics would be conveyed as a scientifically sound approach to urban transformation based on technical know-how, comparative analysis of cities across epochs and continents, and a critical selection of CIAM tenets. Superblocks as the basic unit for urbanization, the separation of vehicular from pedestrian movement, and functional separation of work, live and leisure activities were all prominent features of DA’s Ekistic urban planning worldwide. In Tema too, the system of interlocking superblocks named ‘community class sectors’ enabled the Athens-based consultants to advance a trans-scalar and integral approach to city development. Within a complex urban tapestry, social class, density of community buildings, residential typologies and infrastructure networks were interwoven differently according to the hierarchical level of operation and the particular cultural context of implementation. The superblocks’ perimeters hosted through-traffic along a super-grid, whereas their central areas were restricted to pedestrians in order to safeguard access and use of community buildings and public services.

The Role of Shopping and Commercial Activities within the Urban Tapestry

The first report by DA on the town centre of Tema prepared the ground to apply an Ekistic approach to the Ghanaian new town, from elongated city core to interlocking community class sectors. Meanwhile, both the head office in Athens and the field office in Accra were involved in the elaboration of a counter-proposal to that of the TDC Town Planning Department, town centre included. The new master plan would cover an area of 5000 acres and make provisions for four different zones, one of which was the Town Centre itself. In this proposal the centre retained its location at the junction of residential, industrial and port establishments and stood at the topographically highest point in the area. This position coincided with the site of the ‘little fishing village’ that had by then been moved eastwards at the inception of works for the harbour, and which formed the starting point of an extremely contested resettlement process.10

The area outlined as town centre prior to DA’s involvement was located along a North-South axis and was surrounded by residential sectors on each side but to the south, where the harbour area was located. Indeed, of the overall acreage assigned to the town centre, seventy-five were to be developed by the Tema Development Organisation, and the remaining sixty by the Harbour Authorities. The town centre was thus at the intersection of two perpendicular axes, one of which was the coastal strip where the port’s central functions were expected to intensify, the second coinciding instead with DA’s preferred direction of growth heading northwards.

In preparation for the general plan of the city, the division of the area into ‘homogeneous integrated communities’ represented a crucial step.2 For DA, grouping had to be well proportioned and related to settlement size and importance. The provision of services was a major determinant of community size, and was at the origin of a classification system whereby to each community class sector corresponded a certain degree and allocation of services. In this context, a community of class I was composed of a small group of houses around a common connecting factor, such as a square or a street. When more than one of these was connected by means of a major open space, they constituted a community of class II; when what bounded them together was an elementary school, then a community of class III was generated. Shopping centres, similarly to recreation buildings, were considered a community building of ‘higher order’ and were considered to serve several communities of Class III, leading therefore to a community of class IV (figure 2).12 This classification underpins DA’s recognition that shopping centres were well suited to serve as social and cultural congregators besides fulfilling their evident commercial intent.

The estimate of required shopping units was from inception an important point for the consultants, in line with the general goal of assessing as closely as possible the intensity and kind of functions of the town centre. In an early report, a greater intensity of shops from the expected total amount of 5000 units was imagined as part of the concentration of more important functions in the southern part of town, in proximity to the town centre itself.20 Once the town would reach the final targeted amount of 240000 inhabitants, the remaining units, including general commercial shops and food markets, would serve the communities of higher order, notably community class IV (2000 families on average). As far as the actual distribution of commercial establishments was concerned, the rule elaborated for the communities of class III was to have some shops catering for people’s every day needs, particularly the foodstuffs. The centres of communities of class IV would instead be equipped with complete food markets and general retail stores, as well as with a number
of offices, bars and cinemas. Commercial activities in the following order of community (class V) were to be carried on by a larger number and variety of shops while there would also be department stores, wholesale trade establishments, warehouses and offices.

Commercial spaces were therefore distributed hierarchically across the superblocks composing the new town, and were clearly considered as part of the essential functions that helped ‘non-homogeneous’ urban residents to coalesce into communities of different order. On this premise the simplest form of commercial centre was considered to be that corresponding to communities of class III, namely neighbourhoods including between five hundred and seven hundred families. Tentative sketches of a number of centres illustrated how commerce was combined with other key functions such as community centres, recreational facilities (one cinema, one park), welfare centre and health centre. Together they composed the central area of each community of class IV around a small square designed strictly for pedestrians, whereas shops and schools were made accessible by cul-de-sac roads (figure 3). DA stressed the relevance of lower class commercial centres for the functioning of a community, whereby daily market visits would occur. Neighbourhood commercial sectors should therefore not only be built simultaneously with the dwellings themselves, but even before other types of public buildings.

Shopping in the City Core: Proposals for the Main Tema Town Centre
Following the very first report on the Tema Town Centre, the subsequent document released by DA tackled the centre’s re-articulation more directly, including land use, zoning and design proposals. The team focused on the part of the centre that was bounded by the expressway and road No. 21, which included an administrative and cultural zone, the commercial centre, the wholesale area and a space reserved for residences. The first proposal imagined the administrative buildings to occupy the area’s higher part to form the background to a forty-five by three hundred metre esplanade, onto which pedestrian accesses from the town would converge. Cultural buildings occupying the southern portion of the site would be accompanied by adequate green space for outdoor cultural activities. The commercial centre – foreseen as a combination of business and shopping areas – would lie opposite. The ground floor of the business area would comprise multi-storey office buildings of commercial and professional firms, with luxury shops, cinemas, restaurants, bars and coffee shops and a prominently located hotel. A six-storey façade hosting offices would also be included, mirrored on the opposite side of the esplanade and parallel to the road forming the commercial centre’s eastern limit.
The actual shopping area on the other hand, was comprised of two-storey, single or double-row shops adjusted to the contours of the land. This specific layout was intended for uninterrupted movement through a series of patios, which enable closer approach by car due to the particular exploitation of available space. The shops were designed to be accessible not only by the esplanade, but also by two basic pedestrian roads, one of which was the extension of the main pedestrian road targeting the commercial centre. A second car-free road was provided at a right angle, and hosted a department store with adjacent parking space. The latter was only a portion of the total parking space proposed, which was equal in area to the selling space in the shops, and consisted of one large public parking on the service road along the expressway, and three converging private parking spaces. Car access was a crucial driver of the town centre's design, as was its complement, that of pedestrian circulation. Coming from the town, pedestrians had two options to access the commercial centre, which would converge on the esplanade. These converging approaches joined into a wide ramp crossing the expressway. Small shops on each side of the ramp, with reference to towns of the Italian Renaissance, were expected to contribute towards a denser circulation that formed the spine of the centre.

A second proposal for the main town centre would be the object of a 1962 report. The latter was redesigned on the basis of an important reconfiguration of the road system since the previously imagined curvilinear streets did not fit with DA's superblock and grid system (figure 4). The highest part of the central core – and of Tema in general – remained devoted to the high-grade shopping and department stores, the Administrative Centre, the office buildings, the banks, the central hotel and the cultural and recreation areas. As the report stated, 'in the new form of the Main Town Centre area the pedestrian mall has been made a feature of great importance.' In its re-designed version the mall opens up and connects three main plazas along an East-West orientation and across the entire central area. Each plaza is characterised by a specific function, with public and administrative landmark buildings situated in the westernmost plaza and on highest ground. The middle plaza, built along a North-South axis, was intended as a connecting space between main market, Railway Station and entertainments buildings located across the highway.

The principal hotel, cultural centre and department store were also located around this open space and together heralded Tema's geographical centre. The main market, wholesale commercial establishments and the second-class hotel bordered the easternmost and third plaza. The pedestrian mall linked the three open spaces together and was moreover lined with commercial functions at the mall-level and offices on the upper floors. The designers' account concluded by emphasising the unbroken line of retail commerce and its role as a spine that sustained all other functions and, in return, benefitted from them. Lastly, the centre of Tema was designed in order to make all buildings accessible from the pedestrian mall, which was connected to the surrounding built areas by means of pedestrian over-bridges. The resulting separation between pedestrian and vehicular circulation was thus complete, enabling people to walk 'unhindered and safe in the very heart of the Town Centre.' Access roads for vehicles were
planned either as cul-de-sacs or as loops and adequate parking areas were located under the pedestrian plazas, in addition to a multi-storey parking garage. For DA the ground configuration combined with raising the mall level to enable pedestrian approach implied placing emphasis on the central pedestrian mall – and emphasising humanistic over technological values. From a volumetric standpoint, the second version of the Tema Town Centre was significantly more refined than its predecessor. The main building defining the pedestrian mall was a long multi-storey edifice with office and shops, which complemented the tower hosting the Central Government Offices. A study of the resulting skyline and a model would showcase the sculptural characteristics of the new layout, underscoring the long, wide and pedestrian-only mall avenue.

**Fostering Shopping Culture in Tema or Nurturing the Cult of Teeshi?**

In one of the later reports concerning the Accra-Tema Metropolitan Area, DA discussed the principles of physical development that would act as main drivers for the region’s Ekistic articulation. On this occasion, a systematic description of functions for different classes and types of buildings was effectively delineated by schemes showing how such activities would be distributed according to the number of inhabitants. Interrogations on how to determine their hierarchical grouping pattern of neighbourhood communities were to be based on physical, social and economic factors, which ranged from climatic characteristics to population incomes. The report included amongst these the ‘tradition and scale in the physical planning elements of the community such as the house, streets and squares.’ While the size of residential plots was dependent on income and social class, house types could refer more clearly to particular dwelling customs, and indeed Doxiadis’ capacity to articulate dwellings by combining modern layouts with indigenous features has been accounted for in several cities of the so-called Third World. Dwelling space therefore, appeared as the privileged domain to initiate a conversation between Ekistic planning principles and a locale’s cultural specificities.

In Doxiadis’ practice, the provision of community services and other public equipment was by contrast a matter of quantitative definition and strategic location; reference to customary usages was largely non-existent. In this context, though commerce was portrayed as a favourite occupation in Ghana, no real efforts were advanced to apprehend indigenous forms of exchange and market culture that could be trans-culturally espoused with shopping centre design principles. This was ever more true in the case of Ghana where, in contrast to the revisited souks of Baghdad for instance, specific forms of trade, including open-air markets and street vending would lack acknowledgement. The divergence with residential district design is striking: if ‘African’ palaver grounds were a reference for the small open spaces in low-income neighbourhoods, proposals for the main town centre fail to reflect on any cultural practices that, by means of translation in the built environment, could help refine the design process.

Two major re-articulations of the proposals by DA have over time revealed the mismatch between Ekistic ambitions and Tema’s daily inhabitation. Firstly, the leading principle of separating pedestrian from vehicular traffic in the name of liveability and human scale preservation, dismissed a crucial feature in terms of existing trading culture, namely the intense interdependence between street vending and infrastructure. Early and late colonial reports had in fact described, albeit negatively, the vibrancy of street markets and other informal street-side occupations. Denounced as problematic, such trading activities were condemned as an unhygienic practice, a temporary disturbance, and a hazard for through-traffic. Nonetheless, ever since Tema’s neighbourhoods were constructed, it is precisely this form of commerce that has been conspicuously practised by the large numbers of head-porters and stall keepers. Street vending is today accommodated precisely along the car-based super-grid that DA had imagined as free from all unnecessary interaction with pedestrian activities. This intensification of infrastructure is also reflected in its counterpart, since the largely under-utilised local centres – commercial spaces included – are far from
being an active core within cohesive communities. Rather, these neighbourhood centres are the stage for an extensive register of trading practices, whereby pre-established commercial specifications are transcended, as are the official spaces were commerce was expected to occur.

The actual design of Tema’s neighbourhoods is significantly close to the plans composed by DA; the same cannot be said for the main town centre. While TDC officials consider ineffectual financial management as the cause of such abortion, the unanswered questions by passers-by point to other interpretations. When describing the centre, Doxiadis and his team celebrated the coalition of main civic, administrative, cultural and commercial areas in the heart of the city. A perspective view of their entwinement shows how the main high-rise buildings, including a 258-room hotel, would dominate the central pedestrian area (figure 5). Today the dilapidated hotel is precisely the structure overshadowed by the immense architecture of Teeshi, one of the tree-deities of the Ga people, who settled the coast in the 17th Century. The dimension DA failed to consider – that of religion – is what impeded the centre to blossom as the city’s bustling core. Rather, the legends on Teeshi’s revenge have multiplied, recounting of its impossible uprooting, its constant rebirth following innumerable attempts to cut it away and the deity’s capacity to scare off interested investors by means of supernatural powers. Located on the highest point with the massive mythical rock that marks the Greenwich meridian, the hotel never saw the light despite President Nkrumah’s insistence. This edifice alone embodies the distance between expected and actually inhabited city, made all the more evident by recent events: after more than fifty years from their uprooting, the inhabitants of the fishing village that was forcibly removed to initiate Tema’s fabrication have today recovered their relationship with the contested spaces of the incomplete downtown.20 Within the framework of the Tema Greenwich Meridian Cultural Festival (MERIFEST) that honours the cultural diversity of Tema and Ghana, Teeshi can once again be celebrated as a major deity by the Ga. Rumours have it that Teeshi has been finally able to return home and no longer furiously roams the city. It may well be that the time is also ripe for Tema’s centre to attain completion.

Endnotes
6 Doxiadis Associates, Tema Town Centre 1, DOX-GHA 3 (6-7-60): 10; 16.
12 Ibid.
13 Doxiadis Associates, Tema Town Centre 1, DOX-GHA 3 (6-7-60): 36.
15 Ibid., 1.
17 Ibid., 20.
18 Doxiadis Associates, Accra-Tema Metropolitan Area 2 – The synthesis of Communities Class IV & V, DOX-GHA 72, 4.
19 Ibid., 24.
THEME 4
The Afterlife of Post-war Shopping Centres:
From Tumorous Growth to the Dawn of the Dead
In 1977, George A. Romero shot sequences of ‘Dawn of the Dead,’ a film that would soon become one of the great cult horror zombie movie, in a deserted mall. Shorn of life and light, the shopping centre’s great echoing chambers of commerce took on a very eerie tone. Curiously, Romero’s set design has much in common with the steadily growing number of photographs of abandoned malls strewn across the United States. As Americans return downtown and online shopping popularizes, they leave behind well over a hundred lifeless concrete and steel leviathans; relics of the post-war era, when Americans with cars and fat wallets fled to the suburbs. Thus far, this phenomenon oddly enough seems limited to the United States alone. The situation that many shopping centres (built in the 1960s and 1970s) appear to be facing elsewhere, is tumorous growth. The need to compete has led many shopping centres to expand beyond recognition, adding wings, floors, entries and exits without much consideration for the overall legibility of the complex. The result: an amorphous shopping maze. This theme seeks to set out strategies for (contemporary) shopping centre redevelopment, identify ‘best practices’ and explore if for the American shopping centres – like for the zombies in Romero’s film – there is (a new) life after death?

Abstract

The architecture and the urban form of European shopping centres represent an adaptation of the US settlement model with various temporal gaps. In Italy, the diffusion of shopping centres started in the 1970s with the evolution of the mass retail channel and the retail distribution groups. In the past two decades this development has witnessed a strong increase with the introduction of new typologies, such as ‘commercial superstructures’ and ‘shopping polarities.’ In some urban areas, this has brought about strong territorial competition, with market saturation as a result. In the United States, where the competition among shopping centres is much stronger than in Europe, retail buildings suffering from demise or high vacancy rates, also known as ‘deadmalls’ and ‘ghostboxes,’ are common in every metropolitan area. In Italy and Europe, however, the delay embedded in the modernization process of the retail system should allow public administrations to anticipate this phenomenon and accordingly adapt urban policies. Save for some differences in terms of localization strategy and urban planning regulation, the European and American retail distribution systems are after all quite similar. This became apparent when the first Italian deadmalls began to emerge. Once this problem has been registered, which solutions could be found? Can a shopping centre be given a second life? This paper analyses features and issues arising from the death and the conversion of commercial buildings. Focusing on Italy, the reasons for the demise of malls and its effects on the economic and urban systems will be studied.

Keywords: Italian scenario, shopping polarities, deadmall, demalling
Introduction

The analysis of the shopping centre phenomenon in the United States allows us to better understand the evolution of the Italian and European retail system. In the US, ‘deadmalls’ (abandoned shopping centres) and ‘ghostboxes’ (abandoned big box stores) began to appear in the mid 1990s and reached an alarming level by the beginning of the 2000s. The closure of shopping centres presents itself as an inevitable trend in the development of mass retail – as first perceived in the US, and later on in Europe. The phenomenon seems endemic to this type of facilities, as they are generally planned and managed to be successful in a limited period of time, which is sufficient to guarantee the amortization of the initial investment.

In Northern America, deadmalls and ghostboxes – or ‘greyfields’ as the Congress of New Urbanism,\(^3\) which takes into consideration the whole urban context, defines them – are the testament of this short life span of the retail industry’s physical structures. This collapse is caused by a variety of factors. The increasing number of commercial sites produces a strong competition between retailers and a market saturation, resulting in the crisis or failure of some properties. Moreover, every single mall or big box store must face specific problems, related to location, age, typology, accessibility, maintenance, catchment areas and changing consumers’ behaviours. For example, in the US most customers favour the convenience of power centres, the pedestrian areas of the open-air malls or the ‘urban style’ of lifestyle centres over the enclosed mall. This results in the emergence of greyfields that pose a community-wide problem; not only in terms of the urban and social blight affecting surrounding areas, but also from an economical point of view; loss of tax revenue and the lack of job opportunities.

What happened overseas is useful to anticipate and perhaps even prevent the negative effects of the excessive expansion of retail structures in Italy, taking into account the main similarities and also differences between the two countries. In the US over 73% of all sales, both food and non-food, take place in stores of the mass retail channel, mainly represented by a few large commercial typologies (shopping malls, big box stores) and owned by powerful private companies, such as WalMart and HomeDepot. In Italy, in 2013, only 43.5% of all purchases took place in mass retail channel stores, with stark differences between food (65.5%) and non-food (24.1%).\(^4\) More recent statistics however show that shopping centres and big/medium sized stores\(^6\) in Italy are increasing their market-share, which is becoming much more akin to the of the US. Also the typologies of retail buildings in the US and Europe are quite similar, although the

![Figure 1: Map showing the distribution of shopping centres in Italy in 2014.](image1.jpg)

![Figure 2: Deadmalls in Italy; (1) Le Acciaierie in Cortenuova; (2) Euromercato in Casoria; (3) Giardini del sole in Capodrise and (4) Polo della qualità in Marcianise.](image2.jpg)
average size of the US shopping mall and big box is much larger than that of its Italian counterparts. Analogies can also be detected in terms of location. Most of these large retail buildings are situated in suburban areas. As a result, they can often only be reached by private means of transportation. There are however also some profound differences between Italy and the US; particularly in terms of laws and regulations, which are much more strict in Italy. In the last twenty years, the Italian retail planning legislation has witnessed a progressive liberalization (Legislative Decrees 58/2010, L. 248/2006, Legislative Decrees 114/98) and has adopted the principle of ‘qualitative need’ instead of the previous ‘quantitative need.’ The liberalization of retail activities largely pertains to small and medium size stores, while activities on wider surfaces (with a gross leasable area of more than 2500 m²) are still governed by a more complex retail authorization process that requires a prior evaluation by the regional committee.

The Italian Retail System

In Italy the phenomenon of land occupation and expansion of big retail stores presents an important challenge. Nonetheless, local policies do not (yet) seem to consider the signals coming from the US. Since the 1990s the Italian retail system has experienced a drastic evolution as new typologies have been created next to the traditional shopping centres. Even the location of retail stores have witnessed an evolution, as retail centres began to crop up in proximity of urban areas, often as a solution for the revitalization process of old industrial sites. The Italian commercial system has been further enriched by the introduction of new formats, such as factory outlet centres (FOC) or entertainment centres, and the mixture of different kinds of retail typologies and functions in specific urban areas called ‘commercial polarities.’ When annexed to important buildings, such as train station or airports, these complexes are called ‘superplaces.’ Next to this evolution, an important increase of new retail spaces has been registered, especially in the sector of medium sized big box stores. This increase is even occurring in saturated and congested areas.

At the moment, the Italian retail scenario can be categorized into four different typologies of shopping places or ‘Shopping Polarities.’ First of all, the planned centre, which is an independent structure – or an open air set of retail buildings – planned and developed as a single entity or located in a complex formed by successive additions along the main road system. It comprises enclosed and open air shopping centres, retail parks, factory outlet centres, entertainment centres and aggregations, such as the ‘Commercial strip.’ A second type is the shopping district. This is a spontaneous aggregation of neighbourhood retail spaces along streets or urban squares. It is usually located in the central areas of cities and often organized in ‘Urban commercial districts’ (Distretti Urbani del Commercio) or ‘Natural Shopping Centres’ (Centri Commerciali Naturali). The third type, is the stand alone store. Its is characterized by big and medium sized stores with formats similar to the big-box, and generally located in peri-urban and suburban areas. The fourth and final type, is the E-commerce place. This typology, that trades products and services over the Internet, is both competing with and complementary to traditional shopping places.

For years, the discussion has focused on the conflicts between planned centres and shopping districts. Nowadays, however, this dualism seems questionable. A recent Italian study shows how the retail offer, activities, experiences and use of places related to planned centres and shopping districts are quite different and can sometimes be complementary or symbiotic. Strong competition is however emerging between similar shopping typologies, especially between planned centres, which often present the same layout and retail offer. The main companies of the retail industry constantly increase the commercial offer, especially in terms of local occupation and size, which in some areas has caused a growing competition between retailers and has led to market saturation. As a result, initial crises are emerging in some areas, where the tough competition has led to high vacancy rates and closure – ostensibly reproducing what has been happening in the US for the past twenty years. Even if the problem is only starting to emerge, it can (or should) be considered a sign of a new urban trend that needs to be controlled.

The Case of the Lombardy Region and the Milan Metropolitan Area

In Italy, the Lombardy region is the most dynamic in terms of economic growth and retail development. It was the first Italian region to reach a population of more than ten million – registering 10.001.496 inhabitants in 2013 – and has a commensurable GDP. Lombardy has 192 shopping centres (see figure 1); a number that increases to 222 if the twenty-eight ‘planned centres,’ which have recently been authorized, some of which are under construction, are also taken into account.

If we analyse the effects of the current competitive retail scenario in Lombardy, considering the capacity of its 222 shopping polarities and the force of their gravitational attraction in relation to their primary catchment areas; certain areas are characterised by stark competition in the face of a low demographic density. Symptoms of the retail crisis have begun to emerge in these areas, including the increase of vacant spaces, the decrease of sales and the closure of the first food and non-food anchor stores. ’Le Acciaierie’ is the largest deadmall in the area. It opened in 2005 and was expected to host more than 150 shops on 57000 m² of gross leasable area. Milan’s metropolitan
region represents the most competitive retail area in Lombardy and Italy. It is characterized by many shopping polarities that were created in the last thirty years to 'accommodate' the metropolitan region's wide consumer catchment area. At the same time, the metropolitan area also incorporates a large number of medium and big box stores, especially grocery stores with a gross leasable area ranging from 400 up to 2500 m², called 'superstore' or 'supermarket.' The market is progressively saturated, inducing competition between the different structures. Nonetheless, many new shopping polarities are currently planned or under construction, four of which are large regional shopping centres. The regional shopping centre ‘Westfield Milan,’ which is located in Segrate, a town adjoining the municipality of Milan, is set to open in 2017. It will become one of Europe’s largest shopping centres with over 300 shops and a 170000 m² of gross leasable area. Another one currently under construction is the regional shopping centre ‘Arese Shopping Center,’ which is located in Arese at a distance of ten kilometres from Milan. Arese will open in 2016 and offer over 75000 m² of gross leasable area. Also the ‘Cascina Merlata’ regional shopping centre, which is located in Milan next to the EXPO 2015 exhibition site is coming in 2017, offering over 35000 m² of gross leasable area. Finally, a new regional shopping centre located in the ex ‘Falk’ steel plant of Sesto San Giovanni, a town adjoining the municipality of Milan, is opening in 2018 and will offer another 74000 m² of gross leasable area.

As a result of this continuous growth, some older shopping centres are already investing in restyling and refurbishing in order to maintain or improve their appeal. Our recent analysis of this area\textsuperscript{19} has resulted in a map showing the overlap between the catchment areas of every regional shopping polarity. The most competitive retail area in Lombardy according to our analysis is the northern portion of Milan's metropolitan region. In this area, due to market saturation, medium size stores, with a gross leasable area of less than 2500 m² in stand-alone layouts are the most affected by the crisis; particularly shops trading in home decoration, car dealership and grocery stores.

The Case of the Piedmont Region and Turin Metropolitan Area

The Piedmont region is ranked third for number of shopping centres per region, and presents dynamics similar to those of Lombardy. The Metropolitan area of Turin is the most interesting part of the region. Here the steady growth of the large-scale retail sector along with the approval of new projects for shopping sites have led to market saturation, fierce competition between shopping facilities and the presence of vacant buildings. A recent research that we have conducted\textsuperscript{20} focused on the dynamics of the main shopping polarities (big box stores and shopping centres with a gross leasable area of more than 2500 m²). Analysing the current situation, two key trends can be observed in the evolution of the region’s shopping polarities. There are those with a decisively suburban location, located in close proximity of highways that connect them to the city, and then there are those that have an urban location. These are more recent retail buildings, which are a part of larger urban transformations, commonly aimed at the redevelopment of industrial areas. Starting from the current situation the research provides a potential future scenario, considering new shopping polarities that are on their way. These include 'Caselle Designer Village,' which is a project by Praga Holding Real Estate, located next to Turin airport and offers more than 80000 m² of gross leasable area. Another project in the pipeline

Figure 3: Map of Milan's metropolitan area, showing the overlapping catchment area and competitive landscape.
is ‘Fashion Mall Laguna Verde’ in Settimo Torinese. This shopping mall is to be erected on the Pirelli industrial site, where it will insert 70000 m² gross leasable area. The ‘Palazzo del Lavoro’ project will, in turn, reuse the pavilion of Expo 1961 designed by Pier Luigi Nervi and offer more than 17000 m² of gross leasable area. The ‘Galleria Auchan’ may be realized in the Viberti area, an abandoned industrial site, on which Immochan presented a project for more than 90000 m² of gross leasable area, while the ‘Mondo Juve’ retail park and fashion centre is currently under construction in the southern part of the metropolitan area. It is set to open in 2016 and will offer more than 80000 m² of gross leasable area.

The future scenario assesses the risk of market saturation through a comparison with the existing situation. Scheduled projects could in the years to come modify the current state of Turin’s retail context, as it creates new attractive shopping polarities that weaken the attraction of existing ones. At the moment, four different retail structures in this area have already been faced with the problem of demise. Of these, two have been redeveloped into new retail typologies, another one is set to be demolished in the near future and will be replaced by three residential towers, while another one is still standing, albeit vacant and abandoned.

The Demalling Process:
From US Experiences to the First Italian Cases

In the US, the emergence of greyfields encouraged communities and local administrations to devise shared solutions by defining regulations and guidelines that can prevent the phenomenon or by redeveloping abandoned areas. At the same time, a variety of public and private players, such as developers, politicians, communities, property owners and planners have been directly involved in the process of redevelopment and revitalization of greyfields. This ‘demalling’ process includes various strategies, which may differ in size, location, purpose, completion, strategy or ownership. Thanks to these kinds of projects, several demised shopping facilities have either been demolished and replaced with new urban areas or given a new use, such as museum, university, library, church, medical centre, offices, mixed-use or even novel retail typologies.

The transformation of vacant shopping centres and big box stores represents a completely new urban challenge. Given their short history, this type of buildings has not experienced relevant functional or architectural changes for decades. Moreover, their effective transformation is a complex issue, given the size of the buildings, the investment costs, urban planning rules, contractual conditions and also the necessary community support. By focusing on several case studies from the US, our recent research has identified four operating models: reuse, integration, redevelopment and replacement.

Figure 4: Map of Turin’s metropolitan area, showing the overlapping catchment area and competitive landscape.

Figure 5: Demalling cases in Italy: (1) Health Centre in Pioltello, (2) ‘New Pratilia’ retail complex.
Reuse
This strategy involves the reuse of the abandoned building for a completely new function when retail is no longer a sustainable activity in the area. Changing the purpose of the building requires significant alterations but can solve social problems and counteract urban decay. The ‘Denton Public Library’ (Denton, Texas) was, for example, a large grocery store which has been transformed into a library. Another example is the ‘Windsor Park Mall’ (San Antonio, Texas). This was a regional mall, which is nowadays the Headquarters of Rackspace Hosting.

Integration
Integration refers to those interventions that provide the retail structures facing crisis with a new, complementary activity in order to revitalize the area and augment the flow of consumers. This kind of intervention was implemented at the ‘Surrey Central City’ (Vancouver, Canada), where a branch of the university campus is currently located on the last floors of the mall, next to a new office tower.

Redevelopment
Redevelopment implies that the retail function is maintained, while the structure and the typology of the building is strongly renovated through architectural and urban intervention, adding new volumes or demolishing parts of the complex. ‘Santa Monica Place’ (Santa Monica, California), an enclosed mall by the architect Frank Gehry (Gruen Associates), was for instance recently converted into an open-air complex. The ‘Echelon Mall’ (Voorhees, New Jersey) was, in turn, partly demolished to build residential and office buildings, and partly used to host the town centre.

Replacement
This strategy requires the demolition of the retail building and its substitution with a completely new urban area. The new complex could present an alternative retail typology, a mixed-use neighbourhood or a new activity such as office park or green area. Two examples are the ‘City Center Mall’ (Columbus, Ohio), which was replaced by a park surrounded with residential towers and offices, and the ‘Cinderella Mall’ (Englewood, Colorado), which was demolished to build a new mixed-use complex.

These methodological approaches require urban planning and architectural interventions, as they aim to generate new opportunities for greyfields and bring new life to deadmalls. From a legal point of view, however, the change of use can sometimes be problematic needs to be agreed with the public administration.

Conclusion
The Italian commercial system displays problems resulting from market saturation and retail sites’ proliferation in distinct areas. Some shopping sites are already facing crisis, obsolescence and vacancy and if the development of this sector continues as expected, the failure and demise of malls will become inevitable trends.

The analysis of the Italian context has enabled us to study the process of demise of large and medium size stores in Italy in terms of public and private management and solutions. Different considerations emerge from this,
particularly with regards to how to develop urban and retail planning policies for large retail facilities, and how to face the problem of retail buildings’ demise. The first aspect relates to the location of the new structures, based on the example of the UK’s ‘sequential approach,’ which was already applied in interesting ways in some regional contexts in Italy; for instance the New Regional Retail Planning legislation of the Veneto Region. This approach introduces a regulation for evaluating the quality of projects and areas, giving priority to central locations and guaranteeing specific requirements, such as: easy access through local public transportation, no land consumption, limited impact on environment and landscape, energy efficiency, the sustainability and reuse of materials, etc. These requirements become extremely important in the Italian context, where local policies of urban development still privilege the building of new big shopping centres in suburban agricultural contexts. It is furthermore necessary to consider the lifecycle of retail facilities during the planning and evaluation process of new settlements, preventing periods of crisis and planning interventions of reuse. The possibility of upgrading or conversion strategies might already be incorporated in project-phase of new retail infrastructures. For this reason public administrations in the US have introduced guidelines and rules to minimize the impact on the landscape of new constructions, which would facilitate future reuse or demolition. The problem of the retail demise may thus turn into a great opportunity for the redevelopment of greyfields and, above all, for revitalizing urban spaces. It is therefore important to develop and promote guidelines, as is already happening in the United States, to reduce and prevent the negative effects in economic and environmental terms.

Overcoming mono-functionality, supporting alternative transit, reducing environmental impacts, or improving energy efficiency of these buildings are just a few of the solutions that demalling strategies should provide. This foresee not only the use of equipment to minimize the energetic consumption of the structure, but also the use of material and sources that, at the end of the existence cycle of the structure, can be reused to reduce the cost of disposal, not only in economic but also in environmental terms. Future retail projects should take these considerations into account and should be developed much more coherently than they have been in the last decades. Local administrations have to define rules to guarantee quality standards and prevent unsuccessful dynamics, asking developers to provide a ‘plan B’ for their buildings, that facilitate reuse and redevelopment and promotes flexibility. Demalling strategies should be interpreted not only as a solution for the demise of buildings, but also as a set of instructions for future projects. Important themes, such as alternative transit, public facilities, mixed-use planning, vertical growth, architectural sustainability, integration with urban context and soil protection, can influence the evolution of the retail sector and avoid the repetition of old mistakes.

Endnotes
4 Osservatorio Nazionale sul Commercio (National Retail Observatory), “Sales composition in 2013.”
5 In 1998 the Legislative Decree no. 114 introduced the classification of retail stores. In cities with more than 10000 inhabitants, stores with more than 2500 m² of gross leasable area are classified as Grandi Strutture di Vendita (GSV) or ‘Big size stores,’ and stores with a gross leasable area between 250 and 2500 m² are Esercizi di Vicinato (EDV) or ‘Small size stores.’
6 Italian transposition of the 2006 European Directive ‘Bolkestein’ (ED 2006/123/CE), that de facto included the management of retailing structures’ allocation within urban planning procedures, especially at the municipal level. See: L. Taminì, Il Progetto di Centralità. La Regolazione Urbanistica degli Aggregati Commerciali (Milano: Maglioli Editore, 2012).
8 Morandi & Brunetta, Polarità commerciali.
Strategies for a Contextual De-Malling in USA Suburbs

Vittoria Rossi

Abstract
From an updated list of 358 enclosed shopping malls found on deadmalls.com, there are about 280 dead malls in the United States that have been given a new life that is contradictory to their original raison d'être or, more precisely, contradicts what they used to be: temples of commerce. These American malls have defeated their death thanks to processes of ‘de-malling’ that have given them a new life; sometimes after demolition when new facilities have been constructed on the site, sometimes after adaptive reuse processes, or sometimes even by simply reinventing themselves through reinvestment. When analysing this process in the US, five de-malling strategies can be identified. Thus far, however, little research has been done into the merits or pitfalls of these strategies. When Victor Gruen, developed the ‘shopping centre’ as ‘urban crystallization points’ for suburban communities, it abetted an urban sprawl without precedent. In the fifty years that have passed since then, demographic movements (white flight and immigrant population), political and urban planning choices, economical changes, market saturation, natural disasters, etc. have changed this context and all influence how de-malling is approached in a specific reality. In the de-malling process, there are no ‘models’ – contrary to the original shopping centre model that Gruen proposed which has become a paradigmatic pars pro toto – only ‘suggestions.’ For example, in Lakewood (Colorado), the mixed-use redevelopment of ‘Villa Italia’ became a success, but this same redevelopment strategy failed Union City’s Shannon Mall (Georgia). The primary aim of de-malling is not to build, but to deal with specific contexts and intervene – with the collaboration between public and private actors – to manage the impact that it can have on a suburban community, always remembering the central role that the mall used to have in it.

Keywords: dead mall, demised shopping mall, de-malling strategy, American suburbs, suburban context
Introduction

In the past twenty years the US has experienced urban, social, territorial and economical problems generated by commercial demise in its suburban areas, which are characterized by urban sprawl and traditional practices of urban planning based on zoning. Every suburb represents the legacy of the American Dream and all are largely dependent on car accessibility. Commercial districts within this context are characterized by large-scale retail formats. The important role that the enclosed suburban shopping mall plays in both the local economy and community life dominates the evaluation of the impact resulting from a shopping centre’s demise. This phenomenon generally has grave consequences for the commerce and social structure of the surrounding area.

‘Dead malls,’ ‘underperforming asphalt’ or ‘greyfields,’ are terms commonly used for demised malls. Their sombre tone compellingly evokes these demised malls’ sad existence as they succinctly bring to mind the masses of asphalt, which no longer contribute to local economies or social life.

Since 2007, no news malls have opened in the US. Speculations about many shopping malls’ future are equally dismal. According to Green Street Advisors and Davidowitz & Associates, Inc. about 10 to 50% of 1000 to 1200 malls will fail in ten to twenty years. These demised malls in the US are not given much attention in mainstream media. Awareness is however being raised by informal websites, where private users collect and share memories about demised malls. One of the most comprehensive databases is deadmalls.com, which I have personally updated between October and December 2014. During this research, each case was studied to trace current or past conditions of crisis and demise. The study covered 358 suburban malls, each of which has experienced a period of crisis and demise in their lifecycle. Of these 358 malls, 195 have already been transformed and given a new function (or functions), fifteen have been partially transformed with new functions, 42 are currently undergoing a transformation, six are being demolished, nineteen have been replaced by new buildings and functions, sixty are currently in crisis and as they suffer high vacancy rates, and seventeen are currently closed without any transformation on the way.

Demalling as an Answer to Demise

The term ‘de-malling’ contradicts the base word ‘mall.’ It refers to the process directed towards the ‘de-mallification’ of a shopping mall, during which it is transformed into something else. The mall can either retain the retail function or include new functions, such as office spaces, housing or public and administrative buildings. The process of de-malling can also transform the original mall into a new configuration, with a reorganized range of goods, a new architectural structure, or increased advertising. Twenty years have passed since the first shopping malls started to collapse, demanding immediate action to solve the resulting vacancy. This gave rise to the term ‘de-malling,’ which was increasingly used by actors in the field of commerce and urban planning to indicate different scenarios and transformation strategies as an answer to demise. In the US, the recovery of vacant shopping malls is a widely discussed theme, both in scientific research and popular media. Since 1997, the concept of de-malling has been used to indicate an alternative strategy to the critical situation faced by many malls that suffer vacancy rates ranging from 67% up to 80%. Recently, the concept is cast in a positively light thanks to the contribution that it can make to sustainable suburban growth. A large vacant building surrounded by a big empty parking lot offers an opportunity for testing theories of smart and sustainable growth. To counteract sprawl, it is fundamental to reuse vacant buildings, so they can contribute to the
restructuring of suburban peripheries. Many reports by the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) deal with the prime importance of defining strategies for transforming and recovering vacant malls, or malls that are in crisis, stating that ‘[...] with at least 350,000 square feet of leasable space and a minimum of 35 store spaces inflict particularly severe impacts when in decline, while at the same time offering unique opportunities for reuse.’ The reuse of shopping malls is connected to New Urbanism theories. In their suburban context, failed malls offer unique opportunities to help invert urban sprawl.

Five De-malling Strategies in the US
Five de-malling strategies can be discerned in the US. The first strategy, ‘Re-investing Mall,’ pertains to the renovation of both the existing structures and its commercial offer through refurbishment. This can include a restyling or ‘facelift’ of the building, re-tenanting and resizing. The aim of ‘re-investing’ is to work in the existing mall style, promoting a new aspect for its indoor and outdoor spaces thereby increasing consumers appeal. The second strategy, ‘Mall Plus’ seeks to incorporate other functions inside the existing mall structure, or add news buildings that can house additional functions. The new functions increase the attraction of the mall through functional diversification. By adding entertainment facilities, offices, educational buildings and community services to the complex, it aims to attract a wider consumer base. ‘Adaptive reuse’ is another strategy. This relates to the invasive or non-invasive reuse of existing building for new functions; these can be commercial or non-commercial, single or multiple. Adaptive reuse commonly involves adapting indoor and outdoor structures to their new use, and making sure that the structures comply with the requirements and regulations that it entails. ‘Redevelopment,’ a fourth strategy, involves the development of new retail infrastructure after the old mall building has been demolished.

This new retail typology can be single use, mixed use or mixed use with a town centre for the suburban community. In contemporary debates the latter option is generally considered as having the most beneficial effects for the local suburban community, which is in line with New Urbanism principles and the planning model of the traditional city. The final strategy that can be identified is ‘Re-Greening.’ This involves the demolition of the building, so it can be replaced with green areas, possibly with some amenities incorporated in it. In spite of this strategy’s undeniable sustainable qualities, it is often considered unproductive for the local economy. This list of strategies is organised hierarchically; from less invasive interventions, that aim to rejuvenate the existing mall to avoid its demise, to interventions that can be used to inject new life into malls that are already failing (or have failed), to very invasive acts de-malling that involve the reuse or replacement of the original building, thereby changing the dynamics of the area in which the mall is situated.

Failure or Success of De-malling Strategies
Unfortunately, many recent de-malling projects have not yielded positive long-term results. Many are still characterized by high vacancy rates and economic stress even after they have been transformed. Of the 195 malls that have already been de-malled, 31 are still faced with vacancy. It is therefore important to carefully study and plan the de-malling strategy, and consider the deadmalls’ potential to become a sustainable suburban polarity. In many de-malling cases, this potential is however neglected and driven solely by the aim (commonly of
Despite the positive nature of de-malling, there are many negative cases that give a short-term partial solution to the problem. Their regenerative strategy does not involve a long-term vision that could lead to a re-positioning of the mall in its context, and thus soon results in a new crisis. This does not mean that de-malling should consider solutions in an infinite time span, but it should at least guarantee a lifetime of possibilities and outline hypotheses about potential future circumstances. The study of the lifecycle of American malls – from birth, over first crisis, to regeneration, second crisis, de-malling and finally their current state – allows to create a profile of those contextual conditions that are at play during the transformation of the demised shopping malls. This consciousness helps to outline future scenarios for malls that are currently vacant or facing de-malling, as well as envisage possible future scenarios for the environment in which they are situated. A good understanding of contextual tendencies could thus become an important tool for setting out de-malling guidelines that are specific to each case. The various de-malling strategies thus offer a suggestion on how to transform an area following design and configuration principles more than a repeatable model. Successful de-malling cases need to be studied so we can understand the peculiarities of the context and rationalize the solution with the support of surveys and context analysis. It is thus more important to study the basic principles underlying the five de-malling strategies that have been identified rather than drawing a design model-typology.

**Different Suburban Contexts**

Over the years, from the first generation of American suburbs to the third one, the context of the suburban enclosed shopping mall in the US has undergone many changes, which have had an effect on each single reality. Evidence of these mutations can be found in a range of different territorial, economic and social configurations. The combination of these contextual changes often results in the demise of shopping malls, as they can no longer benefit from the ‘original’ conditions that sustained them. Demographic movements (‘white flight’ and immigrant population), political and urban planning choices, economical changes, market saturation and natural disasters, all have an effect on the context. The layout of American suburbs, in terms of urban planning, is strongly influenced by demographic structures and movements. The movement of the white population, in particular, at first from the urban core to the first generation of suburb, and more recently to the second generation of suburbs, has resulted in the creation of poorer areas that are mostly inhabited by the black population and immigrants. Most of these areas are the first generation suburbs, where white populations fled to, escaping what they called ‘the horror of the city.’ In these suburbs, where they built their American Dream, also the first shopping malls were built. Due to financial crisis, these malls have
often not been able to change and adapt to new needs and emerging trends or, sometimes their accessibility has been discouraged by changes in the infrastructure network. This is aggravated by social conditions. In areas where local communities with a low income do not represent the main consumer group, a commercial typology that is closer to their purchasing power would decrease the mall’s profit. The option here could be to address wealthy consumers, who do not care for poor surroundings, with high quality commercial offers. This short, it is important to avoid contradictory situations that inhibit the chance to reoccupy the mall or its site.

Urban planning choices can also affect the accessibility of a shopping mall. New urban planning regulations, for example, can demand new infrastructure lines and change the hierarchy of the road network with possible negative effects for an old shopping mall’s accessibility. This is of course to the advantage of new retail centres that are well-connected to the new infrastructure hub. Shopping malls are usually located in close proximity of busy roads where traffic and accessible services create a sort of balance. This balance can however be broken by new roads that are built to connect new activities in urban and suburban areas, thereby generating important changes in the accessibility. This process can also be identified in the history of shopping malls; from the first malls built at the beginning of the suburban expansion, with the purpose of serving the communities in the residential areas around the inner city, to the new shopping malls built to service the wider urban sprawl.

In the US market saturation is a common suburban reality. Here, the proportion of retail space is six times greater than in any other country. According to Ellen Dunham-Jones: “We’re just cannibalizing our existing stores by building more stores even when sales aren’t increasing.” Most of the shopping malls are no longer isolated entities, but have become surrounded by big boxes and strip malls, offering a broad selection of medium- to large-scale retail activities. The shopping malls have become part of commercial districts, ‘power centres,’ or are connected to commercial corridors. Minor retail buildings close to the mall are usually not real competitors, but they complete the business offer (often until it is saturated). Malls do however compete with other retail typologies of similar size and sales per square metre, that are built in close proximity, enjoy a more optimal accessibility and target a similar consumer base. It is easy to imagine that consumers, with a broad selection of retail choices, will choose the most convenient and attractive one; one that moreover represents a novelty.
How Suburban Contexts have Determined Failure in Union City (Georgia) and Success in Lakewood (Colorado)

The de-malling strategy implemented in both the ‘Villa Italia’ deadmall in Lakewood (Colorado) and the ‘Shannon Mall’ in Union City (Georgia), was redevelopment through the creation of a mixed-use town centre for their respective suburban communities. However, while this strategy was successful in Lakewood, it failed in Union City. The comparison of these two cases thus offers a prime example of how contextual conditions are determining factors in the success or failure of de-malling practices.

Following the closure of the mall in 2011, the community living in close proximity of the Shannon Mall and public representatives gathered in four public meetings, during which they – guided by experts and researchers in the field – formulated a vision for the area, informed by the 2003 study by the Livable Center Initiative (LCI). These meetings were crucial to identify a shared vision in the 2013 LCI Supplemental Study for the Shannon Mall, and followed the mantra ‘be proactive to promote successful redevelopment.’ The Supplementary Study takes into account the principles established in 2003 through a guided process of participatory planning. Stakeholders focused on the human scale with respect for the pedestrian, traditional planning and landscaping. This shared vision was based on the feeling of small towns, rejecting both the urban big city and typical suburban reality. These ideas, with an awareness of the absence of a historical centre that could represent ‘the heart and soul’ of Union City, resulted in a final vision. Its aim was to create a town centre in the Shannon Mall site with urban and functional features in accordance with the principles of New Urbanism. The principles expressed in the final draft of the vision for the Shannon Mall are shared by many other communities that are charged with the task of formulating a vision for redevelopment in other American suburban contexts. It is likely that the campaign initiated by the CNU to raise awareness is influencing citizens and public representatives, as they increasingly share its principles, guided by the researchers and the themes of the Congress. Too often, however, real practices do not take into account the complexity of the project and negate potential pitfalls, such as poverty, inability to attract investments of private actors, the absence of public funds and a very low suburban density. In these circumstances, mixed-use projects risk to remain paper projects. This is also what happened in Union City. The LCI Study proposal has thus accrued criticism as it expresses an ideal vision that is functionally and spatially incompatible with the problems plaguing the local context. The pedestrian-oriented project that the proposal aimed to create in a traditional suburban area, which is characterized by car-oriented retail typologies, was a challenge for potential investors.
investors, particularly because the closest residential area was located at a walking distance of fifteen minutes, the population density in this area is about 2000 people every three kilometres and the density of sprawl is about 5% within a two kilometre radius.

As a result, no transformation started until 2014, when the new owner Rooker Group, obtained an approval for its de-malling proposal. The project currently under construction is completely different in functions and spatial organization than what was proposed by the LCI Study. It is strongly focused on increasing productivity and strengthening the site’s economy rather than creating a (utopian) social vision based on theoretical research. In the future, the area will house an e-commerce facility with warehouses and offices, and a TV-movie studio. These two economic activities both represent thriving sectors of the local economy.

The mixed-use redevelopment project in Lakewood, which also comprised a town centre, was similarly supported by public actors in collaboration with local citizens. Contrary to Union City, however, the context of Lakewood favoured this redevelopment. It was thus not difficult to find a developer that was willing to take on board the long-term objectives and special requirements stressed by the public stakeholders. This developer was Continuum Partners. The most important contextual conditions that supported the de-malling of ‘Villa Italia’ to enable its redevelopment into a town centre, included the presence of a socially mixed population – both in terms of age and race – who live in nearby residential areas at a walking distance from the new town centre and who require mix of housing typologies. Additionally, Lakewood also had an active existing market with under-facilitated populations nearby. The public actors had a strong involvement in the decision making process, including the identification of a de-malling strategy, finding a developer and managing public support, while coordinating stakeholders and demolition-design phases.

The redevelopment project, which carries the name Belmar is today often labelled a real town centre. Nonetheless, immediately after its opening in 2004, the project was initially not very successful. The de-malling project experienced a natural evolution over time as it shaped its own identity. Today, the newly created core of Lakewood encourages social, economical and political life through investment and development.

**Conclusion**

This study of the practice of de-malling points to the importance of a careful evaluation of the contextual conditions that is able to reduce the risk of creating an unsuccessful project. The failure or success of a project is determined by its capability to respond to context needs, generate tax revenues and further development and investment, while offering a long-term economic, social, political or natural resource for the local community. This requires the parties involved in the de-malling project to look beyond the immediate success that the ‘novelty’ of such a project can generate, as this is commonly short-lived. The comparison of different cases in the US clearly stresses the importance of considering the specific suburban context. The relation with the context, studied through the identification of recurring key elements, is necessary for understanding all dynamics that are at play and paint a complete, complex picture of all the factors that have contributed to the phenomenon of demise. As a result, every case is thus different. Based on the 358 demised malls on deadmalls.com, a list of key elements have been identified that need to be taken into account when embarking on a dem-malling project. These include (1) the accessibility of the mall site and its relation with the infrastructure network; (2) present land use with attention for commercial, residential and natural organization patterns; (3) the size of the site and mall structure, which can be a measure of the impact of the new project; (4) the relation with other retail attractors nearby that could either compete with or support the new project; and (5) the density of the sprawl in a two-kilometre radius around the site. The sum of these factors can results in very different conditions ‘on the ground.’ There are furthermore other important factors that relate to organizational-political dynamics. These include: (1) the market index, which can help to detect potential economic growth or, conversely, deadlocks or crisis; (2) demographic trends related to the number of inhabitants in the area, the value of private homes without any business activity, the average family income that determines the purchasing power and the average age of people living in the area, which determines both the needs and housing typologies; and finally (3) the level of involvement of public stakeholders and their capacity to provide economic incentives. This can play a key role in defining a shared scenario of growth and transformation, as the public stakeholders carry the responsibility not only to facilitate and finance but also to guide the transformation. The collaboration between the public and the private actors is essential to achieve a successful de-malling project, particularly when the public actors have the capacity to activate the necessary resources to ensure a future scenario of growth and guarantee that the new development will be attuned to the local community needs.
Endnotes

8 This is approximately 32500 m².

The Other Side of Shopping Centres
Retail Transformation in Downtown Detroit and The Hague

Conrad Kickert

Abstract
This paper studies the reciprocal relationship between suburban shopping mall development and department store transformation in the urban core. After all, the impetus behind most landmark malls have been the visions of large downtown retailers for growth and modernization, which also reflected upon their original premises. Subsequently, the suburban mall took its toll on their core donors, as downtown department stores have struggled for survival for decades. The morphological, economic and cultural transformation of the most central retail blocks is studied over the course of the last century in two cities which have made their mark in retail history: Detroit and The Hague. The study shows the other side of rampant suburbanization of retail, as downtown hopes are translated to the periphery of cities, and lessons and challenges are brought back downtown. The J.L. Hudson department store, the original developer of Northland, Victor Gruen’s first major suburban shopping mall, created its vision for growth in America’s second largest store in downtown Detroit in the 1950s. Hudson’s quantum leap into Detroit’s periphery would have never succeeded or even materialized without the department store’s exponential downtown growth in the preceding decades, a story that has gone untold. As Detroit’s population moved outward, the home base would be abandoned and demolished by the late 20th century, with smaller retailers only now recovering. Similarly, The Hague’s Vroom en Dreesmann department store became the Netherlands' largest and most modern upon its completion in 1964, yet the company has downsized and is teetering on the verge of bankruptcy today. The transformation of both retail empires is demonstrated in historic Nolli maps, descriptive histories and quantitative studies. The paper concludes on the value of diversity and adaptability for the survival of retail ecosystems.
Keywords: Detroit, The Hague, urban morphology, Nolli Plan, retail transformation

Introduction
Much of the contemporary discourse on retail transformation in Western urban cores focuses on the various social and economic forces behind the significant change that has occurred over the past centuries. Almost continuously, retailers have reinvented themselves to benefit from economies of scale in production, distribution and consumption, leading to the much-studied increase in scale, chaining and suburbanization of establishments.1 As downtowns are seeing reinvestment on both sides of the Atlantic, retailers are rediscovering the urban core as a centre of culture, leisure and consumption.2 Thus far, few studies have focused on the resulting morphological and architectural evolution of consumer environments, and the current body of work often focuses on landmark developments such as shopping malls and major department stores.3 Furthermore, most studies have focused on singular projects, often in suburban locations. As a result, the transformation of the consumer environment in urban environments has been understudied, especially from a diachronic, single-block perspective. Yet the suburban leap that sprouted shopping malls from the mid-20th century onwards was rooted in the success of downtown retailers, as large department stores planned their first branches as subsidiaries of their core establishments.4

This paper studies the flipside of the growth of the suburban shopping mall – the transformation of the downtown retail block. It does so by studying the growth and decline of the downtown roots of the first American shopping mall anchor department store, J.L. Hudson in Detroit. The rise and fall of ‘Hudson’s’ is contrasted with the growth and decline of the once-largest department store in the Netherlands, Vroom en Dreesmann in The Hague. The blocks around both establishments are mapped as Nolli Plans between 1911 and 2011, showing the relationship between interior and exterior public spaces. The plans are based on various historic floor plans in The Hague, Sanborn Fire Insurance Plans and original building plans in Detroit, augmented with photographic material for clarification in both cities. The maps are accompanied by a timeline of the department stores and conclude with patterns of similarities and differences.

Vroom en Dreesmann The Hague
The central block ensemble that now contains the Vroom en Dreesmann department store in The Hague is an excellent example of the rapid transformation of the Dutch retail and leisure landscape over the past century. The blocks reflect the remarkable flexibility of The Hague’s inner city to adapt to changing means of production and consumption by building over, digging under and breaking through its urban landscape. A century ago, the area was defined by contrast. The Spuistraat was established as the city’s popular retail street, lined by a wide variety of retailers. Visiting the street was considered an urban adventure, in which viewing merchandise had as central a role as viewing other citizens, bathing in ‘a sea of light and radiating reflecting windows.’4 With the industrialization of merchandise and the growing wealth of Dutch citizenry as well as the introduction of fixed prices, shopping had become a form of leisure activity.5 The Spuistraat was also at the southern end of the city’s first shopping arcade, the Passage, built in 1885. This arcade was specifically targeted at the growing urban bourgeoisie, which used its sheltered interior space to purchase goods as much as its aesthetic coherence and upscale ambiance to affirm their status.6

Retail consolidation gathered pace in the first decade of the 20th century with the growth of the city’s first department stores. Vroom en Dreesmann, a chain department store from Amsterdam, had taken up several adjacent buildings to house their operations during this decade, but was certainly not the largest store downtown. This would be the Grand Bazar de la Paix, constructed in 1906 across from the Passage’s exit to the Spuistraat. Using steel-frame technology, a ‘hall of enormous dimensions, magically lit from all sides, both during the day and at night’ was constructed in a matter of months. Its almost 27000 square feet of retail space took up the land of eight former properties and clearly outcompeted surrounding smaller businesses, as ‘progress has its demands.’7 Nearby, the Kattenburg Company had combined two buildings into the start of a small department store of their own, the ‘Magazijn Nederland.’ Despite these department stores, smaller retailers and dwellings still dominated the vibrant Spuistraat, and especially the poorer Jewish district to its direct south.

As the city’s population, economy and wealth had taken a leap during the 1910s and 1920s, traffic grew exponentially and inner city housing became overcrowded. To combat traffic and worsening housing conditions, the city decided to construct the Grote Marktstraat and Hofweg between 1914 and 1924. The building plots that were created by the new street cuts allowed for the construction of radically new building types at a scale thus far unknown to the city. On the Grote Marktstraat, the existing Grand Bazar de la Paix commissioned an extension to their premises to face the new street by architect van Dorsser in 1929. The Bazar had to respond to the building that turned all the heads on the Grote Marktstraat – the Bijenkorf department store designed by Amsterdamb School architect Piet Kramer built in 1926. This ‘palace of life’s enjoyments’ was
the first branch of the Amsterdam-based luxury retailer outside the capital city, and with over 100000 square feet of retail space the store was the largest in the country and marked a new era and scale of retail for The Hague. On nearby plots, several growing retailers would soon construct their premises, either newly entering the inner city or expanding their original floor space. C&A, rising empire of Clemens and August Brenninkmeijer, the Modehuis (Fashion House) of the Lampe company and several smaller stores attempted to lure in the public through an elaborate composition of display pavilions, corridors and a recessed storefront, allowing a maximum amount of merchandise to be on display at all times of the day and night. The divide between public and private space was deliberately blurred to remove the threshold resistance between passers-by and merchandise, a concept originating from the United States that would be later optimized in shopping mall design.

Perhaps the most daring example of this deliberate ambiguity between public and private space was the new building for Vroom en Dreesmann’s department store, designed by the company’s preferred architect Jan Kuyt in 1929. The Art Deco building connected the busy Spuistraat with the Spui with an arcade that aimed to provide passers-by with a shortcut between both streets, luring them with merchandise en route. Like with the C&A and Modehuis stores, interior and exterior public space blended to maximize contact between potential customers and merchandise with almost sixty various display windows and pavilions, connecting with the expanded existing store and providing a grand staircase that led customers to higher sales floors. In a sense, the design mirrored the vision of the older Passage complex by functioning as an interior public space with a connectivity function as well as a meaningful commercial presence of its own. It thus melded the prototypical qualities of the shopping mall with an urban footprint. The complex was part of a much larger envisioned building which would stretch the entire block between Spui, Spuistraat, Voldersgracht and Grote Marktstraat, but these plans faltered during the Depression, leaving the store’s frontage on the Grote Marktstraat underused for decades.

As the Depression and World War II came to an end, The Hague was economically and physically in dire shape. Furthermore, residential growth moved to the suburbs where shopping malls were planned from the late 1950s onwards. Department stores would branch out to these suburban malls but they nevertheless remained committed to the urban core. Vroom and Dreesmann expressed their strong belief in the hegemony of the inner city by purchasing the ailing Grand Bazar de la Paix in 1948 and combining it with the retailer’s existing ‘archipelago’ of buildings and a massive Modern addition by architects.
Kraaijvanger, opened in stages between 1961 and 1964. The resulting complex became the nation’s largest department store at 240,000 square feet. Beyond its size, the inner city store contained a range of novelties, including a parking deck on its roof which was accessed via two automobile elevators on the Voldersgracht. The store expansion was clearly marketed toward an increasingly automobile and suburban clientele, as the director aimed to serve “…those, that want to make all their purchases in one building complex.” Even a supermarket was constructed in the basement level of the store, also in an aim to serve the downtown population (figure 1). The resulting complex clearly attempted to fit suburban ambitions into an urban footprint, which raised difficulties regarding its connection to the surrounding urban fabric. Especially side street Voldersgracht suffered from the new development as its small-scaled business activity was replaced by entry ramps for parking and logistics, a compromised outcome of Vroom en Dreesmann’s original desire to close the street altogether.

Arguably, the vision for a one-stop car-centric store contrasted with Vroom en Dreesmann’s 1929 store design that seamlessly blended in with surrounding pedestrian networks – a clear sign of changing times at the company and society at large.

The Modernist suburbanization of the inner city was mirrored by store expansions and car parking construction, such as the design of the large but rather isolated HEMA department store by A. Elzas in 1962 and the concurrent demolition of the rear lots behind the Bijenkorf for car parking, complemented by a large parking garage a few blocks south. An interesting countermovement was the 1967 opening of the Markthof, a covered marketplace that provided a home to a wide range of smaller businessmen to sell their goods in a modestly priced establishment, close to the retail core of the city. Despite upgrades in subsequent decades, retailers struggled in the building which many citizens considered dark and confusing. In 2007, the Markthof was replaced by the Spuimarkt designed by Bolles + Wilson, a complex of ground floor and basement shops and restaurants in various sizes, integrating the large C&A department store, a multiplex cinema, a health club and a casino. Across the Grote Marktstraat, the Modehuis has been replaced in 1997 by the Spuihof, a mixed-use complex of shops, restaurants and upper floor dwellings designed by Cees Dam & Partners architects. These developments reflected the increased retail activity in the inner city of The Hague since the 1990s as public regeneration policies successfully focused on high quality public space and new construction. Car and streetcar traffic was placed in a tunnel under the Grote Marktstraat, freeing the street to pedestrians and cyclists, while rendering Vroom en Dreesmann’s original vision for a car-accessible inner city store obsolete.

The blocking of Vroom en Dreesmann’s car access marked a chapter in its long onset demise over the preceding decades, as its novel underground supermarket had failed and the capacity of the rooftop parking deck had proven insufficient only a few years after opening. Facing declining sales due to the rise of competing chain stores and a fading image, Vroom en Dreesmann began to retrench from its building by shedding the former Grand Bazar de la Paix in 1992 and the ground floor of its original 1929 building in the early 21st century, now housing another retailer which has closed off its original shortcut function. The former Grand Bazar has been reconstructed as an extension of the Passage, in which over 100,000 square feet of smaller and larger retailers connects the Spuistraat with the Grote Marktstraat in a ‘very light, open and transparent’ complex designed by French/American architect Bernard Tschumi, topped off by a 118 room hotel. The covered abundance of storefronts between the city’s two main retail streets presents a dramatic contrast to the dark and inactive Voldersgracht and Haagpoort side streets, which are now closed to the public – completing the vision of Vroom en Dreesmann of five decades ago. As the department store is teetering on the brink of collapse, the consolidation of retailers on its block over the past century may be showing a reversing trend. (figure 2).
Hudson’s Department Store Detroit

For many, the tumultuous history of Hudson’s department store signifies the plight of Detroit and its downtown to survive. Yet Hudson’s growth and decline was but part of a ruthless battle between several department stores all located in Detroit’s most central blocks around Campus Martius, the convergence point of its infrastructure and people for centuries. On the square, small storefronts in the Detroit Opera House functioned as incubators in the 19th century for what would become some of the city’s largest retailers, including Newcomb and Endicott and the start-up of English-born retailer Joseph Lowthian Hudson. His successful business would also soon outgrow this location and Hudson commissioned architect Mortimer Smith to build an eight-story retail palace a few blocks north. Although the store was located off main retail street Woodward Avenue, its opening in 1891 proved a smashing success generating four times the construction cost in first year sales volume. The store soon expanded and made its grand entry on Woodward Avenue in 1911 through the construction of a ten-story ‘annex’ connected to the original building with a bridge across the service alley. Nearby, German-born retailer Ernst Kern Sr. and his wife had moved into a five-story building purpose built for their growing textile firm on the central corner of Gratiot and Woodward Avenue in 1897. More competition would come from the east in 1909, where Joseph Crowley and William Milner would aggressively modernize the massive block-long, six-story building of a failed predecessor to include new fashion departments and a restaurant, in a bold aim to make the department store ‘the strongest establishment of its kind in this section of the country.’

All of the large department stores were set for rapid growth in the decades that would follow, reflecting the city’s economic and population boom. From 1913 onwards, Kern’s department store would increase its sales floor area more than tenfold by buying up several adjacent structures to expand its retail operations. Crowley and Milner were expanding almost as fast, topping their building with two extra floors, expanding it into its entire block and connecting it across the street to a new eleven-story tower with a tunnel and bridge. In 1925, Crowley-Milner had increased almost fivefold, and at around 800000 square feet it became the largest department store in Michigan. Yet the most aggressive growth was experienced by J.L. Hudson’s department store. Realizing the value of presenting its merchandise to a growing audience on the city’s main retail street, Hudson would slowly continue to buy up smaller competitors on Woodward Avenue to expand its sales floors. Besides these major purchases and replacements (including Newcomb-Endicott’s store in 1927), Hudson’s original retail building on Farmer Street would be replaced by an almost twice as large building.
Most retail growth in Detroit ground to a halt when the Depression hit. Hudson’s sales halved between 1929 and 1930 and Crowley-Milner’s sales similarly dropped by almost 75%. But discount Sam’s Cut Rate thrived in the then wartime construction jobs. Hudson’s grew even taller and bought up the last of Detroit’s middle class. Relief came from World War II as Detroit prospered from wartime construction jobs. Hudson’s grew even taller and bought up the last remaining holdout on its block, becoming a store of superlatives by the end of the war: 200 departments offering 553921 items on 17 floors, connected by 51 elevators. The store had its own hospital, art gallery and delivered across the globe (figure 3).

Retreat

As the city and Hudson’s reached its peak, the tides had already turned for downtown. The Motor City’s very invention, the automobile, began to turn against its master as Detroit’s middle class increasingly moved further away from downtown, prompting Hudson’s to build one of Detroit’s first car parking decks in 1941. Suburbanization only accelerated and by 1950, Hudson’s realized that the battleground with its competitors had shifted from downtown to the Michigan prairie. Rather than continuing to lure Detroit’s suburbanized middle class downtown, the store decided to follow them. Working with famed retail architect Victor Gruen, Hudson’s spared no expense and built a 550000 square foot department store in the middle of Northland, America’s first major suburban shopping mall. The resulting retail experience was unprecedented, replacing the noise and bustle of downtown Detroit with a neatly laid out yet playful environment for consumption. The Northland gamble paid off, as Hudson’s $30,000,000 investment already yielded $88,000,000 in trade in its first year, a return on investment only seen before at the 1891 opening of its first department store. The startling initial sales figures prompted the opening of a second branch in Eastland Center in 1957, followed by Westland Center in 1965. Crowley’s would soon follow and opened its first new branch store in West Dearborn in 1959 with great success. More would soon follow in malls around the region, but their modest sizes never matched Hudson’s grand efforts. Kern’s department store was unable to establish branch locations and was forced to close in 1959. Its site was cleared with federal grant money, only to stay vacant for almost four decades. The new reality for downtown Detroit’s retail palaces was clear: branch out or lose out. The percentage of CBD department store sales in the metropolitan region would plummet by almost 50% between 1954 and 1963, and by 1966, less than 15% of Detroit’s metropolitan department store floor space was located in downtown, almost all of it in Hudson’s main building. But that same year, only 40% of Hudson’s income would be generated from its downtown store sales.

Arguably, the decline of downtown as a retail centre would truly enter its point of no return with the Detroit’s civil disorders of 1967. While the disorders did not inflict much physical damage in downtown Detroit, the central city’s image was heavily marred and crime levels rose rapidly. Declining patronage and rising store theft caused a sharp decline in profits for Hudson’s and Crowley-Milner’s remaining downtown stores. As a result, the 1970s marked an era of retreat. Crowley’s department store was forced to downsize its central store drastically from 1973 onwards, and in 1977 the store closed. Hudson’s remained open but would slowly close off upper sales floors, dwindling to only three floors by the early 1980s. A last-ditch effort to replace the old building with a shopping mall failed due and worsening socio-economic conditions in Detroit and a subsequent lack of interest from other retailers to join. After a company merger and change in management, Hudson’s would finally close its ‘Matriarch of Woodward’ in 1983, sending a ripple effect of closures among downtown’s remaining businesses.

After its closure, Hudson’s empty building remained as a silent landmark to downtown Detroit’s decline amidst hundreds of shuttered stores, offices and cultural venues. Efforts to find tenants for the mostly empty structure were unsuccessful, as tenants had a wealth of other vacant downtown buildings to choose from. The central blocks of Detroit were re-envisioned by a mayor-backed consortium as a commercial hub in the 1990s, with no place for Hudson’s old building. In 1998 the empty hulk met its inevitable fate, as it was imploded with ‘a deafening roar that will echo in the hearts of Detroiters for decades.’ Ironically, besides an underground garage nothing has yet been built on its actual footprint, but an office has been constructed on Kern’s former footprint. This situation may be changing soon, as mortgage banker Dan Gilbert has purchased the Hudson’s site and has commissioned New York-base Shop architects to design a mixed-use complex with retail, offices, dwellings and parking spaces. While no new building can remotely equal Hudson’s
sheer size and grandeur, early renderings show a bold design with the potential to mend the heart of Detroit and its citizens (figure 4).

**Conclusion**
Retail change is ruthless and hardly leaves a trace. As modes of production, consumption and distribution have radically shifted over the past centuries, the physical retail landscape has adapted in tandem. This paper demonstrates the rapid change of Detroit and The Hague’s most central retail blocks reflecting this adaptation. Interestingly, the resulting pattern of transformation in both cities has been quite similar for the first half of the twentieth century - successful department stores grew by consolidating or demolishing smaller competitors and their premises, ultimately usurping entire city blocks. Paths would diverge during the suburbanization of the 1960s, as The Hague’s retailers and government remained committed to its inner city while Detroit’s retailers and public continued to look forward. This has resulted in a clear dichotomy between contemporary Detroit’s strong abandonment and renewal and The Hague’s continued retail vibrancy. Yet in both cases, the hegemony of the department store has been disrupted, leading to the full or partial loss of this type of retailer.

Adaptability remains key in the continuously changing retail landscape. The Hague’s central Vroom en Dreesmann department store has been more able to shed space to new retailers, in contrast to the failed transition and resulting full demolition of Hudson’s massive department store (figure 5). Northland Mall, Hudson’s suburban dream, has caved under the very same socio-economic issues its downtown store did, and Eastland may soon follow.\(^{48}\) The rise and fall of the department store and the suburban shopping mall have one lesson in common - retail dreams solidified into optimized environments become limiting if the assumed future turns out different. To prevent the resulting inertia between the envisioned and real futures of consumer environments, a balance will need to be sought between permanence and flexibility – one typically found in the heterotopia of urban cores.

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Figure 5: Demolition of Hudson’s department store in 1998. (Source: Image sequency by Lowell Boileau)
Endnotes


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10 The City in this citation refers to the commercial core of The Hague. "Vroom En Deesmans Winkelplein," Het Vaderland, 24 September 1930.


14 The city refused to close the street. Reconstructed from letters between the directors of Vroom en Deesmans and city planners Von der Sluys and Bakker Schut, 21 December 1953, March 30, 1955, 6 April 1956.

15 Interview with Arno Ruijgrok, 22 July 2014.

16 Cees Dam and Dam & Partners Architecten, Cees Dam (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2007).

17 Description from www.nieuwehaagsepassage.nl and The Hague’s municipal website.


25 20th Century Retailing in Downtown Detroit, 60.

26 Paul Vachon, Forgotten Detroit (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2009), 38.

27 "Fitted to Do Largest Retail Trade in Nation." Detroit Free Press, 4 November 1928. The floor area is more than any of the shopping malls in the Detroit area today.


29 Pitron, Hudson’s: Hub of America’s Heartland, 85.


31 Sam’s was already present since 1925 on Monroe Street, just south of the mapped blocks.

32 Hauser, 20th Century Retailing in Downtown Detroit, 120-21.


38 Van De Grote Marktstraat En Omgeving (Den Haag: De Nieuwe Haagsche, 2005).


40 Vachon, Forgotten Detroit. Despite the small sizes of their branch stores, Crowley’s would open in some of America’s largest enclosed shopping malls in western Detroit.

41 Hauser, 20th Century Retailing in Downtown Detroit.


43 Ibid., III-2 - III-3.

44 Mahoney and Sloane, "Inside Hudson’s 49 Acres - a New Book Reveals a Detroit Phenomenon."

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