The generating value of the Machine: consumption

Cécile Attardo & Rebecca Jordan

Contents

What is consumption?

Consumption is invisible.
Consumption is abiding.
Consumption is irrepressible.
Consumption is unstoppable.
Consumption is incessantly running.
Consumption is an essence.
Consumption is a value.
Consumption is a generator.
Consumption is a lifeblood.
Consumption is a core.
Consumption is a driving force.
Consumption is a mechanism.
Consumption is an engine.

Consumption generates the machine.

Machine[1] 1. "an assemblage of parts that transmit forces, motion, and energy one to another in a predetermined manner"
2. "a combination of persons acting together for a common end along with the agencies they use"
3. "a living organism or one of its functional systems"

1 Merriam-Webster. Incorporated. 2019. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionarz/machine.

1   Albert Sydney
Hornby and Sally
Wehmeier, Oxford
Advanced Learner's
Dictionary of Current
English, 7. ed., [Nachdr.]
(Oxford: Oxford Univ.
Press, 2009), 328.

2   Ibid.

Consumption: "the act of buying and using products: Consumption rather than saving has become the central feature of contemporary societies."[1]

Consumerism: "the buying and using of goods and services; the belief that it is good for a society or an individual person to buy and use a large quantity of goods and services."[2]

1
Introduction

A city is unthinkable without consumption

Nowadays it is considerably common to use the word *consumption* when it comes to define our society. In many instances it is coupled with negative connotations due to the fact that it is often mixed up with *consumerism* and automatically related to the current state of global issues, such as environmental problems, damaging social behaviours and economical crises. Whether we like it or not, consumption is today one of our main leading values.

In a society where the primary human needs of survival are so easily ensured that they are no longer considered as daily concerns, *consumption* represents every feature, that the society needs in order to give meaning to life. However, along with being a paramount principle guiding our society, consumption is first of all a primal influential factor capable of defining our physical space. This impact is noticeable in the use of public space, circulation, city structure and urban life in general. In addition, consumption has always had a substantial impact on social behaviours.

Consumption is therefore a generator of economical growth, development, life styles, behaviours, as well as spaces. Consumption is a generator of architecture.

Consumption and social life

Since early civilizations, the most concentrated expression of public space within the city was provided by trading and other commercial activities, such as retail. These commercial functions stood as the generators of some of the most interesting and memorable spaces during the history of architecture. They did not only determine the appearance of new architectural types and spaces for social life, but in some cases they even influenced the development and definition of city structures. These circumstances have been valuable for a long time, from the historical city to the mid-twentieth century. Since then, the architectural and civic value of commercial types had dramatically declined.

Consumption and consumerism

Nowadays, it is interesting to notice that one of our main leading values, such as consumption, and one of our most current social activity, such as shopping, are often considered in negative terms. The same goes for the spaces which they generate, such as shopping malls or, generally speaking, buildings devoted to retail functions. These buildings do not seem to deserve the same consideration which is given for instance to a museum or any other public building.

One of the reasons why commercial architecture is so often seen through a negative perception, is partly due to the economical and capitalistic growth that took place during the second part of the 20th century. This period gave rise to a new face of consumption, where retail spaces started to take the back seat compared to other architectural types. Once the commercial spaces passed into private developers' hands, who were mainly focused on profit, they started to lose the attention of intellectuals and architects. This phenomenon still bears consequences for our general perception of consumerist spaces. Nowadays, however, retail architecture can be defined as an hybrid. Some architects, intellectuals and more generally sociologists, consider retail as a generator of a potential space into which architectural and public value could be re-established. Others, on the contrary, consider retail spaces as a direct product of the economical growth, in which making as much profit as possible is the principal aim and therefore they are voided of any other civic value.

Despite the fact that the value of consumption has provoked many debates about these architectural issues, retail remains until today one of the principal generators of social activities and public spaces. Even if not always in a positive way, nothing more than consumption has generated such an amount of gathering places and expressions of urban life in the course of history. And it is still happening at the present time. However, these major types are threatened by an increasingly fast transformation that is drastically influencing our contemporary world: digitalization.

Consumption and digitalization

Nowadays, public life and urban space are progressively affected by digitalization. Digital transformations strongly relate to consumption and retail through the e-commerce and logistics. With the arrival of the internet, the e-commerce quickly started to sprawl, to the point of becoming one of the most popular ways of purchasing of today. This evolution is likely to increase day by day, to such an extend that it will replace a massive part of our physical retailing spaces. As it can

be noticed by the current pace of improvements and transformations of technologies, the digitalization increases insanely fast. In this sense this substantial mutation is affecting physical space in a much shorter time that what could have been predicted.

Digital revolution is already having a direct impact on the spatial and social structure of the city. Some examples are already evident: city centres are beginning to empty out and retailers are being replaced by other public facilities, such as coffee houses and restaurants. But moreover, this revolution touches an essential urban program: the using of public spaces.

If retail and commerce always have been one of the main factors able to generate social life, what would happen if the physical retail function started to disappear due to digitalization? What impact will this have on our public life and social activities? And most of all, what will become public spaces in a world where online shops are taking over the physical retail spaces to the point where this latter disappears?

In the light of these facts, this analysis seeks to explore in a first time what has enabled consumption to become a generator of public space. How retail and public functions evolved together during the course of history, causing the origination of remarkable architectural types, such as the generation of the here called *machine par excellence*, the shopping mall. This latter will be analysed in order to enlighten what has enabled its success to the point of becoming an incredibly efficient retail machine driven by consumption, its engine. In a second time, a special regard will be given to the development of digitalization, which is threatening today's retailing spaces, to the point of provoking the dissolution of the physical retail machine. The term *machine* is to be understood as a perfectly planned design, whose aim is to be the most efficient as possible in terms of attraction and success. Within this picture, consumption is to be considered as the principal engine that enables its successful running.

Finally, a personal study will try to explore, what could replace the retail machine in order to enable people to live their social life in a world were retail functions, along with other major daily commodities, are easily replaceable by digitalization.

2
The genesis of the consumption machine

Taking into account that consumption is a generator of space, this chapter will investigate how consumption is born and developed to the point of becoming not only a leading value for our world and society, but notably a primal generator of architecture. One of the main question is what has enabled consumption to become a fundamental generator of public space and how has this connection evolved during the course of history, in shape and space, causing the origination of new remarkable architectural types.

This issue will be explored by looking at the evolution of trading spaces, in Europe, since the earliest isolated civilizations until the interconnected cities of today. In order to understand the origin of the actual consumption spaces and the generation of the so-called *consumption machine*, we are going to point out what we consider to be the principal moments in retail evolution.

2.1 Centre

Consumption can only exist if there is production. Since the earliest civilizations the rise of production started to require spaces devoted to storages and afterwards to exchange and trading functions. Since the historical city these latter played a primordial role in the definition of public space, as meeting point and social interaction space, to the point of defining city centres and their structures along with new types of architecture. When trading activities started to be part of daily life in early civilizations, they were performed within the centre of the city, attributing to this latter the role of lifeblood of public life. Consequently, the relationship between the heart of the city centres and the civil activities became more and more essential.

2.1.1 Agora

The Greek term *agora* comes from *ageirein*, which means "to assemble", from the roots *ger* , "to gather".[1]

One of the earliest examples of specific space intended for public life and arisen within the centre of the city is the Greek agora. The agora was an open space, which was surrounded by the most important civic buildings of the city. It was a space, where citizens gathered for public and political events, and also for trading activities, where merchants and artisans could sell and exchange their goods. Therefore, the agora was conceived as multifunctional public space, intermittently used as a market square which allowed other public activities such as voting, debates, sports and parades to be perfomed.[2] The importance of these principal functions of the political and commercial space, is expressed by the two Greek verbs *agorázō*, "I shop", and *agoreúō*, "I speak in public".[3]

In this sense, it is essential to emphasize that one of the earliest places in history recognised as a trading space, was not originally conceived as such. The principal space of the open air agora, was the mere public space, capable of hosting a wide variety of civic functions. The trading functions took also place within the square, however, in a rather temporary and removable way. These functions were not yet provided with specific structures, though, they relied completely on the open and public area. Together, with the public life, the trading functions created a balanced relation in the heart of the city.

1   Douglas Harper. Online Etymology Dictionary. 2019. https://www.etymonline.com/word/.

2   Peter Coleman, "Historical Evolution of Places for Shopping", in *Shopping Environments: Evolution, Planning and Design* (Oxford: Architectural Press an imprint of Elsevier Ltd, 2006).
This reference has been a useful model for the first half of this chapter.

3   Aziza Ravshanovna, Abdukadirova. "The Agora". Last modified June 21, 2017. http://7wonders.uz/en/wonder/view?id=1220.

Agora, Athen,
500 - 300 BC

0 10 20   50   100 m
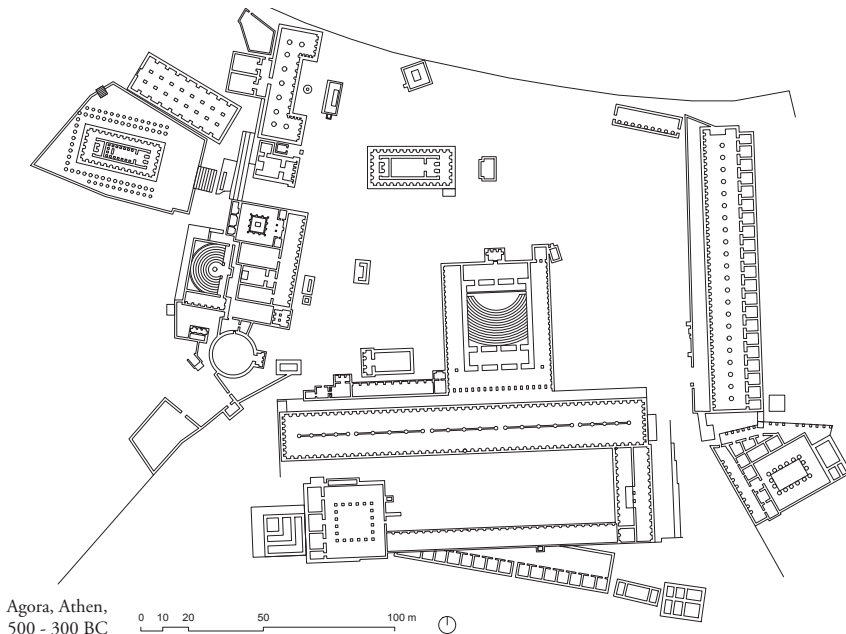
2.1.2 Forum

As in Ancient Greece, also the Roman cities were planned around an open and public space, which was situated in the centre of the city. This open and public square, known as *forum*, hosted a multitude of civic functions as it was surrounded by temples, basilicas, bathhouses and state buildings. The public space was the primal essence of the Roman forum, where it enabled citizens to gather and perform religious, juristic and commercial activities.[4] Compared to the Greek agora, the Roman forum was a more enclosed and rigid open-air square. It was spatially structured and defined by its surrounding buildings. Furthermore, the trading functions, which were intermittently present in the agora, took place not only in the open square but also within the buildings surrounding the Roman forum.

Within the city of Rome, the public and civic life was performed in the two main forums: *Forum Romanum* and *Trajan's Forum*. This latter was built by emperor Trajan from 106 AD to 112 AD. The open space was surrounded by shared-use buildings where different shops were organised on several floors. They were likely to be the first defined shops in history. Furthermore, the shops, which were facing the forum through a colonnade, created an in-between space which was used as public and sheltered passage.[5] These covered and sheltered passages created a connecting system which enabled access to any shop.[6] Since the Roman times, trading activities started to gradually occupy more and more defined and permanent spaces, which started to delimit the public space.

4 Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types*, A. W. Mellon *Lectures in the Fine Arts 19* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1976), 235.

5 Ibid.

6 Claudia *Matz, Warenwelten: Die Architektur* Des Konsums (Baden-Baden: Tectum Verlag, 2018), 46.

0 5 10   20   30 m
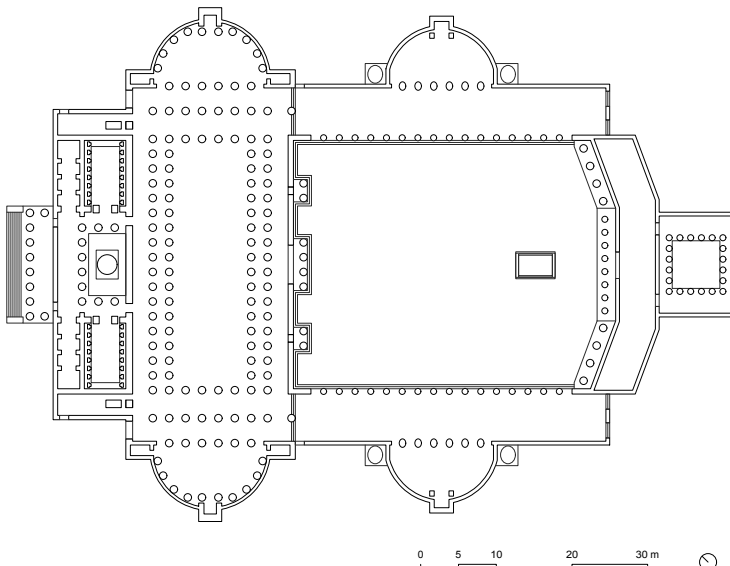
Forum Trajan, Rome, 106 - 113 AD

2.1.3 Market and town hall

After the collapse of the Roman Empire, there was a long period of change. From the 11th to the 16th century in medieval cities, market halls took the place of the large-scale Roman forums. Nevertheless, the variation of scale did not correspond to a decrease of trading functions. On the contrary, trading activities never stopped developing. They generated markets and spaces for the exchange of goods in order to satisfy citizens' necessities and commodities. As a result, they grew to be an even more essential component of the inner city structure. Along with the establishment of wealth and stability in northern Europe, under Charlemagne and later the Normans, cities started to prosper again and to become actual trading centres.[7]

In European cities and during the course of the medieval period, the focus of trading functions started to be embodied in a new building type: the market and town hall. They were usually placed alongside the market square in the centre of the city. The often used wooden structure consisted of two-storeys and used both for trading and administration functions. The open ground floor contained the market hall and opened to the exterior through a colonnade as an extension of the market place. The exchange of goods took place trough removable stalls, where the principal goods were livestock, agricultural products, craftsman's tools, leather-ware and clothing. The town hall, where business and trading activities were performed in a council chamber, was situated on the upper floor.[8] An illustrating example of this building type is the *Palazzo Broletto* in Como. It is one of the oldest dated governments and market buildings, dated from 1215.[9] It demonstrates the strong relation of commercial activities and the religious power during the medieval era.

An interesting example of medieval cities, which were strictly related to trading functions, are the *Bastides*. These particular cities arose in France between the 13th century and the first half of the 14th century.[10] Their peculiarity was, that they were built in a single operation and followed a strict geometrical plan based on a grid, in which the marketplace took the central position of the urban plan. This resolution led to the displacement of the church in a more decentralized location. This extraordinary gesture proved that trading functions were increasingly gaining importance within the city structure and as social activity, to the point of being able to replace the symbolic and physical value of the church.[11]

Similar to the Roman Forum and the Greek agora, trading functions were strictly related to the public space and the structure of the city centre. However, with the appearance of the medieval market and the town hall, trading no longer occupied only a temporary position within the city square. Along with political functions, it

7   Coleman, *Shopping Environments: Evolution, Planning and Design, op. cit.*, 20.

8   Pevsner, "Government buildings from the late 12th to the late 17th century", in *A History of Building Types, op. cit.*

9   Ibid, 27-28.

10 Pierre Garrigou Grandchamp, *L'architecture domestique des bastides Périgourdines aux XIII et XIXè siècles* (Paris: Société Française d'archéologie, 1999), 47-60.

11 Luca Ortelli, "Histoire de l'habitation", (lecture, EPFL, Lausanne, Octrobre, 2018).

defined a new building type. The public market square generated the emergence of these shared-use buildings that incorporated trading functions as well as town governance and qualified it as the functional and public core of the medieval city.

Along with the increasing of wealth and prosperity within the medieval city, the market halls also grew in terms of dimension. Buildings and functions were added, becoming more and more important, to the point that in Europe during the 16th century the market halls were no longer combined with town guild functions. They started progressively to become independent types, as the origin of the later European market buildings.[12] Due to this progression, a new type of retail space appeared. The shopping spaces situated on the ground floor of the buildings, facing the public and pedestrian areas, became the basis for the later century development of European shop-lined streets.

12   Pevsner, "Government buildings from the late 12th to the late 17th century", in *A History of Building Types, op. cit.*

0   5   10   20   30 m
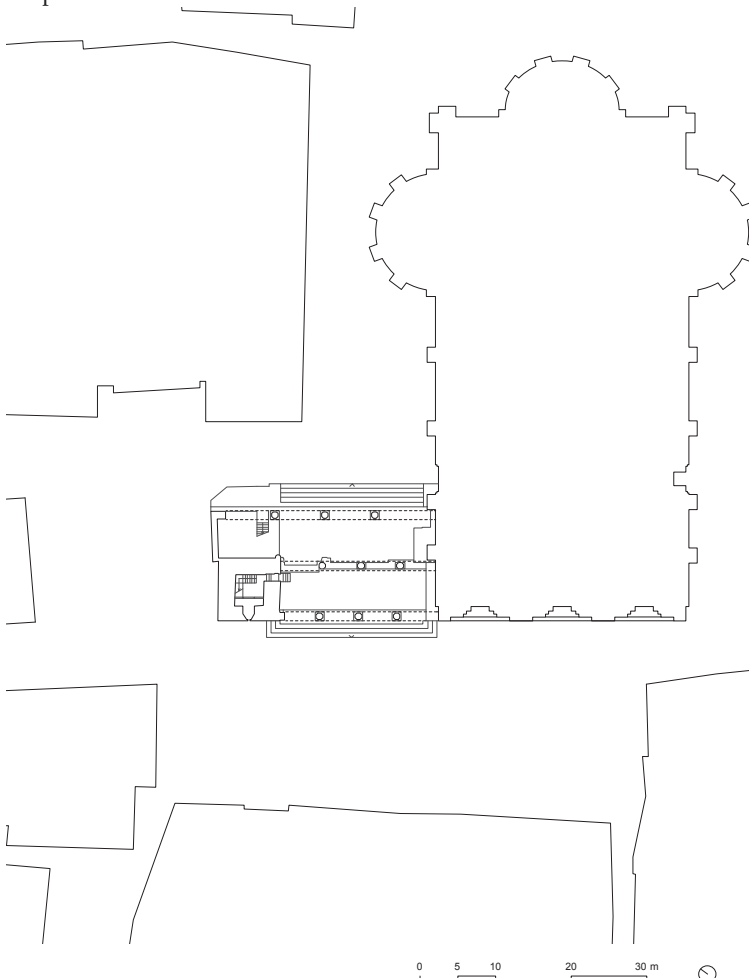
Palazzo Broletto, Como, 1215

2.2 City fragment

Along with the evolution of world trade and commerce during the late 16th century, new types of shopping spaces were generated in Europe. Nevertheless, the development of European trading spaces was much more restrained in comparison to eastern countries. In fact, in the 16th century eastern *bazaars* already organised and developed independent spaces for shopping as only-use, which were shaping different architectural arrangements across the cities.[13] Compared to eastern cities, the European process of defining the first trading building took a longer path. However these latter certainly played an important role in terms of reference and influence for the European shopping space development.

Until the medieval period, trading functions were centred in market squares and town halls, and were strictly related to the city centre. However, between the 16th and the 17th century in Europe, trading functions progressively began to spread across the boundary of the central market squares[14], and gradually became independent programs. Retail spaces started to be defined as city fragments, although always remaining a part of the urban structure. Ultimately, They became specific building types.

13   Johann Friedrich Geist, *Arcades, The History of a Building Type* (London: The MIT Press, 1986), 6-11.

14   Coleman, *Shopping Environments: Evolution, Planning and Design*, *op. cit.*, 20.

2.2.1 Street

The gathering of public activities along with commercial facilities began to spread from the central square occupying the cities' ground-floors, to the extent that the shops were progressively aligned in the main streets. The shops were, however, still controlled by the guilds and were organised by function and streets. Therefore, the organisation was reflected in the naming of the streets and can still be seen today. For example *Bread Street* in London or *Rue de la Lingerie* in Paris among others. In northern Europe, the shops were open to the streets and protected by individual canopies and gables above the shops. In contrast, in southern Europe the shop-fronts were directly protected by the adoption of an urban form, the colonnaded passages. The ground-floor was retreated from the upper floors to generate a protected walkway between shops and columns.[15] In these street configurations a more suitable space was offered to customers. It highlighted the shop's facilities and their entrances, and overall transformed the walkway in a more adequate public space. As regards the relation between retail and public space, one was dependent on the other. An interesting example of this street type is the *Via Roma*

15   Coleman, *Shopping Environments: Evolution, Planning and Design*, *op. cit.*, 26-28.

in Turin, one of the main axes of the city centre, which connects the *Porta Nuova* with the main *Piazza San Carlo*. It is characterized by a series of arcades which separates the busy street and the protected public walkway connecting the shops.

Until the arrival of glazed shop-fronts, the early street-facing shops were separated from the walkway by only a counter. Commonly the public did not enter the shops, but the trading took place across the counter where all the goods were displayed and brought by the seller. The first glazed shop-fronts appeared in the late 17th century in Holland, and with it the shop became an accessible space for the public to walk in. Due to the limitation of glass technology, the early glazed shop-fronts were composed by a grid of small panels of glass.[16] Nevertheless the progress on iron and glass construction enabled the generation of greater and daring shop-fronts, to the point of introducing new innovative building types devoted to trading functions.

16 Ibid.
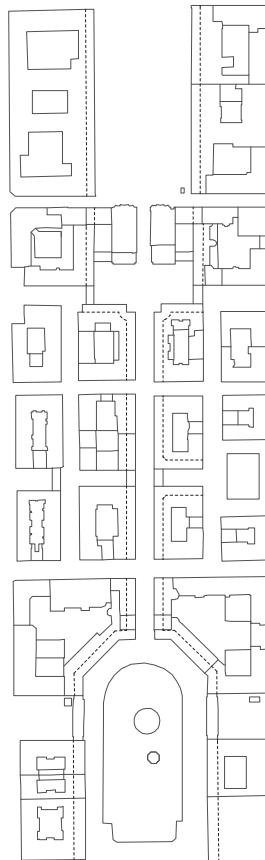
2.2.2 Market hall and fair building

Along with the expansion of the population and the increase of needs for larger markets during the 19th century, another type of trading building appeared. Considered as the evolution of medieval market and town halls, the new market hall consisted of a large glazed pavilion which was influenced by the grand exhibition halls typical of that time. The leading factor to conceive these new kind of buildings were the advances in iron and glass production. These market buildings joined together all the earlier scattered markets into a singular structure. In northern Europe these building types were enclosed in order to respond to the cold weather. An example is the *Covent Garden Market*, designed by Charles Fowler in 1827, and built to regularized the messy market dealings in the central square.[17] Meanwhile, in southern Europe, this type remained more outward with the adoption of a loggia facing the exterior. In this latter case, they were more of an urban covered space than an enclosed building to enter in.

Another type of commercial space were the fair buildings of the 18th century. The shops were organized around pedestrian streets, each of which represented a type of trade. It was an early example of the compatibility between shopping, leisure and entertainment, since different activities were generated besides shopping such as visiting exhibitions, attending performances at a theatre, listening to musicians, dancing in the marquees and gambling in saloons.[18] One of the most remarkable example is Paris' *Les Halles Centrales*, opened in 1858 and design by Victor Baltar. The project consisted of an iron and glass construction of fourteen pavilions, connected by tunnel-vaulted avenues. Each pavilion was devoted to one product type. The Baltar design was never entirely constructed. Around 1970, the pavilions were demolished by the French government which decided to establish international chain stores in the city.[19] Generally, the fair buildings occupied a large area and, with the exception of the given example, they were often installed on a terrain outside the city walls.

One thing to notice is the fact that trading slowly started to become a principal function for a specific place. The public space did not lose its importance in commercial spaces, though, it gradually started to lose its role as primary function. This statement became more and more effective with the empowerment of retail function and the generation of only-use shopping spaces.

17 Pevsner, "Market halls, conservatories and exhibition buildings", in *A History of Building Types, op. cit.*, 238-240.

18 Pevsner, "Market halls, conservatories and exhibition buildings", in *A History of Building Types, op. cit.*

19 Ibid, 243.
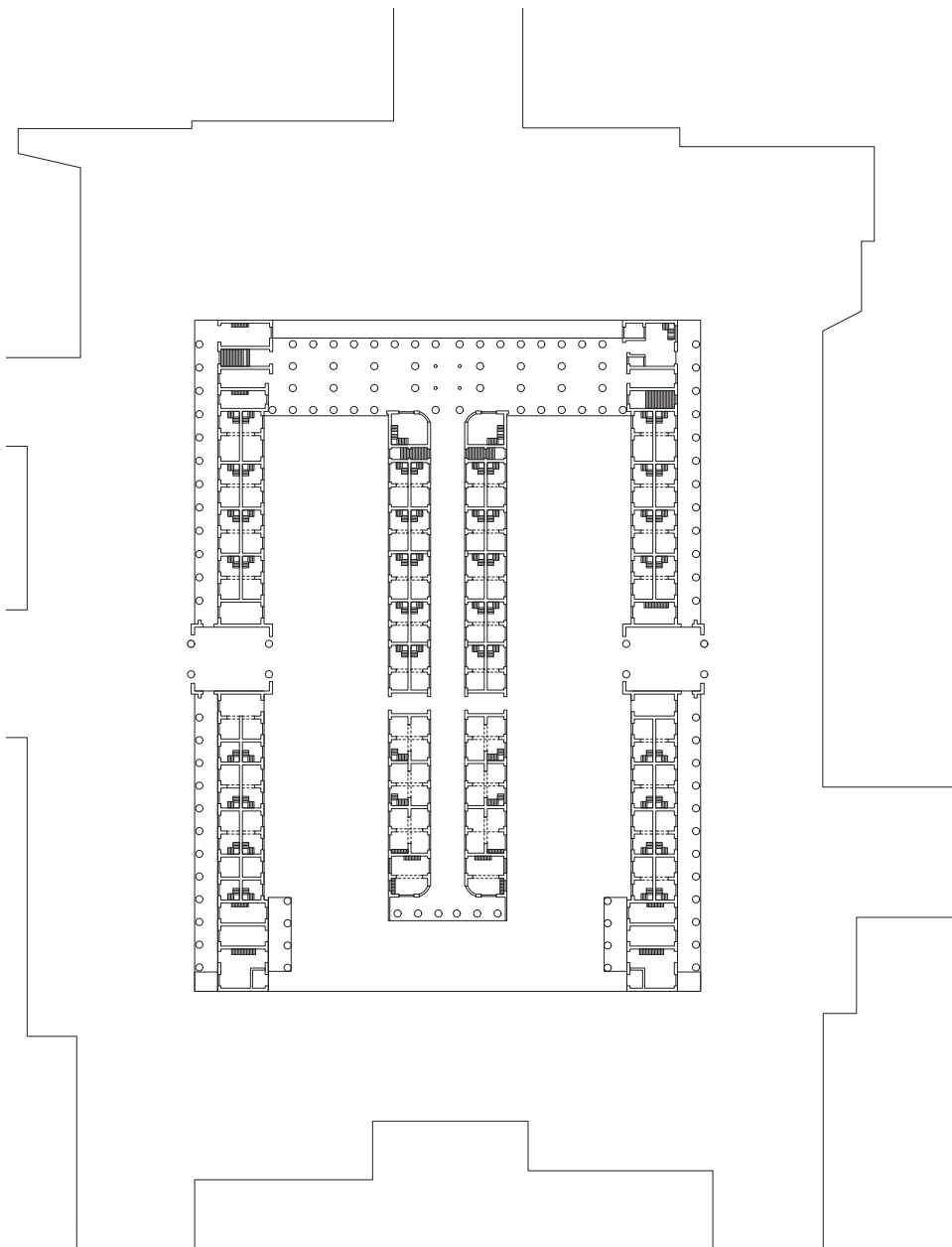
0   5   10   20   30 m

Covent Garden,
London, 1827

2.2.3 Gallery

Until the 19th century, the retail function itself remained related to other building utilizations, as in town halls, market halls and guild-halls. During the first half of the 19th century, a new generation of planned accumulations of shops appeared along with the social and economical development and the spread of consumerism among society.[20] This defined the beginning of shops as a recognisable individual type of architecture. However, already in the late 18th century the first European building type, which was planned primarily to accommodate a series of shops, emerged: the gallery.

Technological inventions, such as iron and glass constructions, enabled the employment of different similar sized shop under an unprecedented type of protected public space. Streets at that time were turning into hostile environments for pedestrians. Due to the presence of vehicles within the cities, the streets were increasingly crowded and overwrought. Galleries enabled the creation of a calm public passage between two busy streets, devoted exclusively to pedestrians. Galleries had a great success all over Europe and especially in the cities, which were affected by a harsh and cold climate. Moreover, this new type was a response to the social and urban planning issue of urban congestion of that time, as it allowed the revitalization and development of public spaces within the existing city blocks.[21]

For the first time, the shopping activity did not focus on the procuring of goods but on the strolling and promenading, which centred the shopping as social phenomenon. The term *flâneur,* which originated in the Paris' galleries was invented by Charles Beaudelaire. He described the *flâneur* as a wanderer who observed and strolled through the streets and galleries of the 19th century Paris, without having a particular aim nor destination. The term has exerted fascination on numerous philosophers and intellectuals. For instance in the 20th century, the *flâneur* was reused as a concept by Walter Benjamin in his book *The Arcades Project.*[22]

The earliest galleries contained open stalls for shopping, but as soon as the glazed shop fronts appeared, the stalls were replaced by larger shops in which clients were able to enter. They were separated from the public passage with a glazed shop-window which permitted the display of a large amount of different goods, of which the production was importantly increasing during the 19th century. The variety of goods was detached from the control of the guilds and single-product streets or districts. The linear and simple structure allowed to the shops to be placed between the regular columns and arches. Further, the glazed roof created a unifying covered space among the unique quality of providing a largely natural enlightened environment.[23]

Over the course of the second half of 19th century, another

20 Geist, *Arcades, The History of a Building Type*, op. cit.

21 Ibid.

22 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 1st paperback ed (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

23 Coleman, *Shopping Environments: Evolution, Planning and Design*, op. cit.

generation of galleries emerged as a result of the improvement of iron and glass constructions. The increment in weight and size of this architectural type became more and more impressive to the point of transforming into actual covered roads. A well illustrating example is the *Galleria Vittorio Emanuele* in Milan, the biggest gallery constructed at that time. It was designed by Giuseppe Mengoni, built around 1865 and has two crossed arms with glass-tunnel vaults and a glass dome at the intersection. The south arms open to the Piazza del Duomo, with a triumphal arch constructed in 1877. [24]

Hence, alongside the generation of a new type for the shopping activity, galleries created a new spatial connection within the city. They also provided a safer place for pedestrians, devoted to social promenading, and encouraged citizens to live their public life. Accordingly, the first only-use shopping spaces were conceived in straight relation with the city structure, and moreover with the creation of a more liveable public space.

24 Pevsner, "Shops, Stores and department stores", in *A History of Building Types*, op. cit, 265.

0 5 10   20   50 m
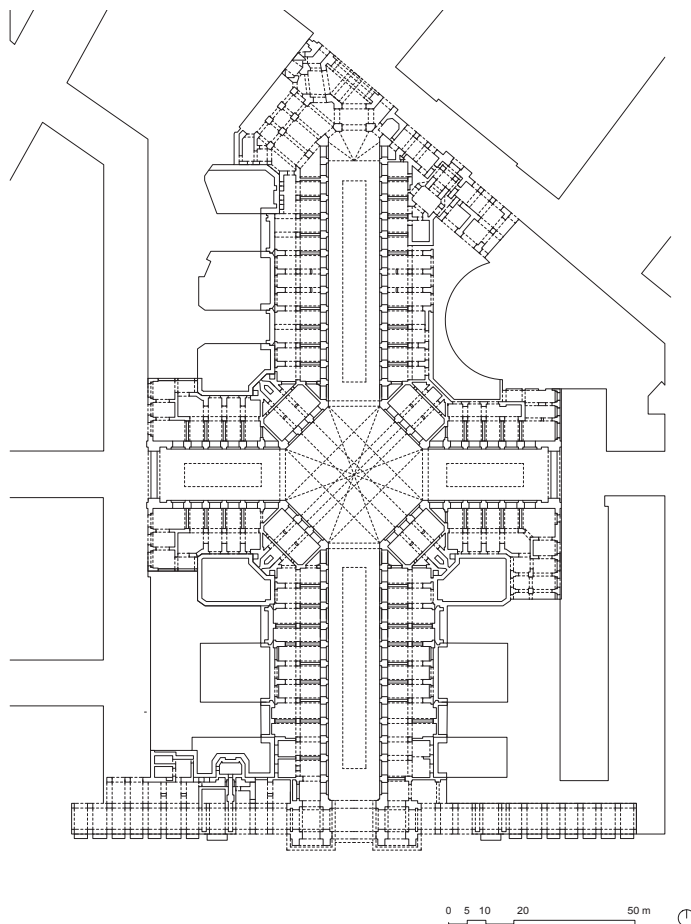
Gallery Vittorio Emanuele II, Milano, 1877

2.2.4 Department store

If the gallery was the first European building type primarily planned to accommodate a series of shops, with the arrival of the department store a great transformation affected the shopping environment and the contemporary trading principles, which have been adopted until today. Until the arrival of the shopping centre, in the second half of the 20th century, the department store had been one of the most dominant and significant shopping environments.[25]

25 Pevsner, "Shops, Stores and department stores", in *A History of Building Types, op. cit.*

Besides the incorporation of innovative constructive methods, the major change was the trading principles which were adopted. Department stores used capitalist retail principles to provide a greater variety of goods through fixed prices, allowing the selling of popular merchandise with a less expensive cost than ever before. This not only attracted a wider social range of shoppers, but caused an important progress of what we call the *consumer society* today. In other words, the department stores provided a wider variety of types of goods with a large selection and less expensive prices, exploited the law of the greatest exchange and allowed to a larger social range of shoppers to afford the costs.[26]

26 Coleman, *Shopping Environments: Evolution, Planning and Design, op. cit.*

Alongside the revolution of shopping customs, another significant innovation had an impact on the physical building size and appearance. The progress of iron and glass technologies allowed wider shops but also higher buildings to be built. Suddenly shops contained over four or five storeys and were increasingly glazed and transparent.[27] This construction enabled the definition of a much larger model destined for public and commercial uses. The first department store, identified by Nikolaus Pevsner in his book *A History of Building Types*, is the *Bon Marché* constructed in Paris in 1852 by the architect LC Boileau and the engineer Gustaf Eiffel. They formed one of the first grand interior store spaces around a three storeys well. This type emerged as a large public space devoted to commercial activities and was strongly included in the dense city pattern.

27 Pevsner, "Shops, Stores and department stores", in *A History of Building Types, op. cit.*

The arrival of steel frame constructions gave rise to a second generation of this type. The incorporation of technological inventions like the elevator and afterwards the escalator facilitated the vertical movement and improved the spatial distribution in this increasingly larger buildings.[28] During one century, the department store in Europe was considered like an expanding architectural type which generated similar ones, such as office buildings. Department stores emerged, however, not only in Europe. Since the second half of 20th century, the United States had entered in the story with similar department stores.

28 Ibid.
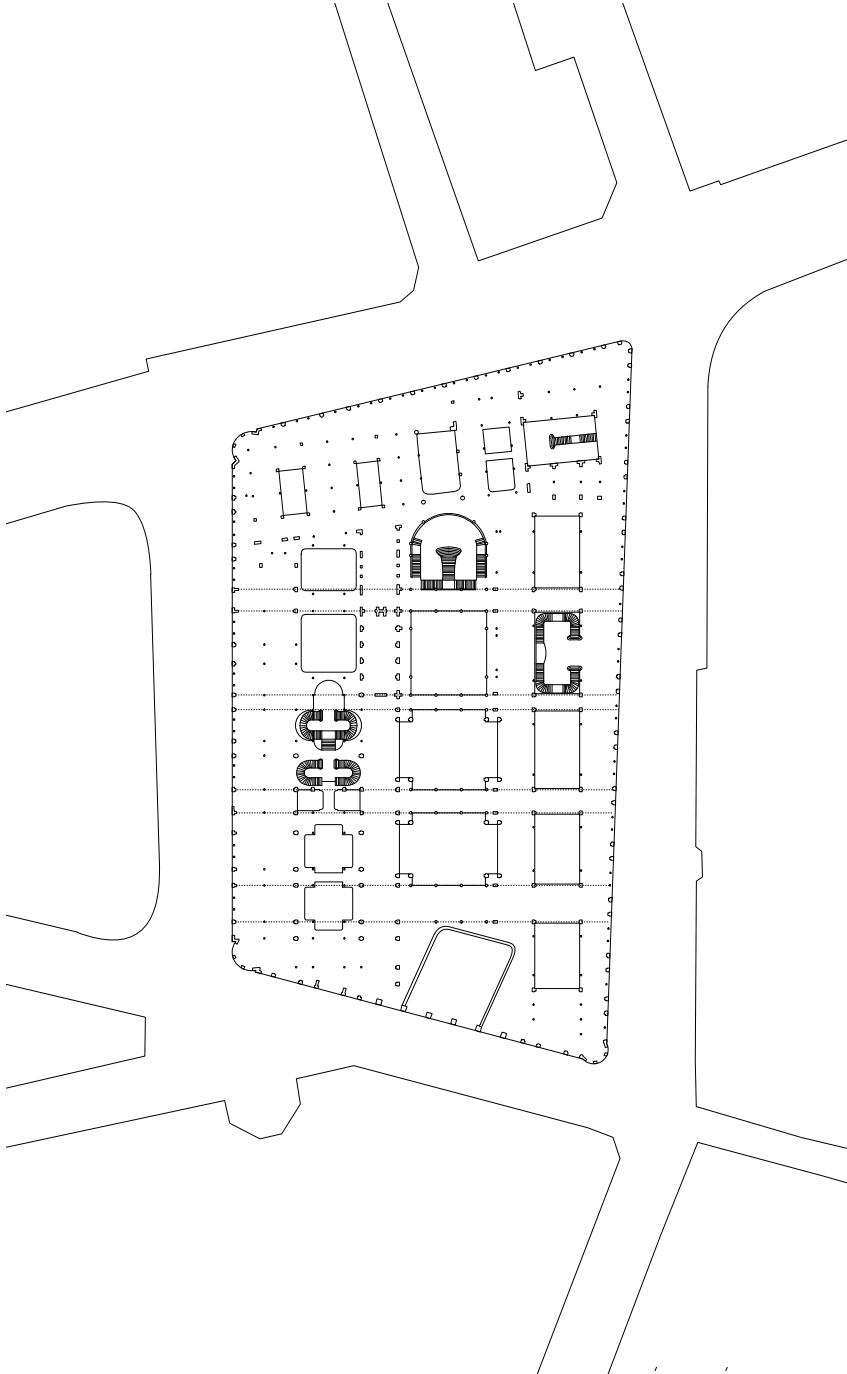
0 5 10   20   30   50 m

Bon Marché,
Paris, 1852

2.3 Periphery

By the second half of the 20th century, the development of transport systems, first with railways then with roads, increased and conditioned the evolution of retail functions and their public spaces. These building types, that until now took place within the city, started to spread out of its boundaries. The main factors that influenced this phenomenon were the increasing growth of the population and most of all the universal spread of car ownership. This latter caused important changes in city structures, congestions in town centres, and a significant increment of the transport network. It is interesting to notice that these urban issues touched European and American cities in the same way, although the consequences have been rather different due to dissimilar historical situations.

By the 50's the American cities were congested with traffic. The decline of town centres resulted from the important increase of car ownership, along with the restricted space for expansion in the urban cores. The reaction had been a significant suburban expansion, made possible by the abundant and available land around American cities, which allowed the spreading of new residential areas across the suburbs. The sprawling of roads and highways started to surround the cities and linking the new residential areas together.[29]

In Europe the premises were the same, however, not the reaction. After the Second World War the cities needed to be rebuilt. Unlike in America where cities spread and turned into the suburbs, the repairing of town centres involved a mixed-use development including residential buildings. Moreover, European cities combined the need to rebuild with the opportunity to respond to the increasing presence of cars, by applying the principle of separating the main traffic streets away from the city centre. This latter was mainly devoted to pedestrianised precincts, in contrast with the American examples. [30]

European cities also had to face important expansion and peripheral issues, however it happened in a less pronounced way compared to America where the suburban sprawl was far more prominent. Despite the fact that America and Europe had two slightly different responses to similar matters, the retail program and its building types started to spread out of the city in both continents. Though, in the United States this took place before and in a faster way than in Europe, which will later be influenced by the American model. For this reason, the following sections will explore the American development of retail spaces outside the city boundaries, in order to understand the origin of the peripheral types and finally to identify how this model has been translated in Europe and what it has generated.

29 Janina Gosseye and Tom Avermaete, *Shopping Towns Europe: Commercial Collectivity and the Architecture of the Shopping Centre, 1945-1975* (London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 4.

30 Ibid.

2.3.1 From chain store to big-box store

With the arrival of the department store, an important increase of production and selling of goods took place along with a significant economical growth. The development of transport systems at the end of the 19th century enabled an easier distribution of goods. This phenomenon not only increased the retail production but generated the emergence of chain stores. This new type of retailing permitted the selling of the same goods in a series of shops owned by one firm.[31] In the beginning they were spread within one city, but with network and production developments chain stores spread more and more, to the point of achieving the national scale and later the international one. In fact, chain stores were the basis for international and global retailers and today's globalization.

31 Pevsner, "Shops, Stores and department stores", in *A History of Building Types, op. cit.*, 270-272.

In Europe, some of the first chain stores were grocers. However, compared to Europe, the chain stores in the United States developed earlier and faster. They were also the basis for new retail spaces, spreading from cities to peripheries. With this new type, retail functions started to prevail over the public spaces, that until now were produced along with commercial functions.[32]

When car ownership reached America's working class, highways were increasingly defining the urban landscape, and city centres were condensed with vehicles. Buying goods from downtown stores turned out to be more and more difficult, as the stores could not provide enough parking spaces. The inner city just could not keep up with the excess of cars. Therefore, the emergence of the strip was inevitable and a direct response to the this issue. The *strip* is characterised by a row of neighbouring chain stores, or so-called big-box stores, which were located alongside a busy street. They are big-box stores due to their low-rise, large and cubic form and mainly blind façades, having nothing more than the appearance of a box. However, the issue of parking was not completely solved by the strip. The parking was either located behind the big-box stores, obligating people to enter next to garbage cans and service entrances, or the parking area was situated in the front of the shop. In this second solution, the view was partially blocked by the parked cars. Either way, the parking turned out to be an irritating disturbance.[33]

32 Gosseye, Avermaete, "Shopping Towns Europe, 1945-1975", in *Shopping Towns Europe: Commercial Collectivity and the Architecture of the Shopping Centre, 1945-1975, op. cit.*

For the first time in history, retail function generated a merely commercial type, deprived of any form of architecture or civic life, and completely separated from the urban fabric of the city. The emphasis passed from city structure and human scale to the adaptation of new cars paces and the subsequent road systems.

33 M. Jeffrey Hardwick, "Seducing the Suburban Autoist", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

During this period, in which retail spaces were affected by these drastic changes, Victor Gruen arrived in the United States after fleeing from Austria in 1938. Gruen was an Austrian architect with the

34   Alex Wall, *Victor Gruen: From Urban Shop to New City* (Barcelona: Actar, 2005).

ambition to provide a solution for the retail type in the periphery. He started out with downtown shop designs and later continued working on retail architecture on the strip. He became later known as a pioneer for large scale shopping spaces.[34]

Around 1940, Gruen designed several smaller and bigger stores for the chain store company *Grayson's* in downtown and on the strip. For a big-box store project he came up with the idea of designing two main façades. The front, which was mainly designed for the car, and the back for the pedestrians, therefore adapted to a much smaller scale and slower pace. Designing a store with two equally important façades became a frequent concept to attract customers.[35] With the exception of *Grayson's*, the neighbouring big-box stores were merely constructed without any architectural knowledge and with the lowest budget as possible. In fact, the economic and capitalistic nature of retailing generated an extraordinary growth of these shopping spaces. However, it also pulled away the interest from intellectuals and architects to private developers, only focused on making the highest profit as possible.[36]

35   Hardwick, "Seducing the Suburban Autoist" in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, op. cit.*, 62.

36   Barry Maitland, *Shopping Malls - Planning & Design* (England: Construction Press, 1985), 1-3.

Before the first shopping centre emerged, a huge amount of America's cities were saturated by commercial strips. Their sudden appearance destroyed the city outlook with their unpleasant designs and fast constructions. During this period, commercial spaces started to be designed without taking into account the value of public life, as the big-box stores were purely commercial and did not offer anything to the public space.
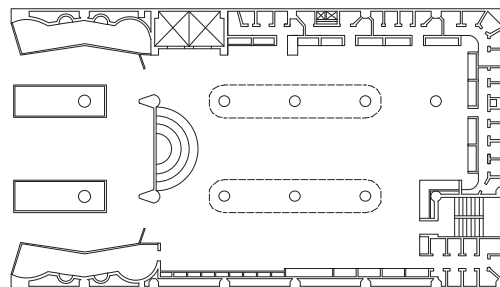
Grayson's, Seattle, 1940

0   5   10   15 m

2.3.2 Shopping centre

The development from big-box stores on the strip to the shopping centre was slow and unpredictable. The earliest shopping centres were a merely accumulation of big-box stores, which created a rather dull shopping area than a proper centre. In fact, they could hardly be described as centres, they were imposters. The only significant difference from the strip was that the new shopping centres contained far more parking possibilities. However, the same old formula of arranging the stores side by side next to a highway and using visually vulgar façades was applied.[37]

Victor Gruen did not turn his back on the strip issue but tried to clean them up. His intention was to respond to the absence of architectural qualities and deprivation of proper public space in these retail types. His conception of shopping centres would not only improve the city landscape and decrease the urban sprawl, but it would also become beneficial for the communal life. One of the principal aims for shopping centre designers was, opposed to smaller downtown shops and large big-box stores, to combine the speed of pedestrians and automobiles and to reintroduce the human scale. Therefore, the shopping centre tried to unite the two paces by approaching both of the experiences.[38]

In this sense, the shopping centre, unlike the big-box store on the strip, was not a model which could be copied over and over again. It was not located alongside a busy strip, however, to become successful, it had to be adapted carefully to its surrounding and to take a strategic central position by taking its community into account. Under these circumstances, Gruen hoped that by introducing a large store as a centre to the American suburbs, it would add value to the communal life of suburban citizens, without forgetting their favoured pass time and America's consumerism.[39]

A shopping centre which was designed following these aims is the *Milliron's centre*, built in Los Angeles in 1949 by Gruen. It could be marked as the first suburban shopping centre, a first of its kind. It was a big, one-storey enclosed box which merged retailing, cars and community. Gruen positioned *Milliron's* next to an intersection of two major boulevards in the middle of the suburbs. Due to its surrounding and accessibility, *Milliron's* was mainly conceived for motorists. Using only one floor to display merchandise was very unusual compared to the downtown department stores, which were in the contrary mainly designed for verticality due to space saving reasons. However, a one-storey-building turned out to be economically more convenient, because no costly elevators had to be installed and it offered more usable space.[40]

Leaving the strip behind, Gruen still applied its tricks. By applying

37 Hardwick, "Seducing the Suburban Autoist" in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, op. cit.*

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Alex Wall, Victor Gruen, "Commerce is the engine of urbanity", in *From Urban Shop to New City* (Barcelona: Actar, 2005).

strong colours and impressive structural elements on the façade, he believed that not even a rushing car could miss it. The most special feature of *Milliron's* was not, however, its capability to attract attention, but the possibility to accommodate numerous cars on its roof. Visitors entered the store from the rooftop parking by a theatrical escalator. By that, he proposed a solution to the major parking and car issue. Furthermore, *Milliron's* did not function only as a merely store, but for the first time, he added new programs to the retail, as a restaurant, a daycare centre and an auditorium. These supplementary functions were located on the roof and turned the parking into a dramatic scenery.[41] This visionary attitude, adding new functions as attraction force, would become the base of Gruen's work.

41 Ibid.

When its construction ended, *Milliron's* caused a sensation. Architecture critics were positive and certain about future commercial buildings copying *Milliron's* model, a one storey high building situated in a rather inexpensive location in the American suburbs. Though, not even five years later, its size and layout were overshadowed by bigger and more modern shopping centres. Shopping centres, consisting only of one solitary branch, such as *Milliron's*, went shortly extinct. The accumulation of several shops and big-box stores became the foundation of the new shopping centre designs.[42] Even if *Milliron's* success was short-lived, it became the milestone between the era of the big-box stores, focusing mainly on selling, and the shopping malls, trying to give a public centre to suburbia.

42 Hardwick, "Seducing the Suburban Autoist" in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, op. cit.*

However, until the first enclosed shopping mall appeared, there was still a long way to go. In Gruen's earlier designs, the shopping centres were not covered as we are familiar with them nowadays. Still, some things would not change much, such as the isolation from the parking areas. The term mall as we understand and use it today is an enclosed shopping centre. However, looking up the term mall in any dictionary, the meaning change drastically, from enclosed shopping centre to a rather common shopping street.

Northland shopping centre was his most successful, not covered, shopping centre. Its design principles became the foundation for future enclosed shopping malls and were used as well as base for other architect's shopping centres. When *Southdale* opened in October 1959, it was the first enclosed shopping mall in the world. *Southdale* was designed by Gruen with the ambition to provide suburbia with a new centre.[42] The opening of this new model of retailing revolutionized the retail habits of American society, and would be later on transferred into European suburban settings.

43 Ibid, 144.

With the shopping mall design, Victor Gruen tried to reintroduce the relationship between civic life and retail functions, which had been lost with the big box stores and the strip. In this regard, a parallel could be made between this last retail type and the agora.

Even if they represent two contradictory types, the shopping centre's ambition embodied the same principle of the initial agora. However, the fundamental contradiction, is that the agora arose as an open public space and was not embedded by any physical enclosure. It was an open space where retail functions took place temporarily without any fixed structure. On the contrary, the shopping centre arose as an enclosed space for retail functions, where public space was introduced within the physical boundary of the building. In other terms, in the same way as Victor Gruen used retail as a means to create public life in an enclosed building, in the agora, the pre-existing public space was used as a means to introduce retail function in an open-air place. Furthermore, the agora embodied the core of the city structure, while the shopping mall was a completely de-contextualised building, deprived from any relation with the city structure. Nevertheless, both types were conceived as centralities.

As it will be seen in the next chapter, the shopping mall model has been at the same time a complete success and a horrible failure. It was successful because it caused a sensation and the stores increased their profit incessantly. Though, due to money-grubbing developers, who turned the shopping mall into a machine of selling, Gruen's initial idea of an enclosed mall as a centre for the community did not end as he planned.
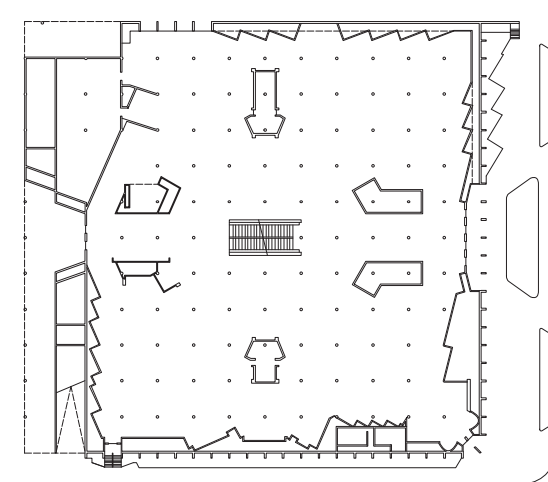
0   5   10   20   30   50 m

Milliron's,
Los Angeles, 1949

Agora, Athen
500 - 300 BC
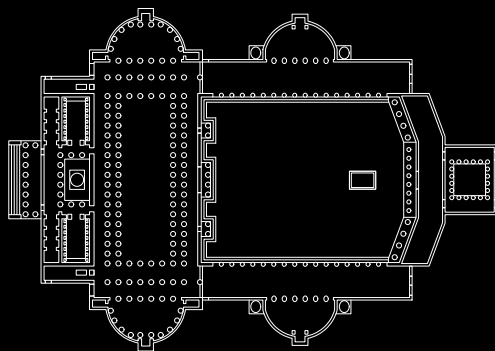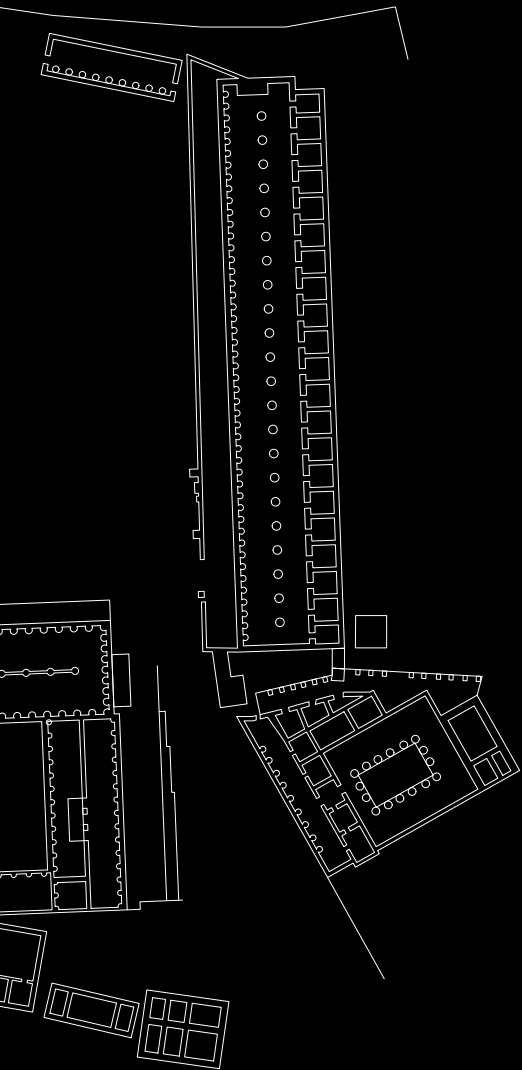
Forum Trajan, Rome
106 - 113 AD
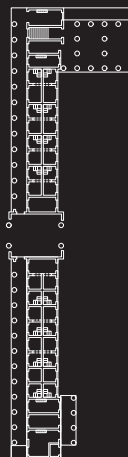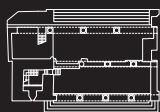
Palazzo Broletto, Como
1215

Covent
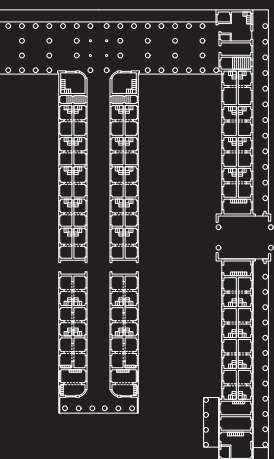
vent Garden, London
1827
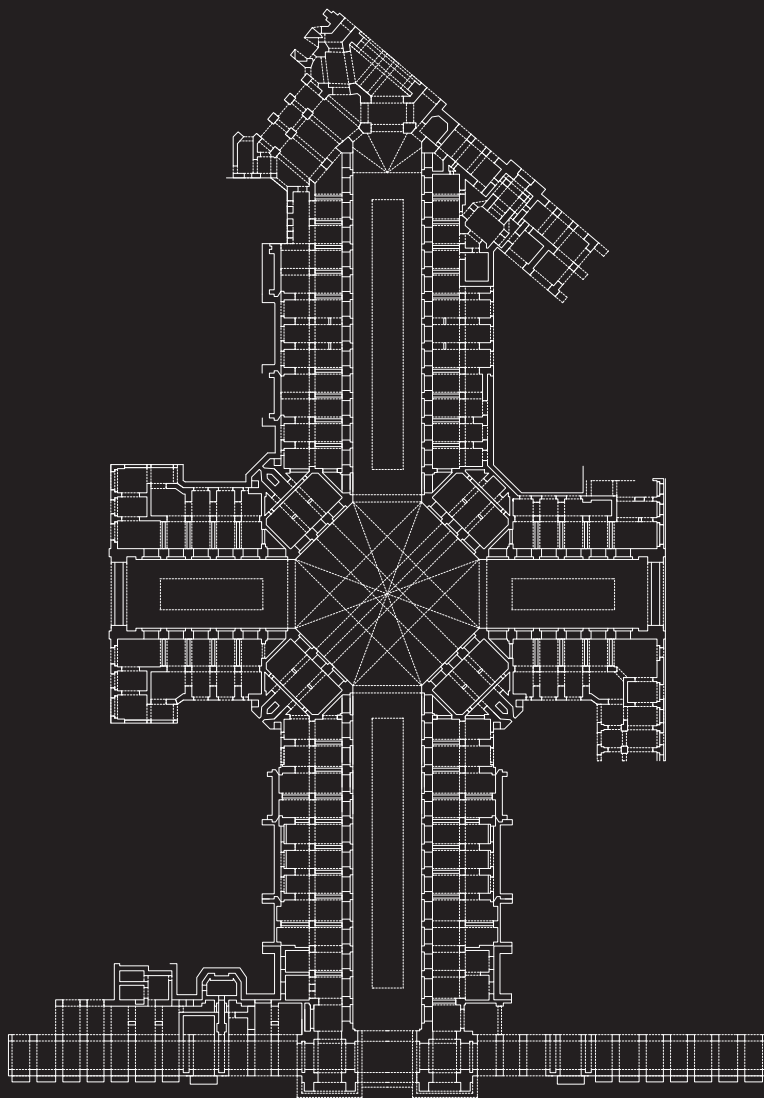
Gallery Vittorio Emanuele II, Milano,
1877
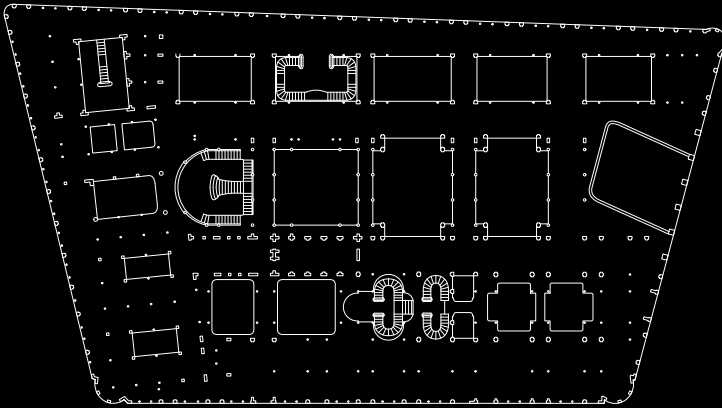
Bon Marché, Paris
1825
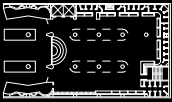
Grayson's, Seattle
1940
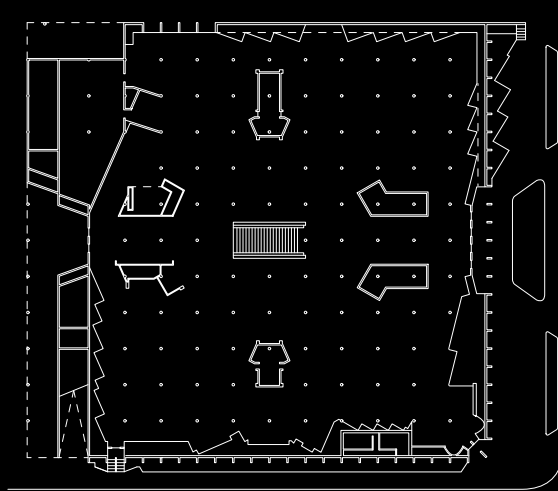
Milliron's, Los Angeles,
1949
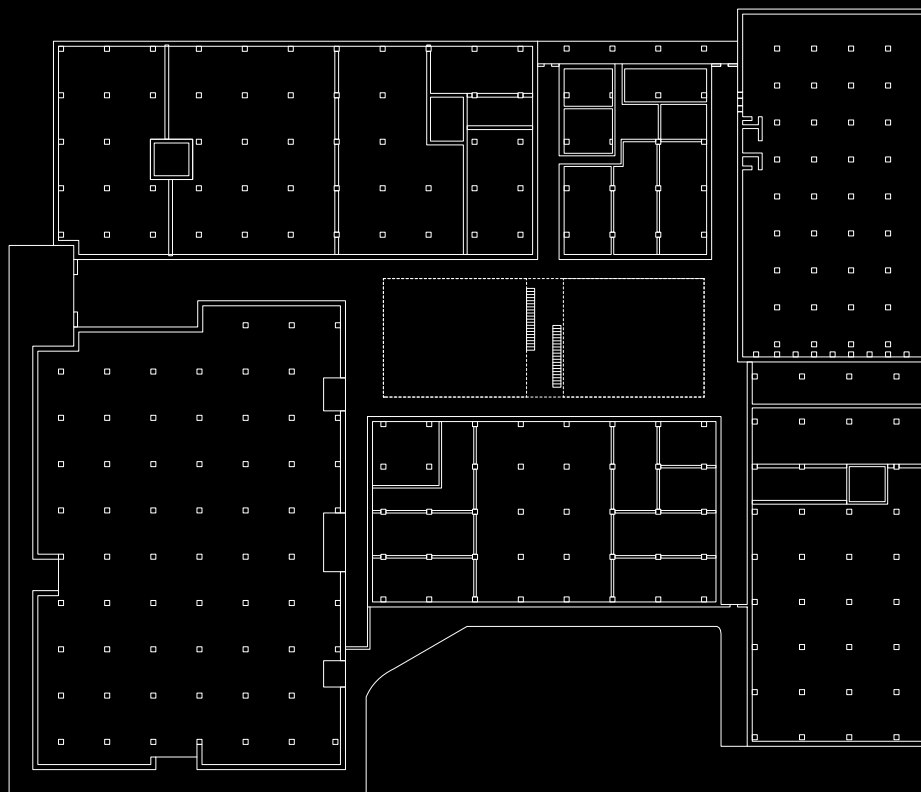
Southdale Center, Edina, Minnesota
1959
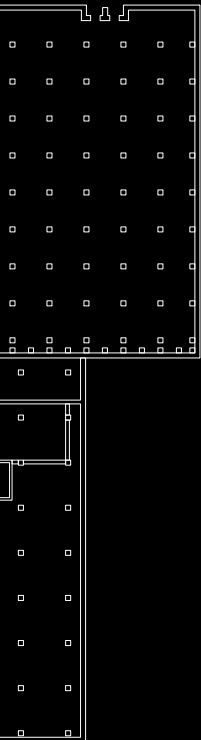
1   Victor Gruen, S*hopping Town: Designing the City in Suburban America* (Minneapolis: Universtiy of MInnesota Press, 2017), 125.

The conventional view was that shopping center should be a cheaply produced shopping machine that should never distract customers from exchanging their money for commodities as quickly as possible.[1]

3
The machine par excellence: the shopping mall

Along with the spreading of automobiles and the increasing of technologies, the world went through a revolutionary period during the 20th century. In several fields, a multiple number of inventions and improvements emerged as a result of the industrial development. The shopping mall was one of them. An incredible space devoted to the eulogy of consumerism, capable of increasing profit and capital out of all proportion. In other words, a veritable machine for selling in which physical consumption was at the base of its mechanism. Nevertheless, it is fascinating to learn that one of the first most efficient selling systems that has ever been created was actually conceived with a completely different intention. The lack of suburban centres in America, and the period of reconstruction in post-war Europe with its congestion of cities, gave rise to the urge of reinventing a new central and communal space for urban regeneration. Indeed, the first shopping mall designs were based on the aim of creating an authentic collective space for citizens.

This chapter seeks to explore the conflictive transition from the primal intention of creating a communal centre, to the generation of an efficient selling machine where the social and civic values had been overshadowed by retail. This transition will be analysed by focusing on what has been the impact on architecture and on the public space, and how these latter have been overwhelmed by the selling machine.

3.1 Shopping mall as social interaction

1   Victor Gruen, "What to Look for in Shopping Centers", in *Chain Store Age* (July 1948), quoted in M. Jeffrey Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004),1.

2   Alex Wall, "Introduction", in *Victor Gruen: From Urban Shop to New City* (Barcelona: Actar, 2005).

3   Janina Gosseye and Tom Avermaete, eds., *Shopping Towns Europe: Commercial Collectivity and the Architecture of the Shopping Centre, 1945-1975* (London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 4.

4   Hardwick, "Seducing the Suburban Autoist", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, op. cit.*

5   David Smiley, "Addressing Redress", in Sprawl and Public space, (Princeton Architectural Press, 2003), 14.

It is our belief that there is much need for actual shopping centers - market places that are also centers of community and cultural activity.[1]

A new centrality for suburbia

When Victor Gruen, often recognized as the father of the mall[2], arrived in the United States in 1938, the American urban landscape was affected by a drastic change. The explosive expansion in suburbia was the result of an incredibly rapid increase of car ownership and highway construction, followed by city centre congestions and a massive construction of new private houses in the periphery.[3]

Contrarily to the construction of all major European cities, which were based on the strong connection between commercial activities and public space, the American suburbs mainly consist of a residential area, characterized by an important lack of collective amenities. For this reason, with the generation of the regional shopping mall, Gruen's ambition was to provide suburbia with a place to dwell, to shop and to socialize. He never intended to create a merely retail machine, rather he desired to decrease urban sprawl and to put a significant emphasis on cultural and communal activities. In order to do so, his aim was to form communities in the vast plain of suburbia, by establishing new centralities and by giving to them a richer public life.[4] In this sense, he probably was inspired by the architecture theorist Sigfried Giedion and interpreted his term by calling the shopping malls "crystallization points".[5]

Retail as a medium

This visionary project for suburban America found its origins in Gruen's formation in downtown Vienna, where civic life and public space were an essential part of the city lifeblood. In America, he had to adapt his European vision to a completely different context, where consumerist society was increasingly growing and consumerism became a principal value. According to Gruen, shopping and retail only were the pretexts to achieve his goals. He hoped to use the consumerism of America to boost communal and social life. He accepted that consumerism

Southdale Center
Edina, Minnesota

was not only a prevalent factor of the society but the leading value of the American dream, which preaches the owning of huge amounts of material goods. Though, he was well aware that the sole consumption of material goods would not satisfy suburban residents.[6] The human still remains a social animal, and the need to socialize and gossip is intrinsic to his nature.

6   Hardwick, "Seducing the Suburban Autoist", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*, op. cit.

Public space as principal aim

When Gruen arrived in New York, the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Centre and the Chrysler Building were not even a decade old. They monopolized the city skyline and were admired by all the newly arrived immigrants. However, not the skyscrapers nor the dense street-scape called Gruen's attention. Instead, he was more drawn by the flashing lights of Broadway and the sudden quiet of the Central Park, in the middle of the noisy streets of Manhattan.[7] An interesting point is to underline what do these spaces have in common, considering that on first glance they seems to be two complete contradictions. However, they share an important characteristic. They both are admired for their public function and above all for their attraction force for citizens and tourists.

7   Hardwick, "Escaping from Vienna to fifth Avenue", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*, op. cit.

Public space as a means to attract people was going to be a constant element in Gruen's future work. Nevertheless, one thing shopping mall designers could not plan, was how citizens would react to newly opened shopping malls. Architects may know all about dimensions, spaces and materials, however, creating a lively public space is never certain. There are a lot of existing public spaces which should theoretically work and be used by a grand number of visitors, still in reality they merely do not. Due to the significant lack of social activities in the neighbourhoods of suburbia, the regional shopping centre became a highly needed public space, used by citizens for social gatherings. Therefore, the regional shopping mall was not only a place to shop, but a centre point where the community could gather, gossip and spend time together. It was laid out for being a vivid space, where the main focus was on the social interaction between customers.

Town within towns

The shopping center is one of the few new building types created in our time. Because shopping centers represents groupings of structures and because of the underlying cooperative spirit involved, the need for environmental planning for this building type is obvious. Where this need has been fully understood shopping centers have taken on the characteristics of urban organisms serving a multitude of human needs and activities, thus justifying the designation: shopping towns.[8]

Many critics would argue that a store is a store and will remain a store. Although, Gruen tried to reinvent the retail space by adding a new image to the shopping mall, filled with music, fun and time. He wanted to be able to offer an urban experience, without the noise and dirt of the current perception of the city. A new other level of retailing appeared. Whereas the shopping mall included spaces for social activities, the strip was on the contrary the embodiment of pure commercialism and profit.

Gruen's typical shopping mall designs employed communal and civic functions, such as exhibition halls, auditoriums, pools and nurseries. These functions would vary depending on each shopping mall's needs and surrounding. New shopping malls could almost be compared to city centres, as they provided not only communal spaces and commercial functions but sometimes even proper programs, such as a police forces or power plants.[9] The historian and sociologist Lewis Mumford, who published the book *the City in History,* described them as a new settlement model which could counter the noisy chaos of the strip and urban sprawl.[10]

In a certain way, the shopping malls were conceived as towns within towns.

Historical inspiration

Gruen often got his inspiration from Europe's public and commercial spaces, and tried to integrate them into his shopping mall designs. He was not only fascinated with Italian *piazzas*, but also with their galleries. Therefore, he often used their exact layout or copied architecture features in his designs, such as the usage of glass or a rotunda. As Gruen was born and raised in Vienna, its historical centre became his inspiration. In Vienna everyday activities were not more

8   Victor Gruen and Larry Smith, *Shopping Town USA: The Planning of Shopping Centers* (New York/Amsterdam/London: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1960), 11.

9   Hardwick, "A 'Shoppers' paradise for suburbia", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*, op. cit.

10   Margaret Crawford, "The shopping Mall in Context: History and Politics" in *Sprawl and Public space,* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2003), 23.

Shoppi
Spreitenbach

11 Wall, " Shop Window: An Introduction to Another World", in The *Victor Gruen: From Urban Shop to New City, op. cit.*

12 Jan Gehl and Birgitte Svarre, "Life between buildings", in *How to Study Public Life* (Washington: Island Press, 2013).

13 Gosseye, Avermaete, eds., *Shopping Towns Europe: Commercial Collectivity and the Architecture of the Shopping Centre, 1945-1975, op. cit.,* 4.

14 Victor Gruen. 1963. "The regional Shopping Center.", *Bauen + Wohnen = Construction + habitation = Building + home: Internationale Zeitschrift.* Band 17. Heft 11: 465-467.

than a short distance by foot from each other and created a dense urban fabric filled with life. For this reason, he frequently tried to recreate this richness of the city's streets.[11]

An important influence that Gruen took from these historical spaces, is the devotion to human scale. It is interesting to point out that medieval marketplaces and Italian *piazzas* worked successfully as public spaces and they were laid out on the principle of human scale.[12] On the first glance, regional shopping malls do not seemed to be constructed in a human scale. Their vast sizes appeared to be simply out of proportion. Although, while entering the mall, a whole new world revealed itself to the visitor. It suddenly began easy to find oneself almost in a contemporary marketplace or *piazza*. Furthermore, the invention of cars could not even been imagined in a medieval marketplace. Also the Italian *piazzas* would not be the same spaces if they had welcomed rushing cars. Similar to its ancestors, the shopping mall banished motor vehicles outside to the parking area, leaving the primacy to pedestrians. Consequently, the interior space was freed from any noise disturbance, and could be transformed into public events, such as concerts and civic meetings. By separating pedestrians and automobiles, customers were offered a relaxing atmosphere in contrast to their stressful lives, rich in cars and highways. This procedure would become quite common in Gruen's designs.

The American model

In 1956, Victor Gruen designed the first enclosed American shopping mall, the *Southdale centre*, in Edina, Minnesota. This project became the dominant prototype for the next retail spaces in America. It gathered two anchor stores, which worked as an attraction force, and seventy-two smaller shops under one roof.[13] However, *Southdale's* special feature was its enclosed interior court. This latter, a rather vast space, was three storeys high and became fast a meeting point for visitors. The totality of the space was simply gigantic, almost comparable to a Gothic cathedral. Nevertheless, it was not a dull space, but on the contrary it contained much to distract the eye of the customer. The actual reason why the covered mall, and with it a climate controlled environment was created, was mainly due to the harsh climate in Minnesota, where the summers were hot and rainy and the winters very cold. The idea was to create a public space, which was welcoming throughout the whole year. Gruen added skylights to the natural light to enlighten the massive space, and due to the appearing micro-climate, he was able to bring exotic plants into the interior.[14]

The courtyard was used as a centre, an orientation point and

as well a social meeting place. Juice bars, kiosks, radio booths and cafés provided the customer with the necessary refreshments and entertainment. Given the fact that it was located in the centre, where all the pedestrians paths and escalators were passing through, the central court became the most used space in the mall. *Southdale* was a complete success and was more visited because of its events and crowds than because of its retail offer, almost as Gruen had predicted and hoped.[15]

15 Ibid.

The European case

Even though shopping malls originated in the United States, they quickly arrived in Europe between the early 1950s and late 1970s. The emergence of this new type in Europe was primarily linked to the need of urban reconstruction after the Second World War. During the post-war period, European cities, were overcrowded and congested. For this reason, the development of new self-sufficient areas capable of rehousing people was necessary in order to decentralize the city centre.[16] Along with the fast modernization and industrialization, the need to redefine the collective space became primordial. In this sense, the shopping mall became a new collective centre for the citizens.

16 Gosseye, Avermaete, eds., *Shopping Towns Europe: Commercial Collectivity and the Architecture of the Shopping Centre, 1945-1975*, op. cit.

At this point, the relation between the origin of American and European malls is parallel, however disconnected. Though, the urban situation in Europe was completely different. The damage caused by the war led to a vast reconstruction within the cities, and moreover to the need of replanning the urban fabric. Therefore, the shopping mall in Europe, apart from being used as a tool for urban expansion and decentralization, also became a tool for urban regeneration. Unlike in America, where shopping malls were built horizontally in the infinitely vast suburban context, the European shopping malls were most often integrated in the urban fabric, and therefore more vertical. Two sizes of the shopping mall types were developed during the post-war period. The first was located in the urban context, defining a new centrality and urbanity within the urban fabric. This type was smaller, but more accurately adapted to its context compared to the big American model. The restrictions in terms of space caused a reduction of its footprint and an increasing of its height. Due to the general preference of cars, a multi-storey parking was always placed near this smaller type, even if public transports were also accessible due to its location.[17] The second one, located in a more suburban area, was mostly based on the principles of the American model. It was a bigger, de-contextualised building connected to the increasing highway network. However, the aim of the European mall, whether small or big, was to generate a new space for the citizen's collective life, by introducing a new modern urbanity.[18]

17 Dr. Cristian Suau and Margarita Munar Bauzá, "*The mall in the online shopping era*" (Study, The 4. International Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism, Amsterdam, Delft, 2009).

18 Ibid.

Glattzentrum and *Shoppi Tivoli*

19 Fabian Furter and Patrick Schoeck-Ritschard, "Vom Einkaufen zum Shoppen", in *Zwischen Konsumtempel Und Dorfplatz: Eine Geschichte Des Shoppingcenters in Der Schweiz* (Baden: Hier und Jetzt, 2014).

20 Christian Felix. 2000. "Die Landschaft der Einkaufzentren im schweizerischem Autobahnnet: Orte für ein neues Konsumverhalten" *Werk, Bauen + Wohnen.* Band 87. Heft 7/8: 24-30.

21 S.N. 1975. "Das Einkaufzentrum Glatt in Wallisellen ZH" *Schweizerische Bauzeitung.* Band 93. Heft 11: 135-141.

22 Christian Felix. 2000. "Die Landschaft der Einkaufzentren im schweizerischem Autobahnnet: Orte für ein neues Konsumverhalten", *Werk, Bauen + Wohnen.* Band 87. Heft 7/8: 24-30.

It is important to mention that Victor Gruen had a direct influence on the European scenario. Besides being a reference for architects which were involved in shopping centre design, he also directly participated to the conception of some of the first shopping malls in the European continent.

In this sense, interesting examples are the Swiss shopping malls. The war did not leave much physical damage in the Swiss cities compared to other European countries. However, they had similar starting points, as the major Swiss cities became more and more congested although on a much smaller scale. For this reason, during this particular time, also Switzerland began to plan new community centres in the outskirts of the major cities. The intention was to react against the precarious traffic conditions within the city centres. These new planned community centres, always containing commercial functions, would later on become the future shopping malls, inspired by the American model.[19]

For post-war Switzerland, the highway became the new symbol of modernization and wealth. Due to strategical reasons the new shopping malls were often positioned on the junctions of the highway network.[20] This demonstrated once again the importance of cars and highway system development which were strictly related to this type of building. However, the particularity of Switzerland was the fact that the development of car ownership had been slower compared to other countries. For this reason, the planning of the location of these new centres did not take into account only the highways, but as well the railways. The purpose was to place them in strategic locations, not far away from the main cities, in order to make these centres the most accessible as possible by the largest amount of people. Therefore, the public transport was also an integral part of the general planning.[21]

One of the first Swiss shopping malls was the *Shoppi* in Spreitenbach, near Zürich, which opened in 1970. Only three years later it was joined by a second shopping mall, *Tivoli* and together they created the biggest temple of consumption at the time: *Shoppi Tivoli*. Along with their vast cubic forms they created an extreme contrast to the rural and residential Spreitenbach. Gruen himself laid out the first plans for this shopping mall and advertised with it the model for future mall designs in Switzerland.[22]

Besides *Shoppi Tivoli*, Gruen was also involved in another Swiss shopping mall design: the *Glattzentrum.* This centre was built in 1975 in Wallisellen along with the construction of the highway N1, which was connecting Zürich with the surrounding communities. Due to its proximity to the highway and other major streets and due to the resulting lack of space, the parking was transformed into a multi-

storey car park which surrounded the mall. Consequently, it obtained an appearance of a fortress or a machine. Similar to the *Shoppi Tivoli*, Gruen also participated in the primal guiding ideas of *Glattzentrum*, which would later influence and guide the architects in charge of the project. [23]

After *Shoppi Tivoli*, *Glattzentrum* was one of the biggest and most famous shopping malls in Switzerland. Right after their openings, the respective locations received a boost in terms of population.[24] At first glance it seemed like an achievement as the principal aim was to create new communal centres. In reality, and almost immediately, the increase of these villages led to an opposite result.

As it has been exposed above, even with different sizes and situations, the need to create new communal centres was the basis of the general conception of the shopping mall. This type arose not only in America, but as well in Europe and more precisely in Switzerland with the intention of introducing new centralities for the collective life of citizens as a response to the urban expansion issues. However, using commercial functions as the principal means to gather people and create public life, had led to completely opposite and unexpected consequences.

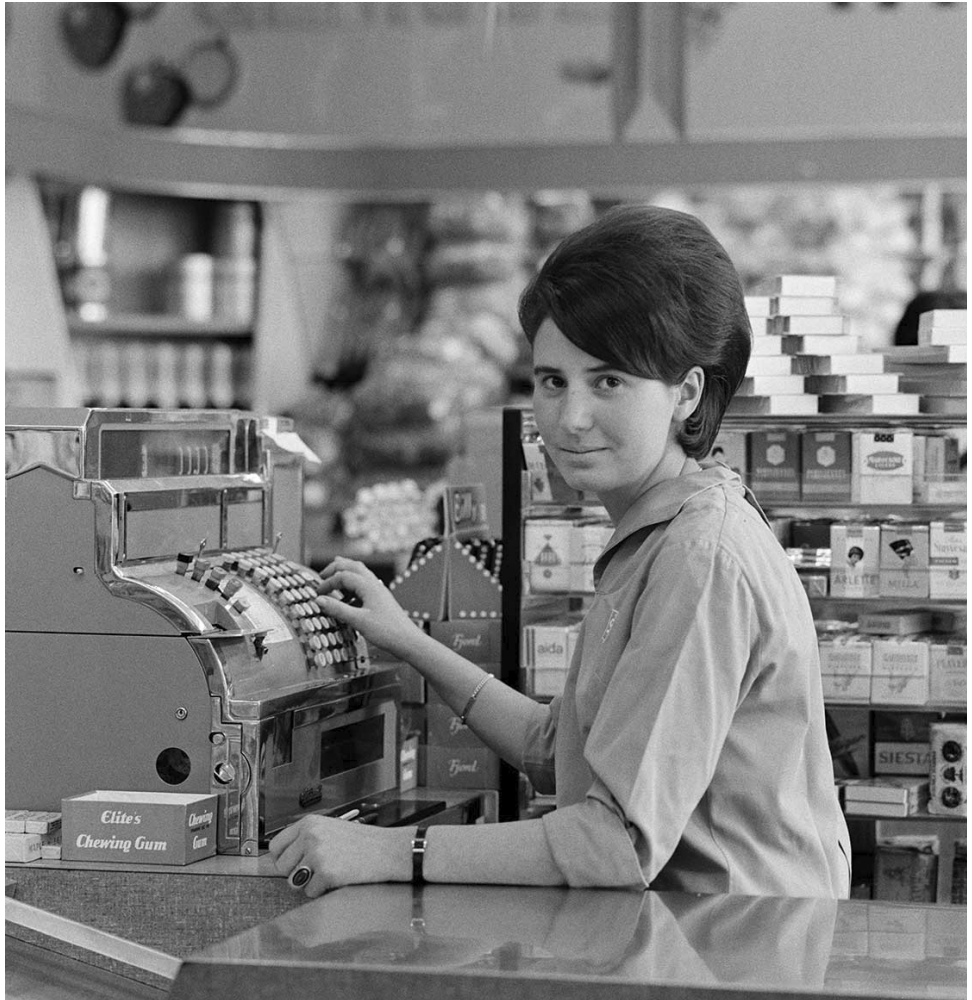23   S.N. 1975. "Das Einkaufzentrum Glatt in Wallisellen ZH" *Schweizerische Bauzeitung.* Band 93. Heft 11: 135-141.

24   Ibid.

Glattzentrum
Wallisellen

Shoppi
Spreitenbach

3.2 Shopping mall as retail

Consumer society

Shopping malls appeared in both continents as vehicles to build new collective spaces. Certainly, America has been an important source of inspiration for the designs of European shopping malls. However, America transmitted to Europe more than the building type itself, namely the emergence of the "mass consumer society".[25] The arrival of shopping malls, along with the development of capitalism, led to the definition of the consumer society, which defined the new post-war society.[26] Shopping malls had a profound impact on the post-war life, which was based on the duality between necessity and leisureliness. They generated a meeting point for the new consumer society, for which the principal aim was the physical consumption.

25 Janina Gosseye and Tom Avermaete, eds., *Shopping Towns Europe: Commercial Collectivity and the Architecture of the Shopping Centre, 1945-1975* (London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 19.

26 Ibid.

Public space as a medium

> Les Grands Magasins constituent une sorte de sommet de ce procès urbain, un véritable laboratoire et creuset social, où la collectivité (Durkheim, dans Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse) renforce sa cohésion, comme dans les fêtes et les spectacles.[27]

27 Jean Baudrillard, La Société de Consommation (Saint-Amand: E.P. Denoel, 1974), 265.

In 1970 Jean Baudrillard, in *La société de consommation*, described the "Grands Magasins" as the apotheosis of the above mentioned development of the consumer society. He stressed that within these types, the "collectivité" was used only as a means to strengthen the new consumer society.[28] At this point, it is quite ironical to restate that the genesis of shopping malls were anchored on the social and civic needs of public space. The paradox is that using consumer society as the principal medium to create public life, had led to the generation of an efficient retail machine. This latter, in its turn, used the public space as a means to enrich the consumerism's purposes. In other words, the public space went from being the principal aim to become a means to make profit.

28 Ibid.

From civic space to retail machine

Gruen did not predict this bad turn. However, already after the construction of *Southdale*, a lot of features that he planned, such as parks, schools or housing, had never been realized. Furthermore, *Southdale* became a model for other shopping malls located in the middle of a vast parking areas which did not include Gruen's collective functions.[29] As soon as Gruen stated this unpredictable circumstances, he left the United States in 1968, and went back to Vienna.[30] On the occasion of the Congress on Commerce and Urban Planning in Brussels during the same year, he stated:

> To me it seems unnecessary, illogical and tragic, that Europe and other regions should repeat the mistakes made in the United States rather than to make use of the new concepts which have arisen from our own shortcomings and our search for better methods.[31]

Contrarily to the United States, Europe tried more to prevent the growth of shopping malls as stand-alone buildings placed at the intersection of a major traffic network. In fact, in Europe the first shopping malls were mostly constructed as an integrated part of an already existing urban fabric and included the inner city structure in their reflections. However, the same phenomenon as in America affected Europe. The commercial interest took the upper hand over the architecture and the civic and public needs. This occurred when retail sector passed from the hands of architects and intellectuals, to the exclusive domain of private developers.[32]

A particular example of this case is noticeable in Switzerland. Even if *Shoppi Tivoli* and *Glattzentrum* were conceived in order to respond to the lack of communal centres within the urban expansion, they achieved a quite opposite result. At first, both locations received a boost in term of population soon after their openings. Due to the construction of *Shoppi Tivoli*, the number of residents of Spreitenbach increased from 1100 to 7200 within some years.[33] Also Wallisellen obtained an upsurge. But in spite of the massive growth of the two villages, the local pre-existing shops had been forced to close due to the strong competitors. The shopping mall type not only wiped out all the local shops and commercial activities in the near surroundings, but it also introduced a completely de-contextualised image into the rural landscape. However, along with the strange combination between rural life and modernity, the outcome had especially been the introduction of a new temple of consumption and thereby the

29 Gosseye, Avermaete, *Shopping Towns Europe: Commercial Collectivity and the Architecture of the Shopping Centre, 1945-1975, op. cit.*, 4-5.

30 Ibid.

31 Victor Gruen quoted in Günter Schütze, "Internationaler Kongress 'Handel und Städtebau' in Brüssel", *Der Aufbau* 21, no.2 (May 1967): 10-12.

32 Gosseye, Avermaete, *Shopping Towns Europe: Commercial Collectivity and the Architecture of the Shopping Centre, 1945-1975, op. cit.*, 21.

33 Furter, Schoeck-Ritschard, "Vom Einkaufen zum Shoppen", in *Zwischen Konsumtempel Und Dorfplatz: Eine Geschichte Des Shoppingcenters in Der Schweiz , op. cit.*, 48.

Shoppi
Spreitenbach

increase of consumer society's value. The promise of a new centre for the community was quickly forgotten. Even until now, the village of Spreitenbach is known as the ugliest village in Switzerland, which is mainly due to the application of the American shopping mall model.[34]

34 Ibid.

This brutal decrease of architectural and civic values transformed the shopping mall into a banal collection of stores with no ambitions of influencing communal activities. After decades of evolution between retail and civic functions, the consumer society gave born to a purely retail machine, starting to break up this age-old liaison. Further, it created a perfectly efficient machine, in which every single component was planned in order to make the more profit as possible.

Pretended public space

At this point, it is interesting to point out that different public facilities were used as an integrating part of this retail machine. Even if retail functions had overwhelmed the social aspects, we can not yet talk about the disappearance of these latter. On the contrary, it is important to notice that without public facilities filling the in-between of stores, the machine would not have achieved the same success. However, talking about *public space* would be quite incorrect, as the public facilities used within the retail machine are more likely to be defined as *pretended public space*.

When we talk about an actual public space, we intend it as a space which is laid out for citizens as a public service, without any constraints in terms of accessibility or time. A pretended public space, instead, is considerably different as it is owned by a private owner who can decide for whom and when the space is accessible. From an external point of view, the difference between the public space and the pretended one is almost imperceptible. This is where it can get dangerous, as the private owner always has a purpose, which is most of the time to maximise a profit.

The retail machine was primarily generated to make as much profit as possible. The same went for any features integrated in the system. Within the shopping mall, the pretended public space was an integral component of the mechanism that allows the running of the machine. Every small detail, from the little bench, to the plants, the light, the music, and the general attractive atmosphere, was precisely studied and designed in order to offer a place where consumers can spend the longest time and therefore as much money as possible.

The fine line that separates any public space from a pretended one, is that the aim of the first one is to offer a place where citizens are welcomed to stay in order to live their social life. Instead, the aim of the pretended public space is to offer a place where the consumer

society is welcomed to stay in order to consume as many goods as possible. In this sense, the pretended public space within a shopping mall was carefully planned in order to turn citizens into customers. The tricky part is that the physical appearance of these two spaces can be quite similar, if not identical, while the purpose is clearly not.

Today, the actual public spaces are more and more threatened as they are more often surveilled, their access predefined and as they are often linked to consumption. The Greek agora is frequently described as the ideal public space where one freely can gather and exchange political opinions. However, even there, groups of people were excluded.[35] On these grounds, an assumption can be made that the meaning of an actual public space changed over the years and will still change further until this latter completely disappears and is replaced by the pretended public space.

35 Marta Kwiatkowski, Stefan Breit,Leonie Thalmann, "Why the public space doesn't exist", in *Future Public Space*, GDI Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute, 2018.

An efficient machine

Along with the pretended public space, every single feature introduced within the shopping mall became an integrated mechanism of the retail machine, whose sole purpose is for the selling and buying. Everything was put in place in order to optimise the exchange of goods in time and space.

Nevertheless, these circumstances did not prevent the generation of an incredible attractive space. A fascinating optimized machine in which it became easy to get lost, due to the overwhelming surreal atmosphere. In fact, even if the shopping mall did not have a public purpose, it had been an incredible type, capable of creating remarkable spaces and generating the highest form of expression of the consumer society.

In the following chapter we will explore the different kinds of worlds that could take place within the walls of a shopping mall. It was a space where nothing was there by chance and everything was planned, but also where an unprecedented exceptional space was generated.

Shoppyland
Gäupark
Centre Chavannes

Shoppi Tivoli
Schönbühl
St. Jakobspark

The pictures within the
chapter 3.3 were taken in
Shoppi, Spreitenbach.

3.3. Shopping mall as image

The primal force of the shopping mall type was its permanent and fundamental necessity to attract customers. The richness of this pursuit of attractiveness was the consequent generation of an unprecedented world of images within the shopping mall environment.

The term *image* is to be understood as a visual reproduction of a real object. In this sense, the images are generated in order to produce attractive atmospheres capable of evoking several types of spaces and sensations depending on the observer. The different perceptions of the observer relied on its personal experience and on the degree of *imageability* offered by the given environment. The term *imageability* was defined by Kevin Lynch in *The Image of the City* as "that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer. It is that shape, colour, or arrangement which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment."[36]

In this regard, the degree of *imageability* of a shopping mall was what allowed to evoke a familiar image, such as city fragments, natural habitats, public facilities or any other ambiance. The perception of these images prevented the customers from the feeling of alienation within a completely new surrounding. Everything was pictured with the intention of allowing customers to recognize themselves as an integral part of a familiar shopping environment and therefore to spend the longest possible time in it.

Artificial environment

This world of images and goods could be defined as a completely artificial environment. Every single feature was designed in order to reproduce a familiar and attractive image, within which customers could feel comfortable to stay and therefore to consume. Along with several technological developments, two main technical features were essential starting points for the generation of the intended artificial environment. These were air conditioning and artificial lighting.

The introduction of air conditioning within public buildings took place around 1920 and revolutionised the shopping environments. It became a way to advertise and promote shops with slogans such as "leaving more refreshed than when they enter"[37] and promising to shoppers to be "instantly revived".[38] This artificial feature set off a new shopping era. Air conditioning was the basis of the shopping mall success. It allowed the creation of a completely protected

36 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), 9.

37 Sze Tsung Leong, and Srdjan Jovanovich Weiss. "Air Conditioning. ", in *Harvard Design School: Guide to Shopping: Project on the City 2*, by Tae-Wook Cha and Chuihua Judy Chung, (Taschen, 2001), 109.

38 Ibid.

environment which was capable to offer a constant comfortable climate independently from any outside weather conditions. For the first time in history, the ultimate shopping experience could finally be performed without any issues in terms of comfort. The natural environment which had always been a critical factor, was now overrun by the artificial one. The unpredictable natural issues were thus replaced by a constant controlled environment.

Parallel to air conditioning, fluorescent lighting was also a primal component of the shopping mall performance. Since the first fair buildings and with the technological improvements of that time, the use of glass and steel had always been adopted in order to offer the best natural lighting. The large surfaces of glass, letting enter as much light as possible, were no longer required. Even with a blind façade, a good lighting could finally be assured. Once again, with the introduction of fluorescent lighting in commercial buildings, the artificial environment got the better of the natural one. Further, the selling and buying were not anymore an exclusive daylight activity, but they could be extended until the dark hours of the evenings. In this sense, a constant daylight was artificially produced within the shopping mall, leaving no excuses to leave the temple of consumption.[39]

Possibly more than air conditioning, fluorescent lighting was able to seduce customers by replicating the feeling of home, cosiness, heart-warming and pleasure. Still, the combination of these two artificial features enabled the creation of different types of unprecedented atmospheres rich in comfort and visual suggestions.

Shelter

The very first innovation of shopping mall design was the introduction of a covering for the entire shopping complex. This revolutionary feature was what allowed to transform the shopping *centre* into a *mall* and to achieve tremendous success. Along with the generation of a completely new artificial environment, the shopping mall mainly became a place of refuge similar to a shelter. A shelter is here intended as "a place giving temporary protection from bad weather or danger."[40] In this sense, the shopping mall was a entirely safe environment, protected from any unforeseen events and provided a most improved and optimized space for consumers activities.

More generally and already since the historical time, the most successful types of retail spaces had been providing some kind of shelter for citizens: from the colonnades of the Roman forum, through the Italian walkways under the portico and until the galleries, offering a protected passage within the city. Sheltered spaces were the most capable of inviting citizens to stay. Therefore, they were also

39 M. Jeffrey Hardwick, "How Main Street stole Fifth Avenue's Glitter", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

40 "Shelter". Oxford University Press. Accessed December 12, 2019. https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/shelter.

transformed into a strategical retail purpose.

For the shopping mall to be a sheltered space was a primordial and revolutionary factor, because it was capable of protecting and attracting customers in an unprecedented way. For the first time and opposed to the precedent and other retail types, the shopping mall provided solely sheltered spaces. A vast temple for pedestrians, where neither cars nor other disturbances could bother the strolling customers and their shopping activities. This sheltered space, along with a constant comfortable climate and a pleasing permanent lighting, became the most attracting space capable of transforming pedestrians into customers inside an unprecedented world of images.

At this point, we can affirm that shopping malls did not generate a mere space for buying and selling. On the contrary, every single feature was introduced in order to create an artificial environment which was able to offer a multitude of images and suggestions. By doing so, the aim was to improve the customer's experience and therefore to increase the profit of the retail machine. In this respect, diverse images coexist within a shopping mall, enrich the perception of space and vary according to the experience of each observer-customer. In the following paragraphs, a personal analyse will be given regarding what we consider to be the principal and most interesting and attractive perceptions that a shopping mall environment have ever been able to produce. In this manner, we identified five principal images: labyrinth, prison, sanctuary, theatre and billboard.

3.3.1 Shopping mall as labyrinth

Once inside the shopping mall, a chaotic atmosphere was perceived, filled with different sort of forms, colours, amenities, advertisements and other various features. The eye of the customer was constantly entertained and distracted by the suggestive and attractive surrounding. This completely overwhelming atmosphere enabled the loss of perception of time and space. In this sense, the produced image recalled that of a labyrinth, in which it became easy to get lost in it.

Remembrance of city fragments

Somehow, the perception of the mall recalled images of the historical city, such as the remembrance of the narrow streets within the European centres. In the same way, the different stores within the mall were designed in a seemingly unplanned way, generating different types of passages and views. Several elements such as little squares, elevated walkways or sheltered spaces were planned in the image of the city. For instance, some direct inspirations could be found in the historical building types within the city centre. The galleries, which provide a covered passage from one place of the city to another, were re-interpreted in order to generate a vaulted covered passage from one store to another. Another instance is the Roman forum with its elevated walkways encompassing the open and central square. Similarly, the different stores of the malls were, often and in an analogous manner, organised around a central space and were connected by elevated walkways.[41]

These different features increased the perception of a richer space which offered different variations and possible interpretations. The seemingly unplanned and complex design arose the image of a maze. The need to recreate specific environments, such as a typical historical centre, evoked spaces belonging to our collective memory which influenced the customer to feel as they are in a familiar place.

In addition to the different sort of paths between the shops, other features were planned in order to enrich and at the same time optimize the mall. One of the most fascinating was the introduction of the escalators.

> As opposed to the elevator, which is limited in terms of the numbers and its very mechanism insists on *division*, the escalator accommodates and combines any flow, efficiently creates fluid transitions between one level and another,

and even blurs the distinction between separate levels and individual spaces.[42]

42 Leong, Weiss. "Escalator.", in *Harvard Design School: Guide to Shopping: Project on the City 2, op. cit.*, 337.

Escalators allowed a more fluent movement between the different floors by interconnecting the spaces and by almost blurring the barrier between them. Escalators were also introduced in order to optimize the movements and connections. In this way, escalators connected the multiple floors by intertwining and visually increasing the different possible paths. Consequently, this intertwining increased the perception of a labyrinth.

Along with escalators, mechanically controlled elements enabling an artificial environment were also a part of the powerful image of the maze. In fact, the combination of large interior spaces with lights, passages, escalators and natural features enabled a vast expansion in depth, in which different human scales coexisted almost as in an urban context.

To some extend, it could be stated that this research of complexity aimed to recover the definition of the *flâneur*. According to this latter, the pedestrian was free to choose his own path within the countless streets of the historical city. In reality, the shopping mall environment produced the exact opposite. The pedestrian, or in this case, customer had the illusion to choose among different paths within the vast space of the mall, according to its personal desire. In reality, every size, shape and shop location were carefully planned in order to optimize the customer's itinerary. The aim was to lead the customer to pass by the biggest amount of shops as possible.

In this sense, a pedestrian within the mall became an anti-*flâneur*, or a forced customer deprived from almost any right of personal choice. The mall became a labyrinth with only one single practicable path, which the customer was forced to follow without even noticing it.

A planned maze

In this sense, the interior environment, capable of evoking a chaotic atmosphere similar to the one of the historical city centre, was actually everything except unplanned. In fact, every single features was studied in order to optimize the space and therefore to maximise the profit. Precisely like the planning of a maze, the shopping mall interior was designed in order to give to the observer the rather positive feeling of being overwhelmed and lost within the space. In reality, the space was rigidly structured and created optimized and strategical paths, which were accurately studied to lead the customer's itinerary. In fact, this

chaos was purely an image, constructed in order to evoke familiar urban situations, which were in reality systematically planned.

A specific example of this strategy was the planning of the so-called anchor stores. The anchor stores were the biggest stores and the most popular destinations of the mall. For this reason, their position was strategically planned. They were never placed one next to the other, but they were often situated at the two opposite extremities of the mall. In this way, customers which needed to walk from one anchor store to the other, were obliged to cross the entire mall. Therefore, all the smaller stores along the path increased their probabilities to attract and interrupt customers.

This specific configuration drew inspiration from another historical type, which was the gallery. The *Galleria Vittorio Emanuele* in Milan was based on a layout which employed a similar arrangement. The gallery was placed between two main anchors, the *Duomo* and *La Scala* theatre. By connecting these two monuments, the gallery offered a strategical covered passage. The pedestrians who wanted to walk from one point to the other, had to pass in front of a series of shop windows located within the gallery. This resulted in the increase of the probability for pedestrians to stop and admire the exposed merchandise and eventually to make a purchase.[43] The same strategical principle was re-used within the shopping mall design. A particular example was the Swiss mall in Spreitenbach, in which Coop, Migros and Manor were placed at the extremities of the accumulation of minor shops, and became actual anchor stores.[44]

Consequently, shopping malls got inspiration from historical types in order to evoke images, but above all to improve their profit. This essential need of attraction along with the constant refinement of the retail machine enabled the creation of such an interesting space.

In order to animate the diving into a shopping maze, the artificial environment did not provide any temporal or spatial reference concerning the outside. Similar to a labyrinth and opposed to a city, any exterior reference mark was completely lost. The shopping mall became an interior and de-contextualized labyrinth, that could be anywhere and at any possible time. Everything was planned in order to lose the feeling of time and space. One these grounds, once inside consumers could immerse themselves into a purely devoted space for consumerism by accepting and forgetting its artificiality.

43 Matz, *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums, op. cit.,* 85.

44 Werner Huber, 'Vierzig Jahre "Iädele" Im Shopping Center',in *Hochparterre: Zeitschrift Für Architektur Und Design* 23, no. 10 (2010).

3.3.2 Shopping mall as prison

No clocks existed within the walls of the mall and the permanent artificial lighting did not provide any clue about the hour of the day. Due to the fact that the blind façades did not allow any external view, once again any form of distraction within the interior shopping environment was avoided. If the mall provided a natural lighting, it was only through the ceiling. In this way the shopping mall increased the illusion of being in a natural environment, without distracting the customers from the artificial space of the mall. This atmosphere evoked the perception of a prison, in which everything was carefully planned in order to force customers to stay longer and to make more purchases.

Voluntary prisoners

The shopping mall's customers were never forced to enter by someone else, though, they voluntarily decided to experience this artificial environment by becoming *voluntary prisoners* of the shopping mall. The definition of the *voluntary prisoners* has its origin in the *Exodus* project by Rem Koolhaas along with Madelon Vreisendorp, Elia and Zoe Zenghelis in 1972[45]. The project was characterized by a gigantic strip enclosed by two walls, offering an alternative urban condition in order to escape from the unbearable city centre of London. The strip was "marked by an intense metropolitan desirability, and therefore capable, in the aims of the authors, of generating an exodus away from the historical city."[46] Therefore, citizens had the freedom to choose to be imprisoned within the new shelter of the *Exodus*[47], being aware that once inside they will no longer be able to leave. By accepting this self-imprisoning, they also declared a significant need of escaping the existing condition of the city.

In the same way, the shopping mall provided a sheltered space offering a way out from any exterior circumstances. It was a space which was planned in order to attract as many customers as possible and to encourage them to stay and to consume. By entering the mall, the customers somehow accepted these conditions, becoming a temporary but voluntary prisoners. Furthermore, they voluntarily chose to abandon every part of their own identity in order to become consumers within a completely artificial world. This was first of all an incredible means to escape the external reality.

In order to push customers to accept the conditions, the general shopping environment needed to take advantage of any feature that had the potential to increase the attractiveness of the space. From

45 Roberto Gargiani, *Rem Koolhaas / OMA: The Construction of Merveilles* (Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2019), 7.

46 Ibid.

47 "Situation in which many people leave a place at the same time", From the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2015. https://www.oxford-learnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/exodus.

this perspective, some strategical elements were planned in order to transform customers into voluntary prisoners, attracting them to stay and buy the biggest amount of goods as possible.

The Gruen Transfer

One of the most popular and efficient attracting strategies of the shopping environments was, what had been named the *Gruen Transfer*.[48] This term indicated the process by which a customer could get bewitched by the appearance of a store and its surrounding, to the point of originating within the customer a persistent and unconscious need to shop. The specific term appeared due to the first shop window designed by Victor Gruen, whose name became the definition of one of the most efficient selling strategies for retail spaces.

48   Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*, op. cit., 2.

> You must make this window-shopper push your door open and make him take a step, the one step, which changes him from a window-shopper into a customer. A good store front tries to make his step as easy as possible for him, and tries not to let him even notice that he takes such an important step.[49]

49   Victor Gruen quoted in Hardwick, *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*, op. cit., 8.

More precisely, the *Gruen Transfer* performed in three different phases was capable of gradually transforming the pedestrian into a consumer. First of all, a pedestrian passing in front of a store, initially deprived from any intention to buy something, would be attracted by an appealing shop window. Once his attention was caught, it directly turned him into a window shopper. Secondly, the shop window was strategically designed in order to guide the by now window shopper through the displayed goods, from the exterior until the sheltered entrance of the store. The more goods and the closer the goods to the entrance, the more attractive they became. At this point, the entrance door called on the window shopper to enter and to pursue the observation of the displayed goods. The third and last phase was the entering into the store and being welcomed by an even more appealing merchandise. That was when the window shopper would be transformed into a customer. In other words, the *Gruen Transfer* described how retail architecture could manipulate shoppers by applying a strategical planned space and an attractive image.

An example of this strategy was the very first shop designed by Gruen for *Lederer de Paris* on the Fifth Avenue in New York. The principle applied was simple and efficient. By placing the shop in retreat from the walkways, the front of the shop became a single portico

capable of sheltering people from the busy walkway. In this way, pedestrians could admire the displayed goods without stopping the movement on the sidewalk. In other words, the arcade functioned as a fish rod[50], by interrupting the pedestrians' journey and transforming them into enchanted customers.

A similar principle was also reproduced within the shopping malls. The shelter was not only used as a general device to protect the entire building, but it was as well introduced as an element of the interior shop designs. The different shops provided a recess from the principle passage and created an entrance area where all the merchandise were displayed. In this way, customers who wanted to admire the exposed items were obligated to enter the interior of the shop which increased the probability to actually buy something.[51]

Providing attractive images along with a sheltered space, was the most efficient and attractive strategy for a shopping mall interior. The mall was by definition a sheltered space and the images it provided were the most variable and attractive. The aim of these strategical techniques was to influence people to buy as many goods as possible without anybody noticing it. But above all, the aim was to make them believe that their purchase depended on their personal choice. In this sense, the customers were unaware that they had no chance of becoming voluntary prisoners. On the contrary, they were prisoners under the strong influence of the retail machine.

A neutral environment

The *Guen Transfer* strategy for shop windows, employed a utterly larger scale within the shopping mall environment. The aim of attraction led to the definition of a totally controlled environment. Every single detail was planned in order to exclusively highlight the items capable to increase the commercial profit. In this sense, any feature which could distract the eye of the customer from the commercial target, was explicitly designed as neutral as possible. In the same way as the *Gruen Transfer*, the customer was deluded to be in the power to choose which element to contemplate. In reality, his attention was attracted by items which were planned and meant to be contemplated which resulted in becoming a prisoner of his own contemplation.

This commercial strategy led to the creation of a number of items explicitly conceived to be as unattractive and repetitive as possible. For this reason an uniform space was the basis of the shopping mall layout. In this way, commercial items could be more easily highlighted which would catch the customer's attention.

As previously noticed, in order to ensure a remarkable shopping

50 Hardwick, "Escaping from Vienna to Fifth Avenue", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*, op. cit.

51 Ibid.

experience, the mall provided an artificial environment based on the utilization of air conditioning and fluorescent lighting. These technical features occupied a large physical space within the structure of the mall. However, their success was ensured by their physical invisibility. In order to generate an attractive but comfortable environment, their presence should only be felt, but visually hidden.

For this reason the use of Vierendeel beams and dropped ceilings became primordial elements for shopping mall design. The beams ensured the complete liberation of the space and minimal structural requirements. On these grounds, every technical element was hidden within the beams. This allowed the space to be exclusively devoted to the shopping activities, without distracting the customer's attention from consuming. For this reason, a completely open plan, which was based on a generic grid, was the foundation for a strategical spatial design for the mall.[52]

Once the space was freed, the plastered ceilings were added consisting of multiple quadrangular acoustic panels and lights, which were hiding all the technical elements, such as air ducts, sprinklers and cable tangle.[53] In this way, customers would only notice a smooth and continuous ceiling, or even better, they would not notice the ceiling at all, being able to solely focus on consuming.

The principle of minimizing the construction in order to maximize the shopping space, was inspired from the structure of the *Maison Domino* by Le Corbusier. In the same way as Le Corbusier minimized the structure for a dwelling, the mall designers did the same for the shopping mall.[54] In this way, the mall generated a purely devoted space for consumerism, which intended to transform citizens into consumers and therefore, voluntary prisoners.

Control

The other essential element that evoked the image of a prison was the establishment of a permanent control system. With this revolutionary introduction, the shopping mall environment provided a completely new form of protected space, which revolutionised the way of living in our public spaces.[55]

There were two types of control systems within a mall. The first one was the physical and visual control with the introduction of surveillance cameras. These latter increased the feeling of protection within the space. The customers, or voluntary prisoners, accepted to be permanently watched at the expense of feeling protected. Already, in the 18th century similar concepts appeared. Jeremy Bentham published his book *Panopticum* where he imagined a new architectural type in combination with a control system. The concept of the circular

52 Leong, Weiss. "Escalator*"*, in *Harvard Design School: Guide to Shopping: Project on the City 2, op. cit.*

53 Hardwick, "How Main Street stole Fifth Avenue's Glitter", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, op. cit.*

54 Leong, Weiss. "Escalator*"*, in *Harvard Design School: Guide to Shopping: Project on the City 2, op. cit.*, 351.

55 Leong, "Ulterior Spaces.*"*, in *Harvard Design School: Guide to Shopping: Project on the City 2, op. cit.*

shaped prison enabled the aim that the prisoners, without knowing that they were even observed, were controlled by a singular guard. This was made possible, as the inmates acted as if they were being observed at all time and from several guards.[56] This can be compared to the surveillance cameras of today.

With the emerging of digitalization the visible surveillance shifted to the invisible one. The second type of control was an invisible and permanent supervision of what had been bought and sold within the mall, in order to control and improve the commercial exchanges. This was made possible along with the new technological inventions, which allowed the creation of a network system designed to control all the factors that influenced people to shop.[57] Therefore, every single detail of the shopping experience could be supervised, and moreover improved in order to achieve a perfected result.

> Control space provides the infrastructural support for the enjoyment, inhabitation, and experience of contemporary public spaces. It provides the invisible mechanisms that allow us to exist smoothly within enticingly packaged environments offering a total engagement of the sense - where sights, smells, sounds, and feelings are engineered, refined, calculated, calibrated and deployed for maximum persuasive effect. Control space is the attempt to ensure that we all become consumers.[58]

That brings us back to the concept of pretended public space, which was previously exposed. In fact, the shopping mall simulated the appearance of a public space, while in reality it created an entirely new mode of protected space which was permanently controlled and surveilled, similar to a prison.

In light of these facts, the image of a prison could be strongly perceived within a shopping mall environment. It was evoked by different type of features, from the visual and physical ones to the more invisible but still omnipresent features. The fascinating of this statement is to stress the force of attraction of the mall, capable of prevail upon customers wills and behaviours. The power of persuasion of the shopping mall environment reached incredible results to the point of converting citizens into active customers and voluntary prisoners without them even knowing.

56 Kwiatkowski, Breit, Thalmann, "Liberty vs Security", in *Future Public Space, op. cit.,* 31-34.

57 Leong, "...And Then There Was Shopping*",* in *Harvard Design School: Guide to Shopping: Project on the City 2, op. cit.*

58 Leong, "Ulterior Spaces.*",* in *Harvard Design School: Guide to Shopping: Project on the City 2, op. cit.,* 787.

3.3.3 Shopping mall as sanctuary

Within the space of a mall, customers could unexpectedly pass from being in the middle of an apparent natural environment to a completely different one, full of colours, objects, arts, and entertainment. These overwhelming surroundings coexisted within the space of the mall, offering the perception and the functioning of a sanctuary. The sanctuary is intended as a "protection or a safe place, especially for someone or something being chased or hunted."[59] In this sense, these images had the fundamental purpose to offer a refuge and at the same time a way out from the exterior troubles of life. The mall became a destination meant to escape from the reality and to dive into an unprecedented world of entertainment.

The primal precondition, in order to evoke an atmosphere which reflected a sanctuary, was to transmit the feeling of being in a safe and protected space. As previously seen, the physical shelter was the basis for the shopping mall conception. However, the sanctuary, being more than a physical image, enabled also a feeling of protection, well-being and moreover amusement.

Therefore, the sanctuary is a space which transmits serenity but also offers entertainment. It enables every kind of experiences which allow the escaping from the heaviness of life.

Oasis

One of the images capable of evoking a natural space and ensuring the feeling of protection was the oasis. Along with all the technologies that allowed the machine to run, the introduction of natural features was essential to create a protected and familiar atmosphere. The image of a relaxing oasis for the well-being of the customers was once again an attraction force. The insertion of rest benches next to flower beds, information desks under tree groups and site plans next to fountains increased the shopping mall's image of a sanctuary.

In this respect, the shopping mall's conception claimed to be rather a large park with individual shops than a cluster of shops with singular natural elements. A greenery was often used to act as a buffer between the shops, the resting places and the pedestrian walkway. This made the strolling through the shopping mall even more pleasant. Often, a central place was provided, which was employed with fountains and artificial landscaping, in order to bring the feeling of being outdoors inside a protected space. This artificial oasis was therefore accessible during any time of the day and independently from any

outside weather conditions. This image was not only provided by vegetation, but also by other elements, such as art and sculptures. Another essential feature was the lighting. Especially during the dark hours of the day, the shopping mall turned into a lighthouse, inviting customers to enter and to enjoy the warmth of the protected shelter. More than anyone could have ever imagined, a strategic lighting had an important impact on affecting customers psychologically and emotionally. While a bad lighting could cause discomfort and stress, the use of a strategical lighting could significantly improve the attraction of the space and consequently increase the profit within the mall.[60] This strategy was applicable in a similar manner also for the natural features.

The most successful example of this kind was the interior courtyard of *Southdale centre*. Gruen designed the court with the aim of creating an attractive and natural ambience for customers in order to invite them to stay for the longest time possible. By offering a central court, he wanted to turn the shopping into a desirable activity, where it could be possible to enjoy the commercial environment. On these grounds, the courtyard assumed the role of a protected oasis, which had a remarkable success. Especially during bad weather days, while the stores on the strip or the downtown stores remained empty, *Southdale* was almost overran by customers.[61]

However, *Southdale*'s courtyard was one of its kind. Its model was soon later abandoned because the covered courtyard, even if successful, was not an efficient solution in terms of optimization of cost and space. Later on, the central court was replaced by rather narrow paths where the shops were organized on each side. This latter solution allowed the contemplation of shop windows simultaneously on both sides, optimizing customers' time and the space of the mall. However, the attracting features of the court did not vanish, but they were relocated within several smaller courts or narrow paths of the mall.[62]

By creating an apparent atmosphere of an oasis, which was certainly missing in the suburban landscape, the shopping mall manipulated customers to stay. Especially by introducing benches in every corner along with other resting amenities, customers would almost never tire. Consequently, this had a positive effect on the sales figures. On these grounds, it is interesting to notice that the image of the oasis was certainly created in order to attract customers and maximize the profit. Still, it also increased the quality of the space.

The generation of an artificial environment and the introducing natural features, intensified the perception of the oasis as one of the most artificial images within the mall.

60 Wall, "Merchandise is the Master - The Building, the Tool", in *Victor Gruen, From Urban Shop to New City* op. cit.

61 Hardwick, "Planning in the New "Suburbscape", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, op. cit.*

62 Ibid.

Amusement Park

Along with the atmosphere of an oasis, the sanctuary could also generate a completely different but complementary environment. The sanctuary provided a feeling of protection, and therefore allows the isolation from the external reality. In this sense, another principal aim was to provide a space capable of entertaining and distracting the customers from the outside world. This purpose evoked the image of an amusement park, where everything was designed in order to enjoy the present moment, leaving all other kinds of problems behind.

It is interesting to notice that the first precursor of the shopping mall appeared during the World War II. Especially within this period the need of escaping from the reality was felt the most. In this sense, there was no better activity than walking through a lively shopping mall and being submerged by the glittery and dreamy world, which it was able to offer. The different coloured features, shapes, and lights were the medium to provide excitement and amusement. Consequently, the shopping mall was not only a place to shop, but also to have fun and to enjoy. The mall became an amusement park where customers could buy goods and at the same time saunter and hang out. Other programs besides purchasing were added in order to entertain customers, such as sales weeks, shows, concerts and every sorts of public gathering events.[63]

63 Hardwick, "How Main Street stole Fifth Avenue's Glitter" and "Wartime Planning for Postwar Prosperity", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, op. cit.*

Within this picture, the challenge was to create a public and community-minded centre where the customers could gather and spend their free time together. In this way, the mall was not only a destination for shopping, but it could also be a location for other sorts of entertainment. Of course, the purpose to create an environment where customers could enjoy themselves within a commercial space became a vital source of income for the mall.

The interesting result of the consumption of entertainment comprised that the shopping mall turned into a self-contained city. Everything within the mall was designed for the purpose of creating a perfectly planned urban environment. Hence, it provided every kind of possible fulfillments of needs and desires for customers. Similar to a city, it was possible to walk from one place to another. Only pedestrians were allowed inside, however, the mall was only reachable by car. This particularity increased the image of an amusement park as a space which was only accessible by car and which was an impressive artificial and enjoyable environment designed only for pedestrians whose aim was to forget the reality.

By arranging fountains, art, sculptures, benches, crowds and other urban amenities, an attempt to introduce a new urbanity was made within the rather sleepy suburban area. However, the result was the perception of a completely artificial urbanity which was similar to an

amusement park. The mall was visited in order to live an artificial form of urban life which was missing within the real suburban context. However, the capacity of this false urbanity to entertain customers was entirely sufficient.[64]

64 Ibid.

In the same way as an amusement park, the mall had one particular divergence that highlighted the discrepancy between the actual inner city and the mall. This latter was too perfectly designed. It turned out to be a better downtown than the real downtown itself. Furthermore, recreating a newer and better version of downtown did not rely only on its physical appearance, but also on the simulation of its ambiance.[65] Opposed to the dangerous and chaotic downtown, the shopping mall was a safe and well-ordered environment. The customer entered in the shopping mall as in a Disney theme park, accepting its condition of artificiality as the major factor of entertainment.

65 Claudia Matz, *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums* (Baden-Baden: Tectum Verlag, 2018), 293-316.

However, the feeling that an amusement park or a mall transmitted was falsehood. Too perfect, too coloured, too precisely designed, and just too perfect to be real. Yet, in reality the shopping mall was not more artificial than any other feature within the city. The perception of artificiality was generated by the reproduction of a perfected image of the city, that did not exist in the physical reality. The fact that the space was designed as an image of the city in order to be attractive, safe, clean and charming, generated a nostalgic feeling due to the fact that the real city was often the opposite.[66] In his book *The Malling of America: An inside Look at the Great Consumer Paradise,* William Severini Kowinski stated that the real and physical world animates the future customers, to enter the mall where they are sold an artificial and glittery dream world.

66 Barry Maitland, *Shopping Malls - Planning & Design* (England: Construction Press, 1985), 90-91.

Hence, consumers were more drawn to the perfect copy than to its original. This phenomenon can be still stated today.[67]

67 Matz, *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums, op. cit.,* 293-316.

The ultimate goal was to offer a place in which consumerism can be enjoyed by leaving all other kinds of problems behind. However, what was ensured was, that the more lively the mall became, the more profitable the purchase was. In a way, there is no point to blame shopping malls and amusement parks to be too artificial, as the artificiality was their precondition of existing. They were meant to recreate an ambiance capable of offering people the best space for entertainment and amusement. In this manner, there is no better way than offering a perfect model of urbanity, which could only exist within its imitation.

3.3.4 Shopping mall as theatre

Everything inside the mall was staged and performed in the likeness of a theatre. Once inside, a world of performances, stages and lights revealed itself to the customer, who played the role of audience and actor at the same time. The perfectly planned design turned the interior space into a scene, evoking the image of a theatre. The possibility to choose between watching the show and at the same time being part of it, was the attraction force of this theatrical atmosphere. This alternation between observing and performing was the basis of the shopping mall strategy. It was designed in order to be a theatrical scene that carefully staged every important stage props in order to attract the eye and the money of the audience.

Stage

In order to successfully seduce and entertain the audience, everything needed to be staged. The principal stages within the mall were the shop windows. These latter displayed attractive items and goods, which in turn played the role of the actors. The window glass functioned as the curtain and the customers acted as the audience. In this picture, the mall designer was the director of the play, having the complete control over the scene.[68]

The shop windows were therefore the essential stage sets. In this manner, they needed to be as visible and open as possible. Therefore, the most performed materials were glass and mirrors. The transparency of the glass allowed the complete visibility of the stage, while the mirrors enabled the creation of different perceptions of the space, distorting or expanding it according to the purpose. The stage needed to be seducing and efficient at the same time and to be capable of attracting the eye of the audience in order to lead it into a dreamy world of consumption.

This theatrical strategy was therefore also applicable on any shop window on the strip or on the narrow city centre streets. Some of the first examples of this kind of strategy were the early shop windows designed by Gruen for the first chain stores. The strong passion for theatre was often reflected in Gruen's work, who developed on this basis the essence of the chain stores' identity.[69] First of all, a large sign marked the chain store's location. After that, a vast shop window displayed as many goods as possible towards the street, followed by large arcades which sheltered pedestrians passing by. Finally, the whole was highlighted by a bright and attractive lighting. The appearance of

68 Alex Wall, "Commerce and the city", in *Victor Gruen, From Urban Shop to New City,* (Barcelona: Actar, 2005).

69 Ibid.

70 Matz, "Das Warenhause", in *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums, op. cit.,* 293-316.

71 Kowinski, "Secrets of the shopping mall", in *The Malling of America: An inside Look at the Great Consumer Paradise,* 1st ed, (New York: W. Morrow, 1985).

these shop entrances were analogue to the ones of a theatre. Later on, new chain stores emerged soon after and overshadowed the first chain stores by being higher, bigger and brighter. Also other commercial spaces, such as the ones of a downtown department store or a mall, have been compared to the interior spaces of a theatre. Especially the department progressively developed as a stage, on which the goods and customers played the role as actors.[70]

In the case of the shopping mall, the same strategy went also beyond the scale of the single shop window by comprising the entire building. The mall, therefore, did not employ any indications of the outside world, such as clocks or daylight in order for the space to resemble a theatre.[71] In this sense, the shopping activity became an entertaining performance which became almost more amusing for citizens than seeing a play at the theatre.

Audience and actors

The entire shopping mall became the stage on which everything was performed in order to attract and entertain customers. To enact an attractive stage, every feature inside the mall, including the customers, needed to be as visible as possible. This meant that also the customers played an active part in the stage set, balancing between being audience and actors.

This phenomenon was also illustrated by the group *Archizoom Associati* with the drawing *teatro d'incontro ideologico* of the series *teatro impossibile*. The concept of the project illustrated, how two audiences on tribunes which are separated by a curtain, are going to face each other as soon as the curtain drops and then realise that actually they are playing the role as actors.[72]

72 Roberto Gargiani and Archizoom associati, *Archizoom associati: 1966-1974 : de la vague pop à la surface neutre* (Milano: Electa, 2007). 87-90.

73 Kowinski, *The Malling of America: An inside Look at the Great Consumer Paradise, op. cit.,* 71.

The visibility was the basis of this conception of a commercial space. It was primarily due to the simple fact that people attract people. In a sense, the shopping mall could also be compared to a TV. "The mall is primarily a visual experience. It's a TV that you walk around in."[73] When pedestrians passing by a shop window and were seeing other customers purchasing, they were more likely to enter and to do so as well. In other words, the more crowded the space was, the more attractive it became. This was due to two main reasons. The first one was the simple fact that people needed a space to gather for social interaction. Secondly, the more people were located in a store, the more occurrences took place on the scene. This increased the entertainment for the spectators who would in an empty space simply be bored and leave.

In order to achieve this goal, the design of large spaces along with the use of glass and transparency was primordial. The precursor of

this theatrical strategy was the exhibition building *Crystal Palace*, which was built around 1851 in London. "In the Crystal Palace, which exemplified structural invention and horticultural experiment, the open display of commodities in a spectacular environment pre-empted the modern shopping experience."[74] This building was conceived to exhibit and therefore it offered for the first time in history a completely free and vast space, where a mass of people could gather at the same time. The revolutionary aspect comprised that people became themselves actors within the space. The interior empowered them not only to see but to be seen.

However, the *Crystal Palace* was not the first space which was based on this. Already the medieval market square contained not only the sole function of trading, but it was more a gathering space which functioned a stage for self-expression and self-staging.[75]

In the same way, these kind of spaces were recreated by the shopping mall designers. The previously mentioned courtyard of the *Southdale centre* illustrates this well, even if in a smaller scale. It could be stated that both of these spaces were actually contained stages for actors and spectators at the same time. This ambiguity turned to be the mall's attracting force.

On these grounds, the use of glass was not only employed to display the merchandise but also for customers to see and to be seen, which had the intended effect of attracting people. For this reason, shopping malls often made use of the unwritten law to stage the interior spaces. By reducing the space between the stores and introducing mirrors in order to expand the perception of space, the environment seemed to be much more crammed than it actually was.[76] For this reason, one can talk about a staged space which is capable of faking a crowded one. In this manner, the mall attracted people by creating an illusion which is a rather a typical characteristic of a theatre scene.

74 Wyman, "Crystal Palace", in *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping. Project on the City 2, op. cit.*, 229.

75 Matz, "Der mittelalterliche Mark-das Zentrum des Handels", in *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums, op. cit.*

76 Wall, "Merchandise is the Master - The Building, the Tool", in *Victor Gruen, From Urban Shop to New City, op. cit.*

Spotlight

As in any theatrical performance, the lighting was the key component in order to enable the success of a play. Without a good and strategic lighting, even the best theatrical performance would simply fail. Two principal types of lighting were used in the theatre and as well in the mall. The first one, was the general lighting that created the desired atmosphere on the scene. In the mall, the fluorescent light was mainly used for this particular lighting, which provided the overall comfort of a well-enlightened space. This light invited customers to stay by generating a comfortable atmosphere. The second type of lighting was the more intensive spotlight, which enlightened particular elements of the scene that needed to catch the attention of the audience. The

spotlight was a key factor in the theatre, just as within the mall. Similarly, the spotlight was directed on the features that needed to attract the attention of the customers.

While the incandescent light of the spotlight illuminated the more prestigious goods, the background fluorescent light did not mean to attract too much attention. In general, the light intensity of the background light was exactly just sufficient to enable visibility, allowing the spotlights to be added. Without this differentiation, all surfaces would be enlightened by the same intensity and colour. In this way, the customers would not be able to distinguish the less important merchandise from the more essential one. In a sense, the use of strategical lighting went even further than the simple generation of a well-enlightened environment. It was notably designed in order to create a particular attractive atmosphere, capable to entertain and emphasize particular items or spaces according to the specific purpose. In fact, a strategic lighting had a tremendous impact on affecting customers psychologically and emotionally. While a bad lighting caused discomfort, the use of a seducing lighting significantly improved the profit of the mall.[77]

77   Ibid.

This dramatic representation of goods with light and shadow could have been copied from any theatre production or Hollywood set. In this sense, the design of shopping malls evoked not only the image but also the essence of a set of a theatre. The richness of the mall was not only the generation of strong images but moreover the reinterpretation of historical configurations and artistic arrangements. More than any other type of retail buildings, the mall was capable to stage various types of elements which were performed in a perfect planned play, rich in images and entertainment.

3.3.5 Shopping mall as billboard

Along with the rich production of spaces and atmospheres capable of evoking different types of images within the interior of the shopping mall, the entire building could also be considered as an image itself. The attractive colours, lights, letterings and pictures were actually advertisements which filled the interior space of the mall. However, not only the interior space functioned as an attracting billboard, but the entire mall.

A new monument

78 Denise Scott Brown, Robert Venturi, 2000 "An Interview with Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi", Interview by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Rem Koolhaas, Geneva, August 2000, *Harvard Design School: Guide to Shopping: Project on the City 2, op. cit.*, 593.

> The essential element of architecture for our time is no longer space, it's no longer abstract form in industrial drag; the essential architectural element is iconography.[78]

Being a commercial building type involved an emphasis on the communication sector. For this reason, a great amount of words and symbols were used for commercial persuasion. In this manner, it is interesting to stress what Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour exposed in their book *Learning from Las Vegas* which was published in 1972. They described the different forms of communication used by various types of commercial spaces within the course of history. They pointed out that since the historical city, every commercial type had always been based on different forms of communications. For instance, the middle east bazaar or the medieval market square contained no physical signs due to the fact that the communication in these particular cases worked through proximity, smell and oral persuasion.[79] In this manner, the attractive signs inviting future customers to enter, were not only visual but implied also the other senses. Considering the evolution of commercial types previously exposed, the main commercial streets within the cities needed to introduce visual communications, such as shop windows or exterior physical signs, in order to attract people's attention from the street. With the strip and the shopping mall, the essential difference concerned the sudden change of scale and context. Notably with the arrival of cars and highways, the commercial building had to find new ways to communicate and advertise itself by adapting to the new scale and pace of the surrounding.

79 Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000).

Contrary to the commercial streets, the façades of the mall were completely blind, as both merchandise and architecture were disconnected from the road. In fact, the first and main gaze of the

building was from a distant highway and from a rapid traffic. For this reason, its exterior architecture needed to be as neutral as possible, in order to be recognisable and effective from the highway.

An interesting parallel on was given by Venturi, Brown and Izenour in the previously mentioned book. According to them, the movement crossing of an Italian piazza illustrates the movement between high enclosing forms. On the contrary, the movement through a high-speed highway landscape corresponds to the one through an expansive and dispersive landscape.[80]

Using the outer appearance as advertisement was not necessary a novelty. Already in the early 30's Oscar Nitzchke designed the *maison de la publicité* for a hypothetical site on the *Avenue des Champs-Élysées* in Paris. However, its façade was mainly based on advertising and was an expression of a "pure media machine".[81] He even went further by using digital screens as advertising surfaces.

On the basis of this comparison, the mall became a graphic sign on the vast highway landscape. Opposed to the chain stores on the strip which were marked by big signs, lights and colours, the mall was a monumental landmark in a low-rise region. Its force of attraction was therefore mainly due to the fact that it stood out of its surrounding.[82]

In this manner, the mall belonged somehow in both categories at the same time: the *Duck* and the *decorated Shed*. According to Venturi, Brown and Izenour, the *Duck* illustrates the buildings which explicitly reflect their programs. On this account, also the buildings' shapes and constructions vary due to their functions. Contrarily, the *decorated Shed* comprises the buildings which feature a generic structure and additional flashing signs.[83] Though, the mall was a special case. It did not reflect explicitly its function, yet, due to its massive cubic form its commercial function was easily guessable. Furthermore, even if the mall was based on a generic grid and there were almost no flashing signs and lights, it advertised for the shopping activity solely with its form.

At this point, the architecture of the mall could be considered as an advertisement itself, comparable to a multidimensional billboard. To be an advertising sign, which attracts people's attention, was a principal feature of the exterior and the interior part of the mall. The need of communication through advertising became the precondition for the shopping mall performance and success.

For this reason, the mall along with being an architecture of space was an "architecture of communication".[84]

80 Ibid, 13.

81 Wall, "Advance messengers", in *Victor Gruen, From Urban Shop to New City,* op. cit., 22.

82 Hardwick, "Seducing the Suburban Autoist", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, op. cit.*

83 Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form,* op. cit.

84 Ibid, 8.

The interior world of billboards

As it has previously been mentioned, the principal form of communication and advertisement of the mall operated through images and signs. From the outside, the sign comprised a clear and unmistakable big neutral structure, which was visible from a large distance and comparable to a monument within the high-speed highway landscape. However, this external and neutral monument contained a complete opposite interior world. In spite of the apparent opposition, the exterior and interior of the mall could both be considered as different types and forms of a billboard.

Form the outside, the blind façades functioned as a massive sign. This especially concerned the motorists on the highway. Conversely, the closer the customer got to the shopping mall, the more signs became comprehensible. For instance, the first proper signs, such as the announcement of the day's bargains, appeared to the pedestrians only by approaching the entrance from the parking lot.[85] Also, the interior space contained an entire collection of different kinds of smaller signs.

Every single feature within the shopping mall contained publicity, from the general design to the effective physical elements. In particular, the shop windows represented the most efficient advertisement within the mall. This was due to their capacity to effect customers to pause just as they were passing by and to animate them into buying the exposed merchandise. For this reason, opening the shop windows as much as possible and filling them with attractive lights and colours, was a way to strengthen their essential role of advertising. In this manner, they were transformed into attracting billboards.

Further, another feature to be consider as advertisement were the different kinds of experiences which were organized to entertain and moreover to attract the customers. In this case, the customers did not care about the shopping mall appearance. They were more interested in the interior space and its proposed experiences.[86] Therefore, the shopping mall often staged unique events which attracted people due to their temporary aspect. The special country weeks, the celebrity appearances, or the public concerts, to give some examples, played also the role of advertisement.

On these grounds, it could be stated that every single feature within the mall had the same purpose of a billboard, which is to be a commercial advertisement. These considerations are strictly related to the theatrical strategy exposed in the previous chapter, in which everything was staged for the specific purpose of attracting and of becoming a permanent advertising sign. In this sense, the mall was not only a generator of images, but also an advertising image itself.

85 Hardwick, "Seducing the Suburban Autoist", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream, op. cit.*

86 Victor Gruen, Anette Baldauf and Michael Stephen Gruen, *Shopping Town: Designing the City in Suburban America* (Minneapolis: Universtiy of Minnesota Press, 2017).

As it has been analysed within this chapter, the shopping mall, along with being an efficient retail machine, was also an unprecedented attractive space abound in images and entertainment. Its often underestimated richness was the ability to reinterpret historical types and artistic arrangements and to transform them into a strategical plan to increase profit. On these grounds, the pursuit of attractiveness not only led to the generation of a fascinating artificial world of images, but also responded to the urgent need of gathering spaces for suburban communities.

However, the negative connotations often used to describe this type could be sometimes considered unreasonable. The main critics of the mall arose due to two principal reasons. Firstly, the images generated within the mall were evocations or projections of an already existing reality. The second reason and the most important one, was the fact, that too much pressure had been put on the shopping mall since its first emergence. The shopping mall arose within a period of change that needed quick solutions. Having the pretension to give to a single building type the responsibility of generating a whole new urbanity within the suburbia, could be considered unfair.

Therefore the mall offered a space in which citizens could best enjoy consumerism. As a consequence, it also became a space for the community to gather, which often achieved a tremendous success. In this manner, there is no point to blame the shopping mall to be an artificial retail machine, as the retail and the artificiality had been the preconditions of its existing. It is important to consider that the mall achieved a big part of its purpose. Actually, the richness of the shopping mall design comprised its power of attractiveness and that it actually was often used for gatherings for whatever reason. Even if not for what it was expected, it had been able to achieve an incredible success. In this sense, certain aspects of the richness that has been stressed within these chapters should be some valuable lessons and important source of inspirations for the conception of future public architectural types.

1   Rem Koolhaas quoted in, Marta Kwiatkowski, Stefan Breit, Leonie Thalmann, in *Future Public Space*, GDI Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute, 2018, 17.

Through a battery of increasingly predatory forms, shopping has infiltrated, colonized, and even replaced, almost every aspect of urban life. Town centers, suburbs, streets, and now airports, train stations, museums, hospitals, schools, the Internet, and the military are shaped by the mechanisms and spaces of shopping. [...]Perhaps the beginning of the 21st century will be remembered as the point where the urban could no longer be understood without shopping.[1]

4
The dissolution of the machine

In the past, shopping was mainly effectuated actively and within the public space. The Greek agora and the Roman Forum, are only two of the many examples which demonstrate well the balanced relation between public spaces and commercial activities. Over the centuries, commercial functions gained more and more the upper hand and suppressed the space meant for social life and gatherings. With the invention of new technologies during the 20th century, public space was entirely replaced by commercial activities or was mostly employed to encourage shopping. Though, not only the relation between public space and retail changed over the centuries, but also their location within the cities. Whereas in the beginning commercial activities were mainly effectuated within the heart of the cities, later on, they were sprawled as punctual elements until they were displaced in the periphery due to shortage of space and the increasing of mass-production.

Nowadays, a dissolution of the physical consumption machine, the shopping mall, can already be perceived all over the world. This phenomenon can be distinguished between two different forms of dissolution: the typological and the formal one. The typological dissolution appeared with the increasing of stores which try, with all available means, to clutch on to other types of public spaces within the city. Consequentially, an hybridization of public programs and retail started to appear, and led to the typological dissolution of the shopping mall, as a specific space devoted to retail. This hybridization, however still includes physical consumption through stationary stores.

Opposed to the typological dissolution, the formal dissolution arose with the utilization of digitalization in the retail sector. Due to the appearance of e-commerce, the lack of time of today's contemporary society, the abstraction of objects, and globalization, shopping malls began to lose their allurement, and were transformed into an invisible network.

However, these two variations of the dissolution of the machine par excellence did not stop material consumption. Quite the opposite. Along with stimulating material consumption, they even changed consumer behaviours to the extreme. In this chapter, this analysis seeks to understand the typological and especially the formal dissolution of the shopping mall and its consequences for the contemporary society and its future public space. By analysing the era of digitalization, its corollaries and the consumer society, the aim is to fully understand its consequences for the architecture and the city.

4.1 Hybridization

With the shopping mall type, comparable to a large retail container, shopping had its apotheosis. In recent years, however, a slow typological dissolution of this retail machine can be observed in many countries, as well as in Switzerland. Stores, which could usually be found in malls, latterly started to spread to other kind of building types, creating hybrids with public programs. However, the hybridization of retail spaces and the appearance of other public realms, is not due to a decreasing sales figures of the shopping malls, but to a changing society and strategical entrepreneurs.

There are nearly no public spaces left which do not include retail in their main programs. For instance, retail spaces and museums somehow contradict each other and seem odd combined. However, it is mostly forgotten that the department store and the museum appeared during the same era and rose out of similar social conditions. Today, the distinction between a museum and retail space becomes more and more blurry, due to financial support problems and the competition of customer's entertaining leisure activities. Hence, many museums are struggling to persist. Therefore, the museum shops purpose does not only comprise advertisements, but it gains about 18 to 26 % of the museum's income. In addition, since 1992, the area of museum shops in general has increased about 29 %, whereas the exhibition space remained constant.[2] Further, terminating a museum visit without the mandatory passage across the museum's shop, would simply be unthinkable.

2   Sze Tsung Leong, "...And Then There Was Shopping", in *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping. Project on the City 2* (Köln: Taschen, 2001), 129–155.

Alongside museums, educational institutions, sport facilities, motorway service areas and other public programs, began to merge with retail spaces, creating all kinds of hybrids building types, incorporating public and retail spaces.

Almost every sphere of life, such as work, leisure and consumption, takes place in so-called *transit centres*.[3] Entrepreneurs and developers are taking advantage of the fact that most of the travellers transit across these places every day. This means that a large amount of merchandise can automatically been exposed to a vast number of passers-by. Especially transit centres such as airports, train stations and even petrol stations, are crossed by a significant number of travellers and foreign visitors daily. For instance, the shops in Heathrow airport in London, make a profit ten times as much as an average shopping mall yearly.[4]

3   Claudia Matz, *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums* (Baden-Baden: Tectum Verlag, 2018), 428-433.

4   Ibid.

The principle of consumption at these transit centres, is already used in full capacity. A relevant example is the common Duty-Free-Shops at airports. The Duty-Free-Shops evolved from the original purpose of tax-free consumption between two countries, into small

department stores, where waiting travellers can stroll and shop. These transit centres, whether small or vast, local or international, are not only essential points of intersection, but they become actual centres for the future increasing mobile society. They supply travellers with constant provisions and entertainments until the arrival to the next destination.

It is rather a logical consequence, that retail shops started to be relocate towards these new centres. In the past, for instance, only the essentials could be bought at petrol stations. Meanwhile today, their assortments are constantly enlarging. The same goes for the other transit centres, which are more and more rich in assortments of any kind, letting the specialised shops slowly disappear. Probably in a near future, customers are going to shop more often at a petrol stations, than in large and distant supermarkets due to convenience.

This passage from a specific architectural type devoted to retail space, to the formation of hybrid buildings which incorporates retail function along with other programs, turn out to be a vigorous competition against shopping malls. Switzerland's malls are particularly touched by this hybridization. Especially, the malls which are smaller in size and located in peripheries, have already problems to keep their doors open.

This global situation is leading to the disappearance of a particular building type devoted to retail function, of which we have underlined the history and evolution during the previous chapters. Consequently, it could be stated that today the shopping mall as a type is disappearing.

4.2 Digitalization

Opposed to the typological dissolution of retail spaces, the formal dissolution of the machine is generated by the technological and digital revolution. The utilization of technology and the ubiquitous digitalization completely altered today's consumer behaviour. This had a tumbling effect on today's way of shopping. Shopping evolved from being a laborious necessity into become a quick pleasure settled by a single mouse click. With the usage of digitalization, physical shops started to disappear due to the appearance of a new form of retail: the e-commerce.

The e-commerce is nowhere, yet everywhere. It is omnipresent. The internet, or specifically the online-shop, has already become a steady component in the retail functions and it is increasingly integrated in one's daily life. It is not anymore an inconceivable medium or a trend which will eventually fade. Further, the preference to shop by

means of the e-commerce, instead of the physical store, is based on the possibility to consume independently from any given location or time frame. This is significantly different compared to conventional and stationary commerce.

Further, the online-shops permit a faster searching, additional informations to the product and they provide a larger assortment and more variety than in stationary stores. Looking with a sociological perspective, consumption through e-commerce is more predictable than ever. Consumers do know on which website to shop, how much they will have to spend and when they receive the bought product.[5]

The e-commerce plays a crucial part mostly in the branch of non-foods: around 55% of the retail companies in Europe are already using e-commerce and the virtual world to increase sales figures.[6] This figure is on the rise and will constantly continue to increase.

More and more, smaller cities, outskirts and villages, are therefore stripped from their commercial activities and left with tremendous void. Furthermore, still existing physical shops evolve more and more to concept stores where their primary functions such as retail disappears and where amusement and experience become more important. The city centre stores turn into exhibitions or showrooms where the buying of goods will be effectuated later at home. They become sort of large advertisements within the historical city.

In this new digital age, retail makes also use of new advertisement possibilities, which appeared alongside the common utilisation of the internet. Furthermore, consumers are providing advice by a so-called third instance, such as social communities, where products can be rated and compared. These experiences and opinions ultimately affect individual purchase decisions.

Before the digital revolution, enterprises advertised their merchandise through newspaper, magazines and billboards. Already with the appearance of the television and its availability to the middle class, the advertised merchandise was not only penetrating private homes, but was reachable to a larger public. With the digital revolution, advertisement went even further. Not only the majority of today's society uses smart-phones or computers on a daily basis, but these digital devices have become essential means for our daily activities. Enterprises found therefore a strategical and global strategy to discreetly hide advertisements between the pages of online magazines, social media accounts and blog posts of common websites.

Among other digital platforms, notably social media are capable to interconnect people from every corner of the world. It is at the same time a digital and social medium, which allows to surpass distances and to transfer any kind of information and data from one person to another, without any physical or temporal barriers. Therefore, by means of social media and other digital platforms, such as blogs and

5   Dr. Cristian Suau and Margarita Munar Bauzá, "The mall in the online shopping era" (Study, The 4. International Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism, Amsterdam, Delft, 2009).

6   Matz, *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums*, op. cit., 408.

online reviews, enterprises influence social media users to purchase certain products, without their knowing.

In the same way in which digitalization is affecting the behaviour of consumer society, it is also having a revolutionary impact on the physical consumption spaces. Therefore, the spaces devoted to public and civic life of citizens are threatened. The disappearance of physical retail spaces, caused by digitalization, is putting in crisis the usage of public spaces within the cities. This latter could not rely anymore on the commercial programs that needs to be replaced by other functions. Some public facilities, as coffees and restaurants, are already trying to replace this lack of public programs. However the question that arises at this point is to what extent these programs will be sufficient to respond to this critical circumstances.

Before going further into this issue, it is important to understand how this process of digitalization have emerged and developed in retail sector, to the point of becoming a threat for our physical public space. A short overview will be given in order to understand the principle factors that have led to the generation of this new condition. These are the three principle domains of logistification, globalization and abstraction.

4.2.1 *Logistification*

The increase of the digitalization of commonplace usages in the contemporary world had a shifting effect on today's society. Similar to the industrialization, the digitalization enabled new occupations as well as it replaced occupations by machinery.

The logistics is one of the activities which had a boom within the age of digitalization. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, logistics is described as "the careful organization of a complicated activity so that it happens in a successful and effective way".[7]

The logistics are summarized not only as an organization of activities, but as well as a process of transformation. In this way the *logistification* is put equally alongside the processes of *industrialization, mechanization* and *automation*. Next to the *industrialization* (production through the development and invention of machinery), the *mechanization* (production through the combination of human and machinic labour) and the *automation* (production through solely machines), the *logistification* can be qualified as the fourth process in the history taking technologies into account.[8]

In his book, *Theory and design in the first machine age,* Reyner Banham describes the machine age as an era which is based on mass-production, technological inventions and ideologies. Further, he determined that the second machine age is defined by computing

7   Cambridge Dictionary. Accessed december 12 2019. https://dictionary. cambridge.org/fr/ dictionnaire/anglais/ logistics.

8   Jesse LeCavalier, "Introduction", in *The Rule of logistics: Walmart and the Architecture of Fulfillment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

technologies.[9] Continuing Banham's progression by introducing the age of digitalization, a third machine age is perceived today. The machine age of logistics based on globalization, digitalization and neoliberal politics.

In this new era of digitalization, informations and data are moved digitally. However most of today's objects in the field of retail are still material, and needs to be transported physically in time and space. The logistics is therefore the department which is conjoint to these considerations.[10] Without logistics, the shopping activity in today's fast consumer society would not be possible. Furthermore, this new form of retail, the e-commerce, would be unthinkable.

Whereas previously machinery and human would work alongside, with logistics, nothing is left to chance. Human failure is hereby erased and replaced by computing technologies leaving nothing unplanned, inefficient and at risk.[11] Logistics is an invisible machine, designed to smooth movement. As it will be later seen, logistics generates other types of spaces and buildings, which, however, have no longer anything to do with social and gathering spaces.

4.2.2 Globalization

The omnipresence of logistics is only possible due to globalization, liberal trade policies and international demand. Walmart Inc and other retail businesses based on logistics, are perfect examples of the outcome and engine of globalization.

The beginning of globalisation in retail, was not necessary due to the emergence of digitalisation. Already with the appearance of the self-service and chain stores this phenomenon could be perceived. During the Second World War, when numerous self-service and chain stores emerged over the whole country on America's main streets, globalization was introduced for the first time. Suddenly, all Americans were dressed the same way and purchased the same goods. Somehow these stores, such as the big-box store Grayson's, gave to America a nationalistic feeling, which was at the time given a necessary response to the enduring war. If shoppers desired the same all over the country, the stores should incarnate the essence of globalization by featuring an almost identical appearance. The stores where therefore designed without any context, however, always with the possibility to adapt to its surrounding. Through Grayson's, an example was set for modern retailing at this era. Within years, the America's landscape was condensed with these self-service and chain stores.[12]

As well in Switzerland, at the end of Second World War, a shifting was observed in the field of retail with the emergence of the

9   Reyner Banham, *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age,* 1st MIT Press paperback ed (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1980), 329-330.

10 LeCavalier, "Introduction", in *The Rule of logistics: Walmart and the Architecture of Fulfillment, op. cit.*

11 Ibid.

12 M. Jeffrey Hardwick, "How Main Street stole Fifth Avenue's Glitter", in *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).
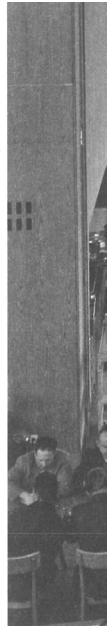
self-service grocery stores. This event implied the slow extinction of the Swiss *Tante-Emma-Laden*, which is the designation for a small corner shop where its owner serves the clientele. Further, this change demonstrated the intensifying involvement of the customers in the shopping process and transformed the necessary buying of goods to an eventful and joyful pastime. In Switzerland, a fast development as in America was not expected, however within few months 30% more self-service grocery stores emerged.[13] A going back was simply unimaginable. Within twenty years, 60% of all the grocery stores in Switzerland included self-service.[14]

Whereas self-service and chain stores changed the landscapes within countries, logistics due to digitalization transformed territories. This new global trade created a connectivity, which dissolved countries and their borders and even infiltrated the most distant village. For instance, the enterprise for parcel service UPS, advertised with the slogan: "Crossing borders with ease" ,"clearing customs a breeze" operate "overseas, over land, on the Web, on demand".[15]

Therefore, it could be stated that globalization is the ancestor of digitalization, in the sense that it has been a leading factor for the typological and formal dissolution of retail spaces.

13   Fabian Furter and Patrick Schoeck-Ritschard, *Zwischen Konsumtempel Und Dorfplatz: Eine Geschichte Des Shoppingcenters in Der Schweiz* (Baden: Hier und Jetzt, 2014), 16.
14   Ibid.

15   LeCavalier, "Introduction", in *The Rule of logistics: Walmart and the Architecture of Fulfillment, op. cit.*, 8.

4.2.3 Abstraction

Exchange with its circulatory systems and networks may occupy space worldwide, but consumption occurs only in this or that particular place… […] Space thus understood is both abstract and concrete in character: abstract inasmuch as it has no existence save by virtue of the exchange-ability of all its component parts, and concrete inasmuch as it is socially real and as such localized.[16]

16   Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 341–42.

As Henri Lefebvre states, imagining a logistical network system it requires to understand a given landscape. Not only as a concrete or abstract but as a linked combination of material and immaterial, and as terrain and territory. Therefore, logistics is the mediating element of time and space and of concreteness and abstractness. Today's society is completely dependent on this logistical network, however, which is only noticed when it fails.

On a daily basis, we encounter ordinary objects, which are part of this invisible and logistical network. As customers, we get only a glimpse of the life of one of these objects. From the production, to the transportation and the acquisition, we abstract solely the essential,

which is the private utilization of the object. For instance, the purchase of a water bottle is just a short moment of an entire invisible network, which is maintained through customer's habits and desires.

Ultimately, individual consumption of objects is only a small part of an elaborated network of humans, organizations and manufacturing systems, which is mediated by digital technology and by collecting continuously data.[17]

17 Matz, *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums*, op. cit., 407.

Already early in retail, before the emergence of the online commerce, digital aids, such as the bar code, were implemented. The bar code transformed a physical item as an inventory into information, which was more easily handled by retailers. With the introduction of the bar code, items could be tracked, located, counted and measured much faster within this abstract logistical network. The main aim was therefore to increase the speed of transactions, by erasing human errors, as the bar code could only be read by computers. If the emerging of self-service and chain stores changed the relationship between customers and retailers, and more generally the shopping environment, the bar code reshaped the nature of physical objects, by allowing them to become immaterial and turn into informations.[18]

18 LeCavalier, "A moving system in motion", in *The Rule of logistics: Walmart and the Architecture of Fulfillment*, op. cit.

4.2.4 Flow

Compared to other forms of retail functions, logistics does not favour congestion, rather it animates movement and strives for coverage. Therefore it is an industry which operates rather horizontally, than vertically. With the arrival of logistics, a completely new type of building arose. These types no longer welcome public spaces. Quite the opposite, these new types respond to the digital and retail revolution, where the consumption finally emancipated itself from any kind of architecture or human interaction, becoming a pure logistical space.

Logistics became an inherent part of large retail enterprises, such as Walmart Inc. Generally, the building and infrastructure network of large retail enterprises, such as Walmart, includes three sample buildings: the *data centre*, the *distribution centre*, and the *super-centre*. The data centre, which is the brain of the company, features no form but a constantly changing content, and it is integrated in the urban fabric. The distribution centre, whose form reflects its content, is situated beyond the city borders. It deals with the transportation of the merchandise within the vast logistical network. And finally, the super-centre, deprived from any form of architecture or content and located in cities' peripheries. It is the actual place where one can shop. The Walmart buildings function more as regulating valves in a complex network of water conduits, than a capturing reservoirs or enclosures. They are seen as a linked network of movements, which

can be regulated to assure a constant flow of goods. This network of conduits or constant stream of goods is so efficiently conceived and organized that the super-centre barely contains areas for stock, but maximizes the floor space for retail.[19]

19 LeCavalier, "Logistics", in *The Rule of logistics: Walmart and the Architecture of Fulfillment, op. cit.*

This dynamic network system is always transforming, expanding and it is in constant change. New super-centres are built, demolished, remodelled and interconnected. It can be also called dynamic, because it can react to collected customer's data, which the data centres store for a minimum duration of two years. Therefore, Walmart anticipates what customers are going to buy in the near future, what to stock and where to direct it. The primary aim is to store precisely as much inventory as needed and demanded. Regarding advertisement, Walmart depends on its buildings and its network system. While its stationary buildings almost do not imply architectural emblems and consist of abstract forms, Walmart uses the architect itself to advertise. In addition, the company's fleet of trucks moving through the cities' network, are carrying the Walmart's sign and acting like mobile advertisement perceivable to as many people as possible.[20]

20 Ibid.

His [Jeff Bezoz'] goal was to turn Amazon into the Walmart of the online world and, eureka, he's done it.[21]

21 Gary Rivlin, "A Retail Revolution Turns 10," *The New York Times*, July 10, 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/10/business/yourmoney/a-retail-revolution-turns-10.html.
22 Matz, *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums, op. cit.*, 409.

In 1994, Jeff Bezoz founded Amazon in the USA, a store which does not sell its merchandise through physical stores. In addition, the merchandise is only available through digital devices with an internet connection.[22] In this manner, Bezoz not only turned his back on conventional and stationary stores, but he availed himself of the omnipresence of digital devices and advances to promotes his enterprise. Bezoz downsized Amazon's buildings from Walmart's threes sample stores (super-centre, distribution centre and data centre) to only two: the distribution and the data centre. These two sample buildings are engine-driven points of a vast infrastructural network of flowing goods. Formerly, Amazon focused on the sale of books, music and movies. But nowadays, after having enlarged its assortment of goods, anything can be purchased within the range of non-foods. In other words, Amazon turned the medieval square into a digital market place.

Within a year since its foundation, Amazon realised a profit about 15,7 millions US-dollar. In the coming year, he increased the sales ten times and merely four years later he expanded Amazon's coverage to an international territory.[23] Amazon was the initiating enterprise which based its sale on a digital market. Due to its tremendous success, many retail enterprisers imitated Jeff Bezos strategy by introducing websites

23 Ibid.

and online shops to their physical and stationary stores.

Today, not only an increase of online stores can be perceived, but as well a substantial decrease of physical stores, due to declining sales and the success of the Amazon model

4.2.5 Socializing

The typological and physical dissolution of the architectural type devoted to public retail functions, is leading to a drastic revolution affecting our physical space. The public space, which was coupled to commercial functions in the agora, the medieval market square and even the American shopping malls, is disappearing with the emergence of digitalization and its logistics connotations.

The so called Amazon boxes are taking a next level compared to the previously analysed big-box stores. This latter was already a type of retail space which did not consider the value of public space. However, the Amazon boxes are already beyond the bounds of physical space issues. They not only bypass gathering and social factors, but even retail as a physical place to shop is not considered anymore. They simply correspond to a new type of a perfected retail machine, physical and digital at the same time, which leaves no room for human activities and focuses on the purely logistic consumerism.

The long evolution of public space and commerce from the agora to the distribution and data centre of logistical retail companies arrived at a dead-end. Although the consumption of goods is still happening within the invisible network, its social aspects are disappearing. Therefore a new centre needs to be re-invented, restarting from the public space. Consequently, almost as Gruen anticipated with his vision of suburban shopping malls, new community centres have to be created in the cities' outskirts in order to respond to these new circumstances. These centres, however, need to be based on other activities than physical retail.

The machine was established.
The machine is digitalized.
The machine will be reinvented.

5
The reinvention and replacement of the machine

The churches are empty, and the monarchy shipwrecked itself on its own vanity. Politics is a racket, and democracy is just another utility, like gas and electricity. Almost no one has any civic feeling. Consumerism is the one thing that gives us our sense of values. Consumerism is honest, and teaches us that everything good has a bar code.[1]

1   J.G: Ballard, *Kingdom Come* (2006, reprint 2014), quoted in Janina Gosseye, Tom Avermaete, *Acculturating the shopping centre,* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 102.

The remarkable retail development exposed in the previous chapters has always had a substantial impact on population's behaviour and even more on the utilisation of public space and architecture. We currently live in a world ruled by consumption, which today is victim of a significant mutation affecting physical commerce and public space.

As treated so far, material consumption has been the generator of the physical retail machine par excellence: the shopping mall. Already for several years, the e-commerce has become increasingly present in retail sector, leading the physical machine to progressively become entirely digitalized. However, it is important to specify that the dissolution of the physical retail machine does not coincide with the dissolution of the material consumption. On the contrary, we assume that material consumption will always occur by the means of the e-commerce.

The dissolving of physical retail spaces has a direct impact on the spatial and social structure of the city and touches an essential urban function: the using of the public space. This dissolution causes the ultimate and complete separation between the public space and the retail, which have always been in tight relation. The definitive break of this age-old liaison, that until today has been an essential component of our urban space, is threatening our public space, which can barely exist without consumption.

These circumstances lead us to the necessity to reinvent a new machine capable of reintroducing the social life within the physical public spaces. Consumption, however, must remain the engine of this new machine since it still represents the main value of our contemporary society. Precisely because of this consideration, the consumer society requires to find other types of consumption, unrelated to the retail function, and which are capable of activating our spaces for social

interaction. In this manner, the material consumption, displaced in the e-commerce, needs to be replaced by an immaterial consumption, which becomes the engine for the activation of our public space.

On the basis of these considerations, this chapter will try to seek out several guidelines with which the new consumption machine can be reinvented and transformed into a successful gathering space. In fact, the two essential prerequisites defined for the generation of the new machine, are the capacity to be an attraction point and to be efficiently connected. Firstly, we are going to analyse which conditions can enable the machine to be a successful attraction point. Secondly, an importance will be given to how the machine needs to be connected and accessible in order to be efficient. In this regard, a short analysis will be exposed regarding the possible and necessary location of this new attraction point, along with the medium of connecting itself socially and physically with the existing environment. Finally, these considerations will be tested with the proposal of different scenarios within specific locations, in order to challenge the limits and potentials of the new defined machine.

5.1 Attraction points

Le client ne va plus dans le magasin, le magasin va chez le client - ceci est vrai tant pour le commerce digital que pour le commerce stationnaire.[2]

What could allow people to live their public life in a world were retail functions, along with other major daily commodities, are easily replaceable by digitalization? What will become public space in a society were the online shop is taking over the physical commercial space to the point that this latter disappears?

These main issues will be investigated within the next pages through the definition of several constraints, which have been specifically studied and selected in order to enable the creation of the new consumption machine. The aim is to explore what could be the main programs capable of activating the new public space of today. Furthermore, what could allow people to live their social life in a world were retail functions, along with other major daily commodities, are easily replaceable by the internet.

In order to do so, our considerations will be based on the analysis of the previous chapters, in which we have explored the different kinds of public spaces produced and transformed by the retail program until today, to the extend that these spaces are threatened by the dramatical

digital change.

The first requirement in order to create an efficient machine is to become an attraction point. The three main principles which in our opinion could be able to assure to turn the machine into a successful attraction point are: the social interaction, the experiences and the image. Each of which will be tested and employed for shaping of the different scenarios.

5.1.1 Machine as social interaction

Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god.[3]

A major factor for the redefinition of public space is the persistent need of social interaction of the consumers. Similar to Gruen's first intentions for shopping malls (see part 3.1), social interaction within the public space is to be considered as the principal aim for the creation of the new machine. Even in an era exposed to increasing technological and virtual transformations, such as the emergence of social media, we believe that social interaction will remain a primal necessity in our society. In fact, the expected prediction of "depopulation of public place"[4], that came up during the 90's, did not actually take place. On the contrary, the rise of social media and augmented virtuality does not prevent our need to socialize in the physical world.

Digitalization is consistently affecting people's lives and more generally, urban space. However, technological development should not only be considered as a negative impact for public space. On the contrary, it can also become a tool to enrich citizens' social life.[5] In fact, given that social interaction is a main necessity for human beings, and that technology is by now an integral component of our life, we believe that these two factors have the potential to collaborate with each other in order to improve the quality of our public spaces. For instance, social media contents are a powerful tool for advertising any kind of public events, due to the fact that they can instantly and easily reach an incredible amount of people. In this way, social media can have a positive impact on public spaces, promoting and stimulating them as much as possible.

However, even if digital devices already are implemented in our

3   Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. Thomas Alan Sinclair, Rev. ed, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth, England New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 1981).

4   Bernegg, Lauermann, Schenkel, Stadt Zurich, *Le commerce en mutation, Scénarios de la Ville de Zurich, op. cit.*, 11.

5   Ibid.

daily lives, the scenarios will focus on the public space in general, which could or could not include social media or other digital additions.

Along with the purpose of proposing different scenarios for the definition of the future consumption machine, the emphasis is firstly put on social interaction. In order to do so, we have to consider that the entire society can not be lumped together in the same category. In fact, to conceive different scenarios, we propose to define five principal ranges of ages. Each represents, what we consider to be, the major age categories of our contemporary society: the children, the teenager, the young adults, the adults, and finally, the retirees.
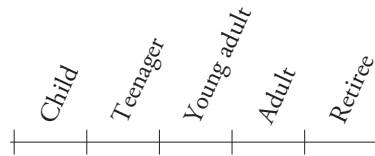
When talking about the first category, we approximately include the age range between two and sixteen. By defining this category, we give a particular consideration to the fact that the children are dependent on other adults. Therefore, their social meetings do not occur spontaneously. In addition, they mainly interact with other children of the same age and principally during the after school time period.

The second category, which includes the ages between fourteen and twenty, are the teenagers. The separation between the first and second category is due to the fact that although their ages are close-by, their social activities differ quite a lot. Compared to the first category, the teenagers are more independent and therefore have more power to decide about their social activities. They mainly interact within their same age range during the evening and the night hours. Furthermore, they mostly socialize in smaller groups.

The third category roughly includes the ages between twenty and thirty-five. The so-called young adults, whether singles or couples, are mainly childless and gather within the public space mostly after work. They notably meet people of similar age and life situation, as spontaneous or planned gatherings.

The adults comprise the most heterogeneous group in terms of age. They are approximately between thirty-five and sixty-five, and they take part of public activities as singles, couples or as parents. Their meetings occur seldom spontaneously and they mainly leave their homes to spend time with friends, partners or families. Due to the vast range of different life situations, no particular time during the

day can be defined regarding when the public spaces are mostly used.

The retirees define the fifth and the last category which we consider important to differentiate. They encounter other people both spontaneously or meet as planned. Furthermore, these occurrences are happening primarily during the day.

However, social interaction does not occur randomly or simply when two or several people meet outside their homes. The spaces where social interaction is more likely to take place, are in the first place the surroundings of attractive programs and locations. These latter require to be welcoming and equipped with public facilities, pushing people to spend their time nearby. For this reason, different activities and programs need to be introduced in order to invite people to stay and to allow them to live their public life. Therefore, to obtain a public space which stimulates social interaction new programs offering entertaining experiences need to be introduced. This leads us to the second principle: the machine as experiences.

5.1.2 Machine as experience

A city is unthinkable without consumption.[6]

6   Bernegg, Lauermann, Schenkel, Stadt Zurich, *Le commerce en mutation, Scénarios de la Ville de Zurich, op. cit.*, 11.

As a result of the first suburban shopping malls, social interaction was achieved through material consumption. By reinventing a new physical machine, a new form of immaterial consumption needs to be introduced in order to become the new generator of social life and therefore the replacement of the previous material consumption. The new immaterial consumption will be called consumption of experiences. This latter allows people to interact socially and therefore activate the public place. The experiences are likely to replace material consumption, as opposed to retail, they can not be replaced by the internet.

Until now, the retail business has always been dependent on the consumer's behaviour. Consequently, new offers were created in order to attract consumers and invite them to use the public space within the city. Today, the question which arises is what kind of programs are able to replace the physical retail spaces, which are disappearing due to digitalization. Attractive installations, safe places, sustainable mobility and buildings for flexible use are an opening to start to answer this question.

Already for some years, the principal program of the shops has not been exclusively retail. Indeed, with the arrival of the online shops, the physical ones were forced to find a way to offer something more,

that could not be replaced by the internet. For this reason the retail started to be overtaken by new functions which offered new forms of experiences and transformed the traditional shops into the so-called concept stores.

Moreover, we assume that the purchasing within the physical stores is increasingly out-of-date, since a large number of new ways of shopping started to appear. An example are the "cross-channels", which consist of having a physical space, the so-called show-room, in which the products are displayed and can be tested in a context that offers a particular experience. After the experience, the purchase is made online.[7] The adding of experiences and emotional values to the retail function became fundamental to attract people.

7   Marta Kwiatkowski, Stefan Breit, Leonie Thalmann "5 Thesis for the future of public spaces", in *Future Public Space* , Study, Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute and ETH Zürich, 21.

However, in our opinion, these new forms of concept stores and show-rooms are not sufficiently adequate to revitalize the public space or animate social interaction. Moreover, the assumption can be made in such way that these new programs will possibly gradually disappear. If anything, they can be considered as an intermediate step until the arrival of a complete dissolution of physical retail spaces.

On this basis, we can assume that today the main attractive programs are the ones able to offer an entertaining experience, to add emotional value and which are not replaceable by the internet. In order to define distinct scenarios for the reinvention of the new machine, we identified five principle categories of immaterial consumption that we consider the most promising which are able to reactivate our public spaces. These are the consumption of knowledge, entertainment, nature, physical activity and service. Similar to the previous chapter, these different categories will be alternatively emphasized and tested in order to create varying outcomes.
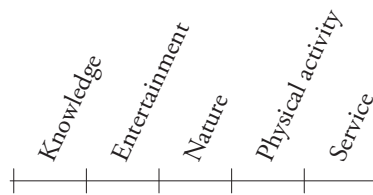
Today's society is exposed to knowledge in a very direct and easy way due to the development of digitalization and its resulting omnipresence of digital devices. This allows the population to contribute to the production and consumption of knowledge through web site advice, social media contents, and every kind of new advertisement forms. However, this way of attaining knowledge is often untrustworthy, limited or simply overwhelming. In fact, due to the big amount of

information, the distinction between important and unimportant information becomes harder to define. According to Jean Baudrillard, this over abundance of information which the consumer society receive every day, leads to a form of "méconnaissance" of the world. It is neither a complete ignorance, nor actual knowledge.[8] However, precisely because of this blurry situation, it is important to point out that today's society is eager to learn continuously and is based on ambitiousness and competition. Therefore, the determination of obtaining knowledge through books, lectures, people and other means, is an essential part of anybody's life and touches all the different ages of today's consumer society. Hence, creating a physical public space where one can consume reliable knowledge, will be a space where people can gather and thus interact socially.

8   Jean Baudrillard, *La Société de Consommation* (Saint-Amand: E.P. Denoel, 1974), 32.

The emergence of digital devices does not only inform us faster and facilitate our daily lives by substituting common daily activities, but it also generates new forms of pastime. Even if digitalization induces even more entertainment possibilities, attracting and amusing events will always gather people within the physical space. This is primarily due to the monotony of the daily life, which today's society tries to escape. Therefore, the second category comprises the consumption of entertainment.

The third immaterial consumption, identified as an attractive force capable to replace retail, is the consumption of nature. Due to the lack of time of today's consumer society, the overcrowded cities and the omnipresence of digital devices, the need of rest became a primal necessity, urgently required and rarely obtained. However, a short pause in the nature will not compensate so easily the stress to which society is constantly submitted. Therefore, today's society needs to consume nature in order to try to balance its stressful life. Consequently, the nature is an ideal medium which allows the gathering of people and which animates social interaction without digital devices.

Due to the emergence of globalization, social media, environmental and nutritive awareness among others, the majority of the consumers is today focused on their appearance, health and amusement. Therefore, physical activities, which have to be performed outside of one's home, summarize the fourth category. Even if digital technologies can increasingly replace daily activities, our society will always be deeply bound to physical movement and activity in order to stay healthy. Consequently, the consumption of physical activities is to be considered as a new engine to activate social interaction within public spaces.

Finally, a considerable number of everyday functions are still dependent on human interaction and will not be easily replaceable by internet. For instance, the sanitary field, which along with other

functions, still needs the social interaction between the giver and receiver in order to exist. These functions are the so-called services and comprise the fifth and the last category. Due to the dependence on the excess of services within our society, it is not disputable that they will always be a possible substitution for the material consumption.

To conclude, the consumption of experiences is a generator of social interaction, for a specific age within a specific environment. However, the experiences can not occur anywhere, but they are strictly constrained by their location and physical form. In fact, the consumption of experiences will only be successful if their location is integrated within the urban or rural fabric in an attractive and accessible way. Its image and accessibility are the essential prerequisites for becoming an attraction point capable of enabling public space. On these grounds, the image of the new consumption machine is as important as its engine.

5.1.3 Machine as image

In the same way as shopping mall designers availed themselves of the rich world of images to achieve their primal aim of selling, the new consumption machine exploits the same principles in order to generate a space for gatherings. As previously analysed, evoking different types of images was a powerful attraction force for the mall. For this reason the degree of *imageability*[9] of the new machine also needs to be exploited, due to its extraordinary capacity to attract people and enable social interaction.

9   Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), 9.

In this manner, the new consumption machine evokes different images and spaces which vary depending on the perception of each citizen. The aim is to generate the perception of familiar atmospheres removing any sort of feeling of alienation. This also allows the new machine to become a reference point within the ample and alienated landscape of today. In the same way as the shopping mall, the new consumption machine turns into an attraction point. This time, however, it is designed to encourage the social interaction between consumers.

Precisely because of this reason, the proposal of the varying scenarios will rely on the reinterpretation of these same images. At this point, an assumption can be made regarding the fact that the same images that had been successful within the mall, could still get the same success since they are addressed to the same consumer society, however with a different aim. In this manner, we distinguish the five principal categories, which are the perceptions of labyrinth, prison, sanctuary, theatre and billboard.

The images generated by the new machine are essential for its successful functioning. Along with the principal aim of social interaction and the consumption of experiences, an adequate foundation is created in order to define the new consumption machine as an attraction point.

However, these new attraction points can only be successful if they are strategically located. The accessibility is in fact the essential prerequisite for becoming an attraction point, capable of generating public spaces and therefore, enable social interactions.

On these grounds, in order to find the most efficient locations for the generation of the new consumption machine, two principal factors need to be taken into account. The first one comprises the accessibility and therefore, a short analysis of the principal transport network of today will be necessary. Secondly, we will identify which areas on the transport network are today the most affected by the dissolution of the physical machine caused by digitalization. These considerations will lead us to the definition of the primal points where this new machine needs to be implemented.

5.2 Connections

Today's society is mobile, constantly in transit and restless. Connections are therefore the essential preconditions for the functioning of the present world. For this reason, the connection is a necessary factor to be taken into account for the definition of the new machine. In fact, introducing attraction points in specific key nodes of the transport network will not only increase the attendance of the new machine, but it will also cause an important deceleration of today's consumer society. Hence, within the next sections, we are going to analyse the connection and movement network within specific territories, in order to detect which are the most strategical sites for the location of these attraction points.

Referring to the previous chapters, a particular emphasis has already been placed on the Swiss landscape, as Switzerland contains an interesting urban situation along with a manageable scale. Therefore, the Swiss territory will be used as a testing ground for the further development of the scenarios. On these grounds, we will demonstrate how the new site and its related connections with the urban centres are primordial factors to ensure a vivid social life.

5.2.1 Accessibility and transport network

Two predominant factors are situated at the base of a successful public space: the transport network and with it the accessibility. In order to enable a lively social life within the public space, this latter needs to be accessible and connected to the urban transport network. Moreover, it also needs to be in proximity to other public spaces and amenities in order to avoid isolation.

These two factors, the accessibility and the transport network, were also the basis of the shopping mall conception. In fact, the mall was often built in strategic locations such as intersections of major roads. This was mainly due to the fact that the car network was in full development when the mall first appeared. The essential difference between the machine and its reinvention is that today the highways are not anymore an efficient response for defining an accessible public space. Compared to the post-war era, our society is increasingly less dependent on the highway network. Therefore, it is no longer judicious to rely on cars as the primal means of transportation, mainly because of their capacity of alienating buildings and partitioning landscapes. For this reason, we need to look at those transport networks which have the potential to be an efficient response to the mobility within

the city and are conceived within a long-term sustainable vision.

The public transport system is nowadays increasingly improving and developing, to the point of being a major success in Switzerland. Due to its efficiency and rather short commute distances, one can come across many travellers who make use of the railway network on a daily basis. Therefore, opposed to the regional shopping malls, such as the American *Southdale,* or Swiss *Glattzentrum*, the new consumption machine does not need to rely anymore on cars and the highway but rather on an efficient public transport system.

Nowadays society is increasingly fast and highly related to time issues. Therefore, the products need to be quick, accessible and ready to be consumed. The same goes for the experiences. For this reason, the emblematic sites for this fast consumer model are the major traffic nodes, like tram or train stations, which are not only efficient spaces for the transport network, but also the easiest reachable and most accessible ones. Due to their accessibility and strategic positions, they are crossed by a large amount of people every day.

An interesting example is the Zürich main station, whose success is demonstrated by the fact, that it is the most visited space in Switzerland. It is daily crossed by approximately 500 000 travellers.[10] However, due to this tremendous amount of people passing through at every hour of the day, the resulting ambiance does not welcome travellers to stay longer than necessary.

On these grounds, it is interesting to get back to the notion of *transit centre* (see section 4.1), as these precedented mentioned spaces, such as the Zürich main station, are the exact definition of it. A transit centre is a major node of an efficient transport system, which is therefore crossed by a large amount of travellers every day. Whether small or vast, these places become actual centres for the contemporary mobile society, along with being essential points of intersection. In a sense, the transit centres are not conceived spaces, in which one want to spend a large amount of time, on the contrary, they need to provide the most efficient space as possible.

An interesting consideration can be made regarding the essence of these spaces. In fact, we could state that these transit centres are the quintessential of Marc Augé definition of *non-lieux.*[11]

> La multiplication des non-lieux est pourtant caractéristique du monde contemporain. Les espaces de la circulation (autoroutes, voies aériennes), de la consommation (grandes surfaces) et de la communication (téléphones, fax, télévision) s'étendent aujourd'hui sur la terre entière: espaces où l'on coexiste ou cohabite sans vivre ensemble.[12]

10 Bernegg, Lauermann, Schenkel, Stadt Zurich, *Le commerce en mutation, Scénarios de la Ville de Zurich*, *op. cit.,* 23.

11 « (le non-lieu) symbolise le rapport de chacun de ces occupants à lui-même, aux autres occupants et à leur histoire commune. Un espace où ni l'identité, ni la relation, ni l'histoire ne sont symbolisées, se définira comme un non-lieu (...) »
Marc Augé, "Non-lieux" (lecture, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, January 26, 1994), 1.

12 Ibid.

13 Marc Augé, "Non-lieux", (Document for lecture, Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, January 26, 1994), 2.

Augé stressed that these particular spaces, so-called *non-lieux*, are completely deprived from any identity or historical symbolic relations. The consumer or the traveller, which are the protagonists of the *non-lieux*, represents the exact opposite of the Baudelaire's *flâneur*. This latter was the protagonist of the so called *city of the poetry*[13], defined as the opposite of the functional and rational city of today. In the rational city, a specific path is designed and imposed to the traveller. In this manner, the individual loses the liberty of defining its own way within the space, which corresponds to losing the right of *flâner*. This restriction is proper to the contemporary spaces of today, designed to be as efficient and rational as possible, exactly as the *transit centres*. In the city of the *flâneur*, one is freely allowed to chose its own paths. Being intrinsically connected with the history and the identity of the space, which allows the *flâneur* to recognize himself as a citizen and as belonging to a specific place.

14 Ibid.

However, the transit centres are the realms of globalization, where the traveller is neither in the "chez-soi", neither "chez les autres"[14]. In these places, the travellers are in an in-between space which is defined as *non-lieux*. Though, the transit centres have become today a fundamental part of our lives, as without them, an efficient and functioning public transport system can not simply be assured. Moreover, due to the fact that commuting is increasingly common, and that cars are decreasingly used, we are inclined to spend a larger amount of time in these so-called transit centres. In addition, these places might already be considered as public spaces par excellence, since its access is not limited in terms of time, space, or people. In fact, not only social interactions could occur naturally, but they also enable the meeting of every ages and nationalities. In this sense, the transit centres have an incredible potential to become strategical sites for the new machine. Perhaps, precisely with the introduction of the new machine on these sites, the transit centre can turn from being merely a *non-lieux* to become the new social interacting space par excellence.

15 Hans Rudolf Meier, Jürg Kuster, "Monitoring urbaner Raum Schweiz Analysen zu Städten und Agglomerationen" *Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung ARE, 2009: Monitoring urbaner Raum Schweiz – Analysen zu Städten und Agglomerationen.*

In order to propose a more specific study about these kind of spaces, we will begin to look at the Swiss situation from a larger perspective. We chose to consider four of the five largest cities in Switzerland, which contain at least 250 000 residents including their peripheries: Zurich, Basel, Bern and Lausanne.[15] They represent not only the cultural centres of Switzerland, but they are also cities in which the population is still drastically increasing. The decision was made to exclude Geneva from the selection, as the city illustrates a particular case due to its enclosed and isolated location.

The first thing that stands out by observing these cities at a large scale, is the importance of the railway network. When looking at the infrastructure, which encompasses Zürich, a sprawl to the N-W and N-E can be identified. Its population not only increases within the

core but also in its surrounding smaller cities and villages. More and more people are moving out of the city centre due to congestion and the high rental and buy prices.

Similar occurrences have happened also in the other cities. For example Basel has sprawled on the Swiss side in the S-E direction by creating smaller hubs within the periphery. Compared to Basel, Lausanne has more spatial and physical limitations, as the national border is replaced by the lake. Due to its position next to the lake Geneva and its sloping ground, the extension of the city proceeds mainly alongside the lake shore. Finally, because of its central position within Switzerland, the capital notices an extension in all four directions.

These cities have a common ground since the people living in the periphery are mainly connected with the city centre through a developed system of public transport, which mostly comprises the railway. The street network, even if strongly present, is therefore not the only and principal connection. In this sense, Switzerland differs a lot from the American landscape.

On these grounds, it is interesting to notice that the most centralized spaces within the Swiss urban fabric are the transit centres. These specific points, which are a beneficial position for the new consumption machine, are the most easily accessible sites and often crossed on a regular basis by the residents of the region. Therefore, the most effective points are the national and local transit centres, such as train, tram or bus stations. At a larger scale the position which is prioritised is not necessarily the core of the city, but the sites which are efficiently connected with a public transport network to the actual city centre.

In this regard, we are going to take a closer look to the cities' peripheries and more specifically to their connected municipalities, in order to understand their importance for the today's consumer society. By comparing similar cases, an ideal location will be chosen for the purpose of creating the different scenarios.

Lausanne

Bern

Zürich

Basel
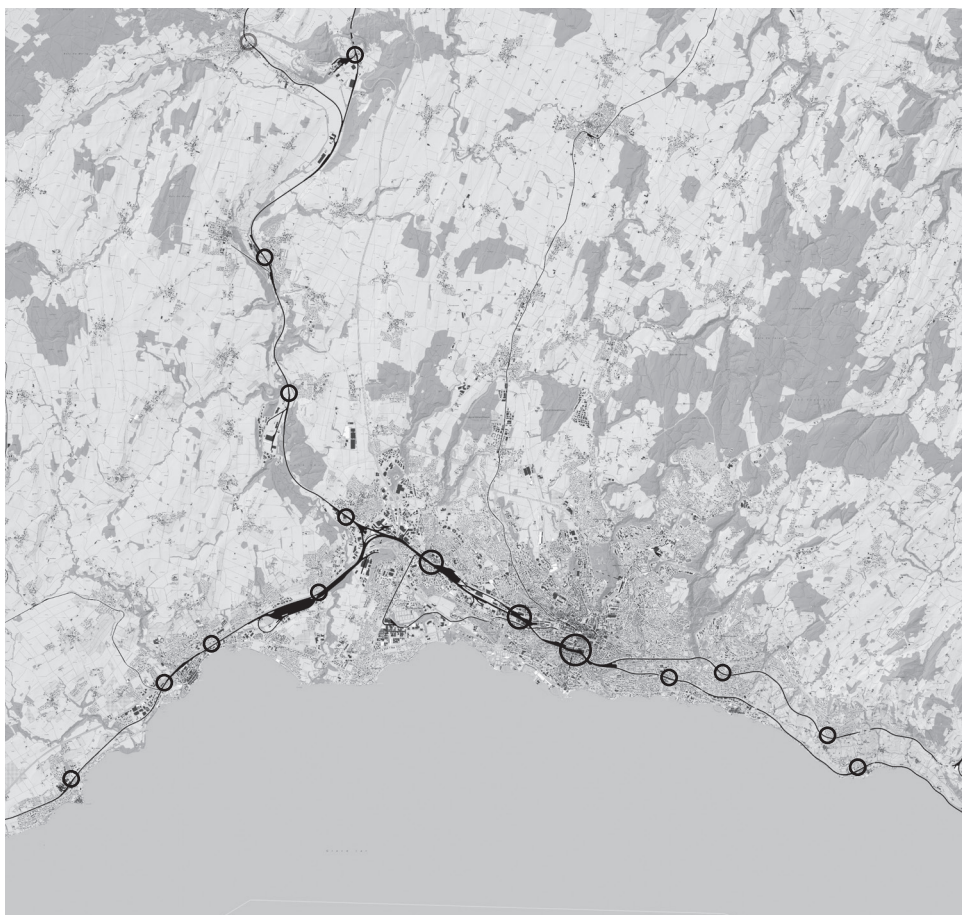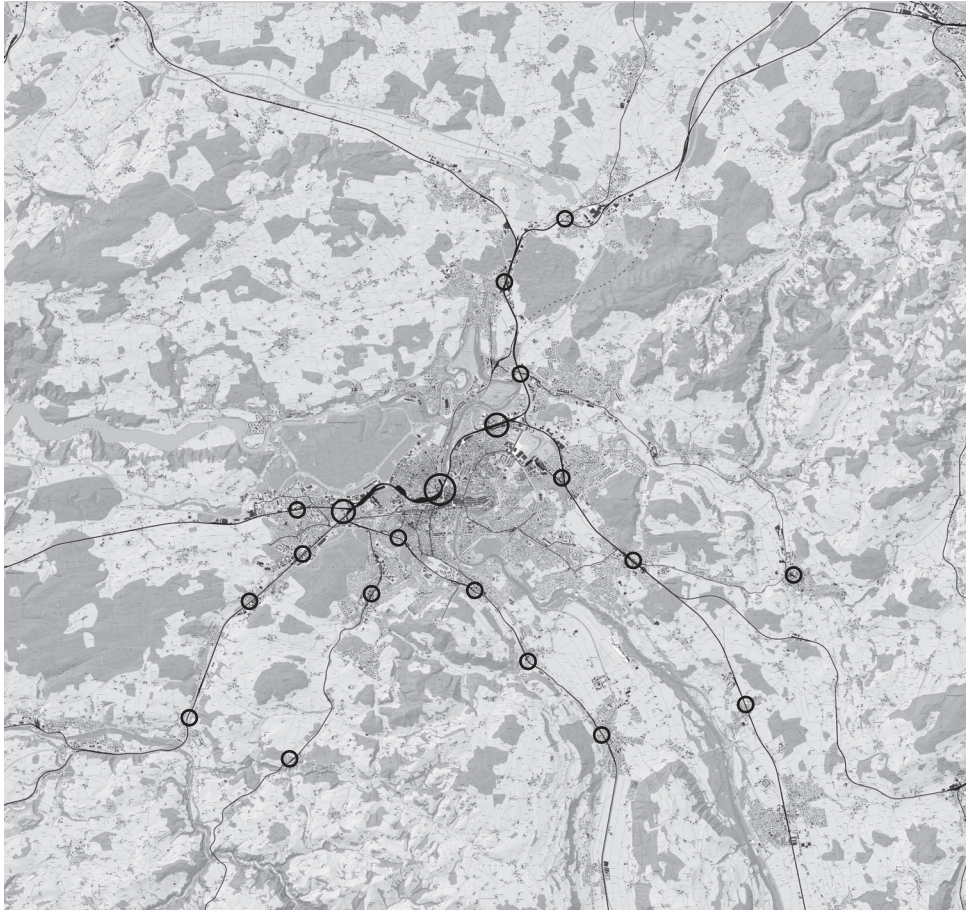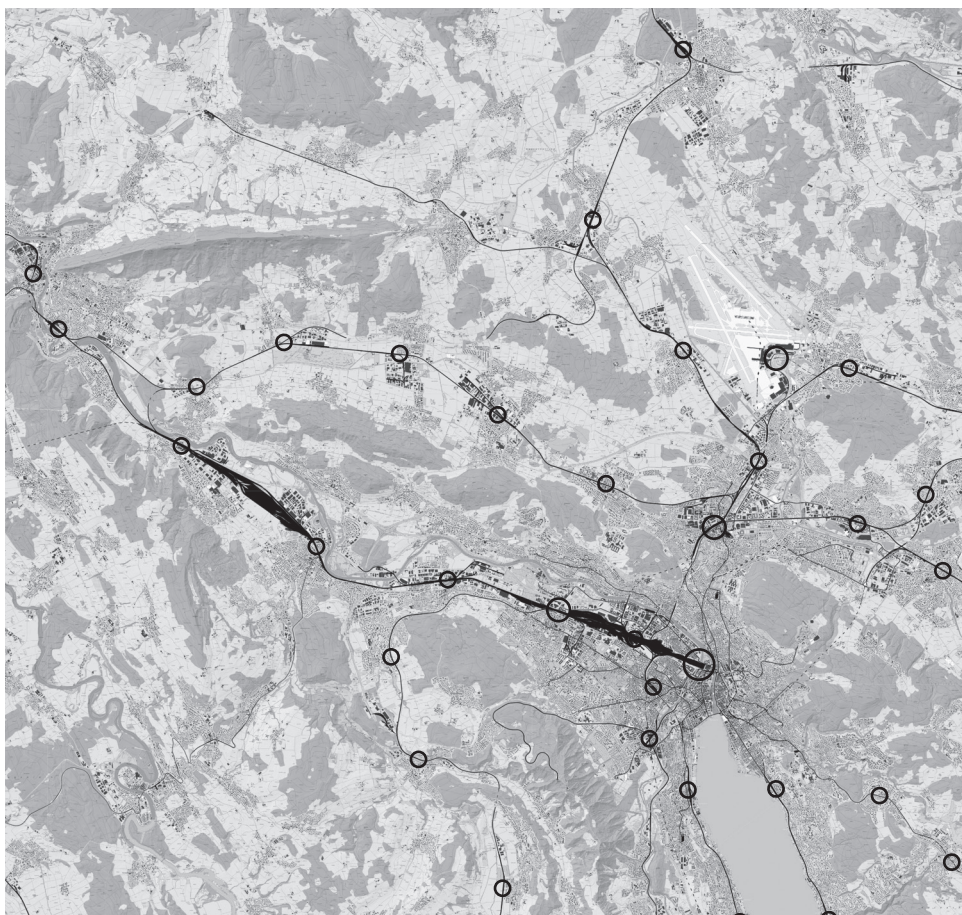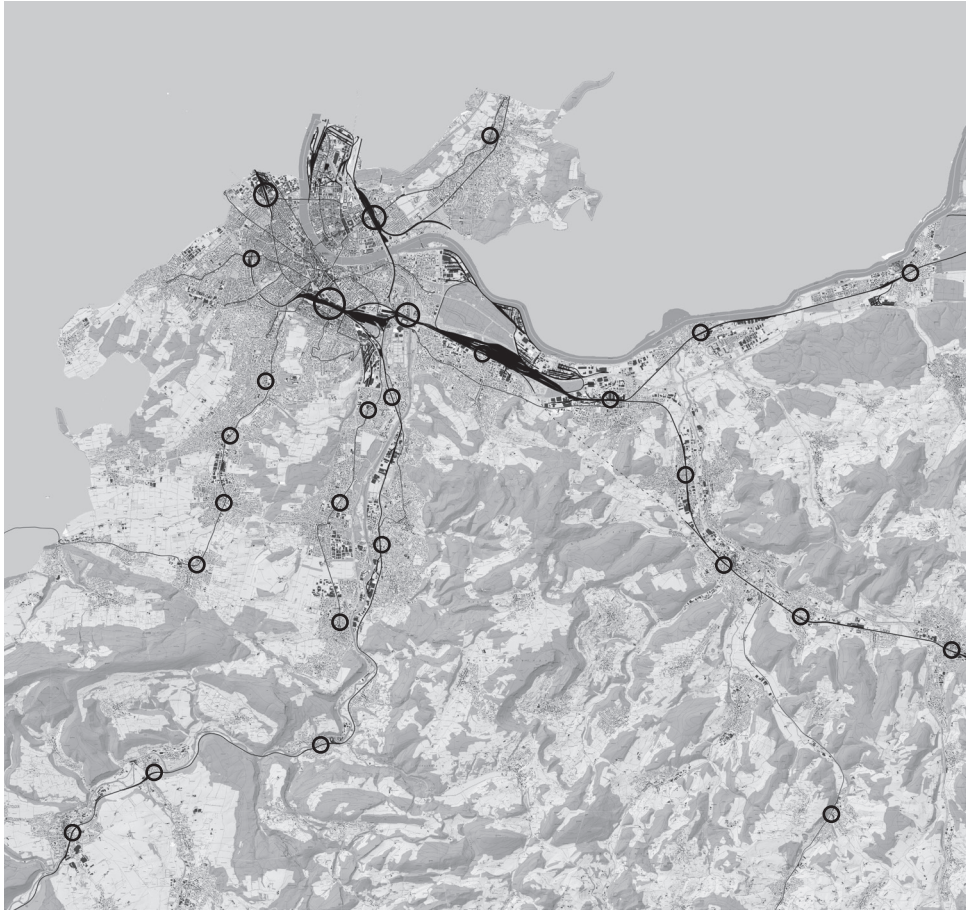
5.2.2 Agglomeration

Referring to the previous chapter, the formal dissolution of the physical consumption machine occurs globally. However, an assumption can be made, that this dissolution happens at different scales, timing and depending on the specific locations. In fact, we presume that the physical shops within the city centres will not disappear as quickly as in the more rural regions. They are the last ones to disappear, if ever. This is mainly due to the fact, that city centres rely on the interdependent relation of public space and retail, and will always find a way to feature a lively public space.

However, this assumption is only valid for the larger cities containing a historical core, such as Zürich, Basel, Bern, Lausanne and Geneva. By taking into account the peripheries of these cities, we can already notice that a disappearing of public space and social life has already started, due to the dissolution of the physical malls and the local stores. Therefore, the most critical sites affected by this dissolution are the agglomerations. These places are not only those which are most in need of a regeneration of social life, but they are also the places whose population will still increase drastically in the future. For this reason, by reintroducing new attraction points within the agglomeration, its missing social life could be reinstated. On these grounds, the agglomerations are going to be our focus point within this chapter.

Before looking deeper into what an agglomeration features, it is important to specify what the term actually means. There are two principal definitions of the term *agglomeration*. The first and official one is exposed in the publication *Die Raumgliederungen der Schweiz*, which defines the agglomeration as an area connected by several urban municipalities, and which comprises at least 20 000 residents. *Agglomeration* is here intended as a generic term, which represents the combination of the main city and several smaller municipalities. In order to belong to an agglomeration, the municipalities have to feature three of the five conditions. They should be physically connected to the main city, feature a high population density, present an above-average increase in population, not prioritize agriculture or should feature a strong commuting integration with the main city. According to Schuler, Dessemontet and Joyer, three different sizes of agglomerations can be distinguished in Switzerland. The agglomerations of the above mentioned major cities, represent the first and largest category.[16]

16 Martin Schuler, Pierre Dessemontet und Dominique Joye (2005): *Die Raumgliederungen der Schweiz*. Eidg. Volkszählung 2000, Bundesamt für Statistik, Neuchâtel.

However, the term *agglomeration* gets a second important definition in the Swiss context and common language. When talking about Swiss agglomerations, the term is mainly used for defining the surrounding municipalities only. The core, such as Zürich, is

hereby excluded from the agglomeration definition. Further, the agglomeration is not considered as an area, but as a single municipality which is connected to the city centre.[17] Within this chapter the term agglomeration is employed according to the second definition, namely a single municipality, which is connected to the main core.

By creating a collection of agglomerations, which surround the four major cities of Switzerland, a lot of similarities can be observed. It can be stated that the closer the agglomeration is to the main city, the larger its size. Although they differ in size, they are mostly located along the railway network, defining denser hubs in the proximity of the train stations. They are therefore directly connected to the city centre through the railway and highway network. They also provide a local public transport network, consisting of trams and bus, which ensure connections within their agglomeration and to the core. It is interesting to notice that the principal road system often matches with the historical structure of the old village, which is today still recognizable.

17 Confédération suisse, 2014, "régions d'analyse", Accessed December 26, 2019, https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/home/statistiques/themes-trans-versaux/analyses-spatiales/niveaux-geographiques/regions-analyse.html.

Lausanne

Renens
Morges
Crissier

Bern

Bümpliz
Ostermundingen
Zollikofen

Zürich

Altstetten
Dietikon
Walisellen

Basel

Muttenz
Pratteln
Reinach Dornach

Considering the various features that these places have in common, the decision was made to analyse a single agglomeration. Indeed, It is a paradigm which is applicable to all other Swiss agglomerations. Therefore, this agglomeration will also serve as our testing ground in order to create several variations of the new machine. The agglomeration of Muttenz has therefore been chosen, as it features rather typical and common characteristics. Due to its proximity to Basel, it is a rather large agglomeration, counting almost 18 000 inhabitants in 2019[18]. In fact, it represents the first agglomeration of Basel on the railway line which connects Basel to the other principal nodes of Switzerland.

This railway line is highly frequented by the commuters, who daily travel back and forth from Basel. For this reason, the train station is to be considered as a main transit centre within the agglomerations and therefore a potential point of intervention to test the new machine. Due to its proximity to the main city, Muttenz is also connected by a local tram railway. Opposed to the rapid train, the tram line respond to a regional scale and provides several stops within the agglomeration. After the train, the local tram is the most commonly used means of transport within the rural landscape. In this manner, the numerous tram stops are other potential sites.

The different Swiss agglomerations have not always been physically connected to the city centres. On the contrary, most of them were villages which emerged independently from the city. On these grounds, the agglomerations contain an historical centre in which the core is often embodied by the church. The historical centres are still present in today's agglomerations, even if increasingly deserted. The reason of this depopulation, along with the dissolution of the physical stores, is also due to the fact that today's consumer society is decreasingly connected with the church or the religion in general.[19] As a result the historical centre of Muttenz, as any other agglomeration, is much less frequented. Hence, it could be interesting to test these historical cores as other intervention points, in order to regenerate the lively centre they once had.

Another interesting feature of Muttenz is the N-S axis, which is perpendicular to the tram lines and the other major street. This axis connects the train station with the historical centre of the village. Due to its orientation and its strategical connection of the two main nodes, it can also be take into consideration as an accessible medium to provide a revitalised site where social life could be introduced.

Finally, the last important site is the intersection of the W-E axis with the previously seen N-S axis. This axes create a strategical intersection which can be exploited as an interesting position within the agglomeration. It allows the creation of a central public space which is easily accessible, since it is crossed by the two main axes.

18   Basel Landschaft. 2019. "Wohnbevölkerung nach Nationalität und Konfession per 30. September 2019". Last modified December 19, 2019. https://www.statistik.bl.ch/web_portal/1.

19   SRF. 2017 "Die Zahl der Konfessionslosen steigt".Last modified January 1, 2017. https://www.srf.ch/news/schweiz/die-zahl-der-konfession-slosen-steigt.

In the light of these facts, the definition of different scenarios on the following pages will try to give a more precise but still speculative result of this entire analysis. The definition of the new consumption machine will be tested and planned according to the previous considerations. However, this analysis, along with the following scenarios does not claim to be a fixed proposition. On the contrary it has to be considered as an opening for further reflections on this topic, whose ultimate issue remains the necessity of regenerating a new space for social life.

Muttenz 1:25 000
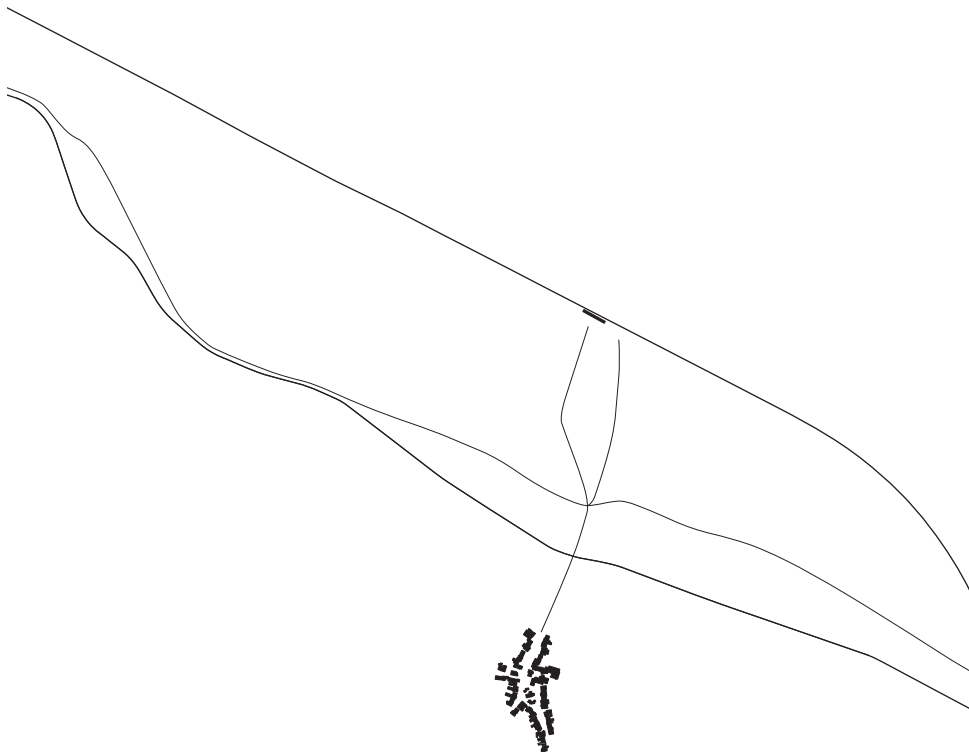
5.3 Scenarios

In the course of this fifth chapter, we firstly identified three main conditions which we consider to be essential for the generation of the new machine. The machine as social interaction, the machine as experience and the machine as image. These conditions are interdependent and allow the generation of a successful attraction point for social gathering. However, the fourth essential factor which enables the functioning of this machine are the connections. These latter comprise the strategical sites, which are connected to the urban landscape, making the machine accessible and therefore efficient. To summarize, in order to generate a successful machine the two essential prerequisites are to be an attraction point and to be connected.

In order to offer a more specific response to this analysis, five different scenarios are proposed on the basis of the previously mentioned conditions. In this sense, each scenario will emphasize a particular aspect of the social interactions, the experiences, the images and therefore will be placed within a specific connection. The aim is to test the particularity and potentiality of each one of these conditions. In fact, for each scenario a theoretical model will be proposed at first, and subsequently adapted within the physical context of Muttenz, which represents our chosen model location.

Scenario 1

Child   Teenager   Young adult   Adult   Retiree

+

Social interaction

Knowledge   Entertainment   Nature   Physical activity   Service

+

Experience

Labyrinth   Prison   Sanctuary   Theatre   Billboard
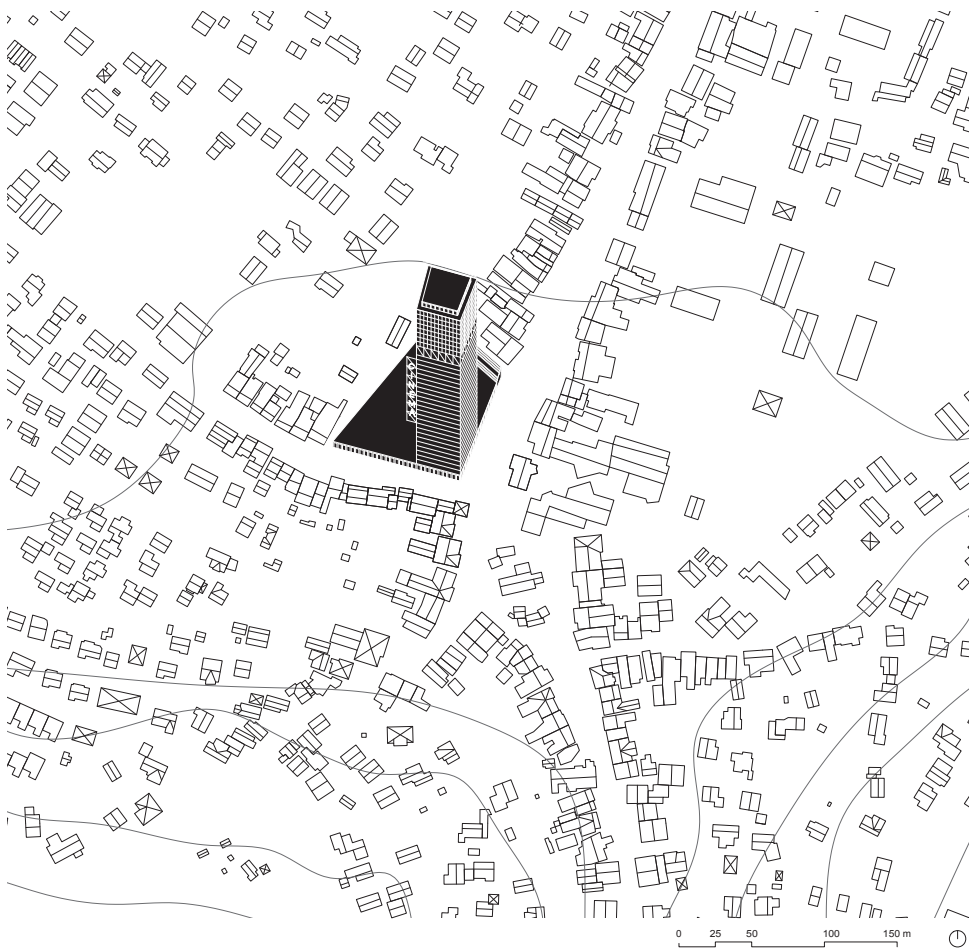
+

Image
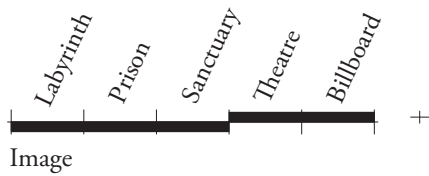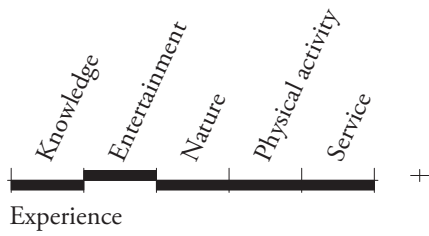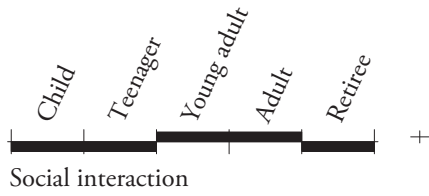
The Amusement Tower

Today's consumer society is decreasingly connected to the church or to religion in general. Except from some retirees and families, also the church of Muttenz is repeatedly vacant. Moreover, the whole agglomeration is rather dull, compared to the glittery city. The amusement tower re-activates its core and confronts the historical but outdated church. On this account, the new amusement centre find its place in the centre of the historical village and directly in front of the church. Thereby the N-S axis, which connects the train stations to the historical village, is strengthened and revitalized.

The tower creates a vivid public space in a dreary agglomeration where people can gather without having responsibilities to the church. It reanimates the missing social contact, caused by the emergence of social media. In this manner, this new consumption machine creates a space which encourages especially the social life of adults and younger residents.

The amusement tower, as stated by its name, offers different sort of entertainment which are today missing in most of the agglomerations. The new consumption of entertainment replaces the already vanished material consumption. Therefore, this community centre employs entertaining programs such as theatres, concert halls, cinemas, night clubs, bowling alley, along with necessary services such as bars and restaurants. These programs can take place within different storeys of the tower, which are permanently occupied. In fact, during the night, the tower turns into a public entertaining space, which provides the residents with amusing activities. While during the day, the upper and more isolated part contains offices of any kinds. In this way the tower becomes a new permanently visited and used centre, which re-vitalizes Muttenz all day long.

The new consumption machine's location and the image are the key for its successful functioning. Due to its height, the tower turns into a landmark surrounded by low rise residential buildings in the vast agglomeration. By adding a physically higher building next to the church, a new core with symbolic and civic values is created. The amusement tower is also perceived as a billboard which can be noticed from far away, advertising the historical village. Furthermore, its leisure facilities transformed the space into a stage. Citizens can observe each others, stand and act on a figurative stage and become the new audience within this space. The amusement tower turns thus into a theatre.
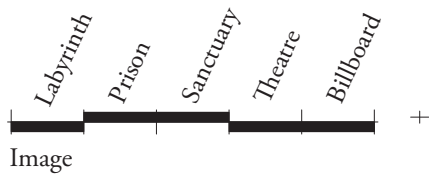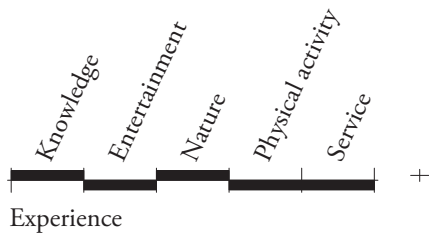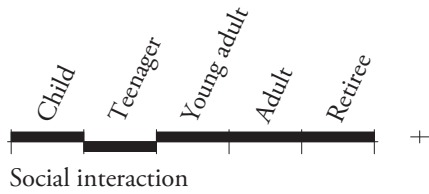
Ideal

Adaptation

0 50 100   250   500 m

Scenario 2

Child　Teenager　Young adult　Adult　Retiree

Social interaction

Knowledge　Entertainment　Nature　Physical activity　Service

Experience

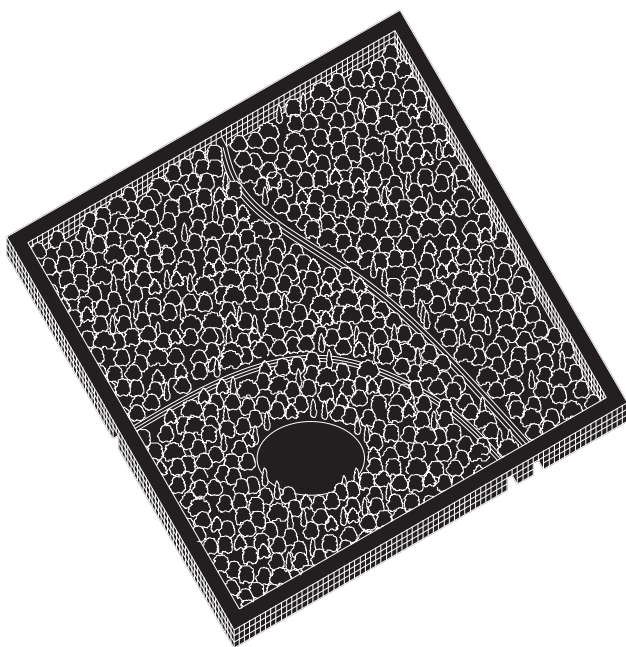Labyrinth　Prison　Sanctuary　Theatre　Billboard
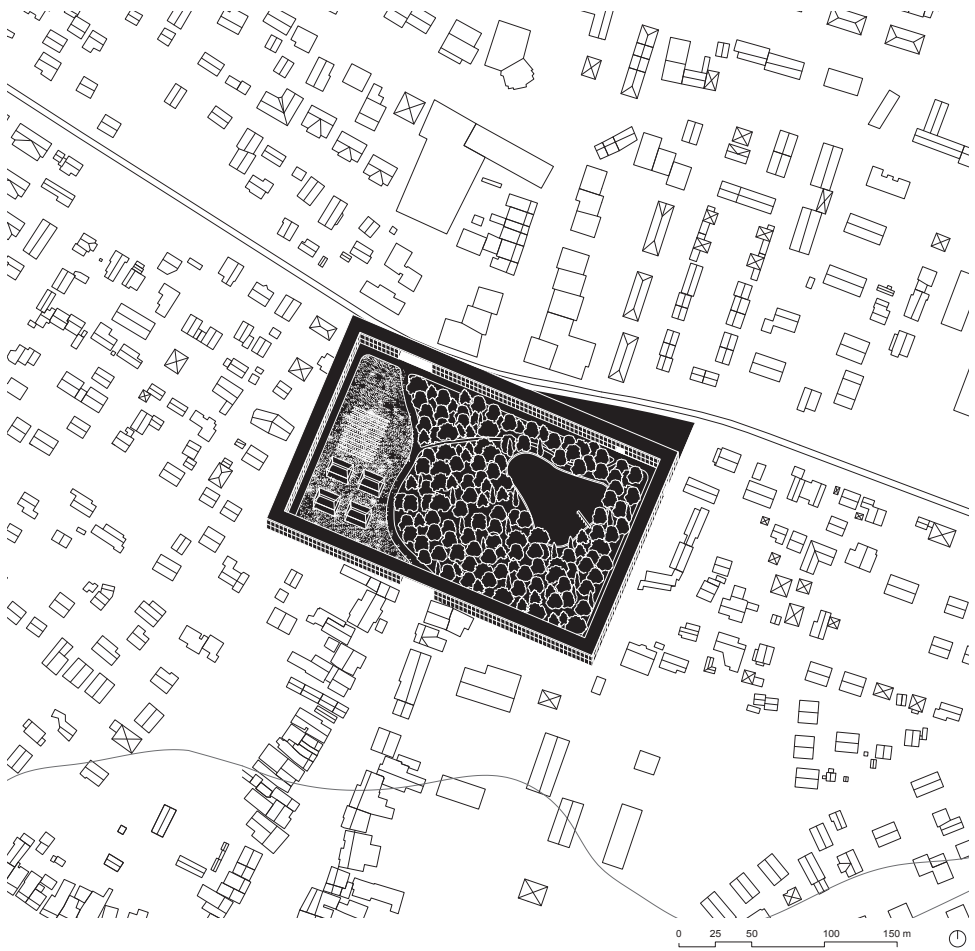
Image
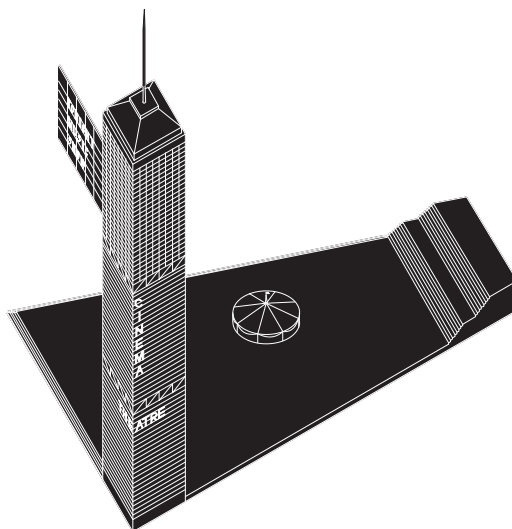
The Collective Park

In a world ruled by food excess, overproduction and globalization, the primordial need of surviving does not apply anymore to our interconnected contemporary society. In fact, this latter is increasingly focused on establishing a healthier way of living. Therefore controlling the food's origin and favour a more local, seasonal and ecological production, is becoming a primordial issue. Then again, today's world is consumed by stress and based on a rather fast pace. By creating a natural and relaxing public space within the agglomeration, a healthy relationship with nutrition can be taught and a consistent stressful life escaped. To be accessible for as many residents as possible, the new communal centre is located at the intersection between the two major axes of the agglomeration. In this way, the new machine defines a new central, interconnected and strategical centre.

The new community centre stimulates the gathering of a large range of different ages: young adults, retirees, adults and children. It is a space where the age difference almost disappears. A strong sense of community replaces the self-centred society. The citizens are encouraged to help and learn from each other. On these grounds, a public space is created, where the agglomeration's residents socially interact.

Opposed to the city centre, where all sorts of entertaining functions come together, in the new centre the emphasis is put on relaxation and cultivation. It contains a public and natural park, which offers active and passive activities, such as reading, enjoying the sun and having a picnic. During winter time, ice-skating and similar winter activities take place within the vast court. The park does not only imitate the surrounding Swiss nature, but it becomes a part of it. Furthermore, the public park provides the citizens of the agglomeration with a collective garden. They do not only have the possibility to garden and to contribute to the community, but as well to learn about nature, cultivation and nutrition. Services, such as coffees and smaller restaurants offer wholesome food, produced on site. In this scenario the consumption of nature is promoted.

This consumption machine can be perceived as a voluntary prison and as a sheltering sanctuary at the same time. The park is imprisoned by a low rise building, which allows the citizens that enter to feel completely isolated and protected from the busy surroundings. Though, by creating a collective oasis within an individualized residential area, the park also becomes a needed collective sanctuary for all the residents.
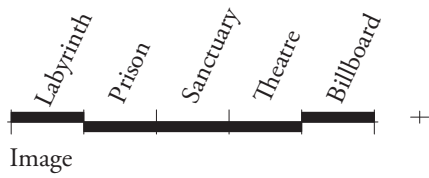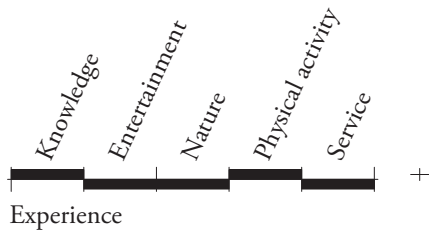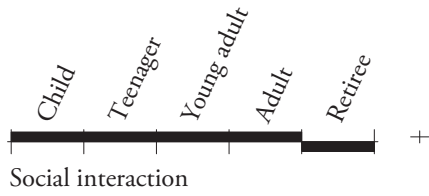
Ideal

Adaptation

0 50 100   250   500 m

Scenario 3

Child | Teenager | Young adult | Adult | Retiree

+

Social interaction

Knowledge | Entertainment | Nature | Physical activity | Service

+

Experience

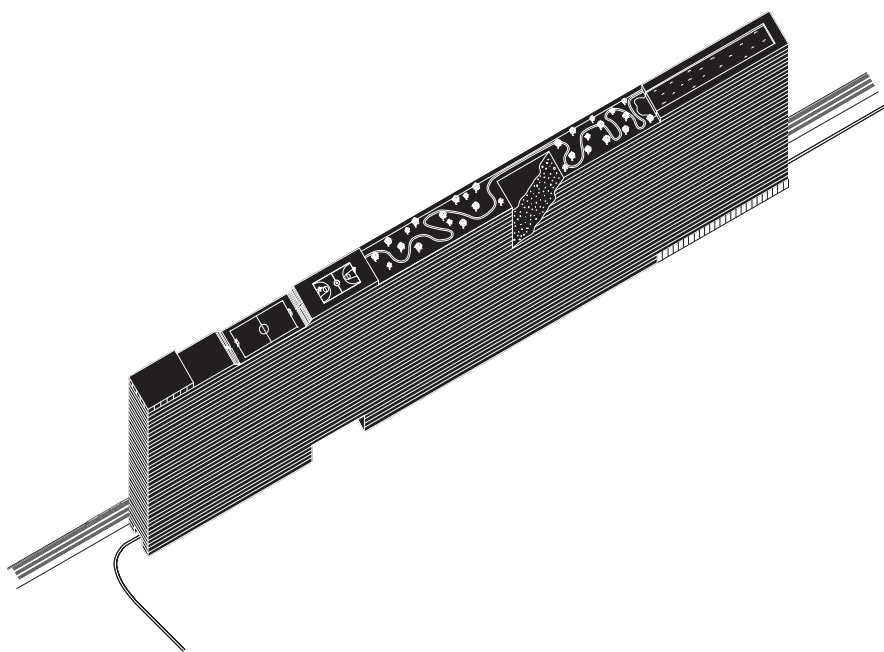Labyrinth | Prison | Sanctuary | Theatre | Billboard

+

Image

The Sport Centre

The important impact of social media and the permanent interconnection of people, provoke the generation of a new leading value which can be well described as self-contemplation. Citizens are increasingly focused on their virtual and physical appearance. A healthier way of living becomes essential to achieve a satisfiable appearance. On these grounds, a new communal centre is created where the emphasis is put on health, appearance and physical activities. The urban agglomeration is connected with the network system primarily through the railways and tramways. The train station is therefore the strategic point of transition as it is completely accessible at all time and for all citizens. This urban hub becomes the site for a new machine which takes the appearance of a communal sport centre.

The centre responds to a large range of habits, preferences, and moreover ages. Physical activities for children until adults are offered in order to enable a new centre for the agglomeration's social life.

In order to create a lively public space, the engine of the new machine is primarily the consumption of physical activity. The principal programs are sport, leisure and health. The residents need a place where they can interact socially but at the same time where they can take care about themselves. The sport centre is offering a wide range of different kind of sports, from the collective ones to the more individual activities. Basket, football, volleyball, handball, hokey, tennis, badminton, athletics, and along with others team sports, they have their own fields within the upper floors of the building. Fitness rooms and more general rooms for individual sports, are also provided within the centre. These programs are complemented with workshops and collective trainings, where it is possible to learn not only about sports programs and training, but also about nutrition. In this sense, chains of restaurants and coffee houses offer an example for a healthier lifestyle. Furthermore, other services are also available within the centre, such as medical care, physiotherapy or orthopaedics.

Mainly due to its monumental dimension, the new machine is perceived as a big billboard within the low rise residential agglomeration. It creates therefore a contrast between its urban dimension and the rural houses of the agglomeration. Further, it can also be perceived as a labyrinth, due to the multitude of functions and storeys that is capable to contain. Once inside, it becomes almost impossible to escape from it.
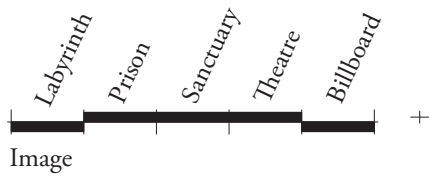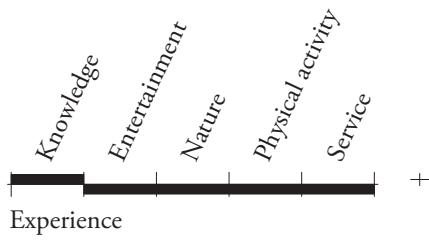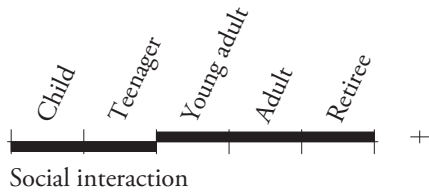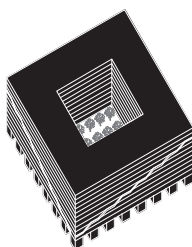
Ideal

0   25   50   100   150 m

Adaptation

0 50 100   250   500 m

Scenario 4

Child   Teenager   Young adult   Adult   Retiree

+

Social interaction

Knowledge   Entertainment   Nature   Physical activity   Service

+

Experience

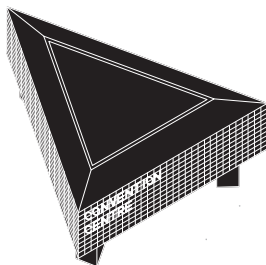Labyrinth   Prison   Sanctuary   Theatre   Billboard
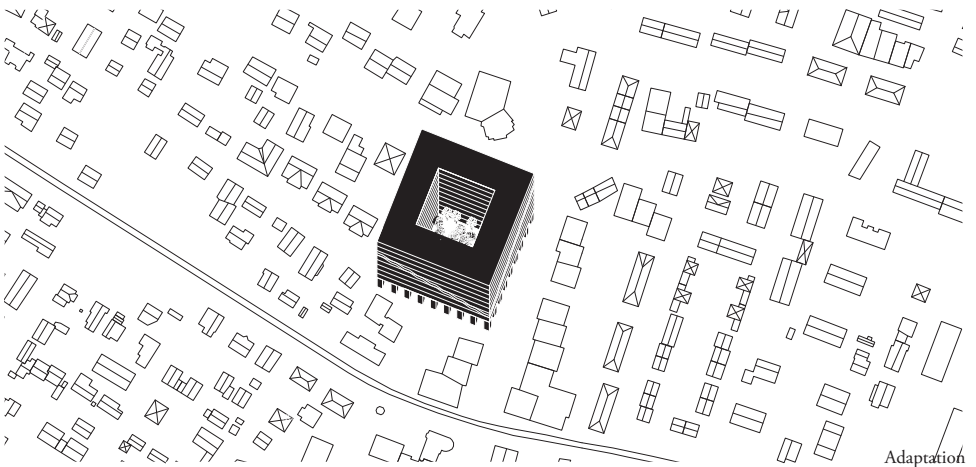
+
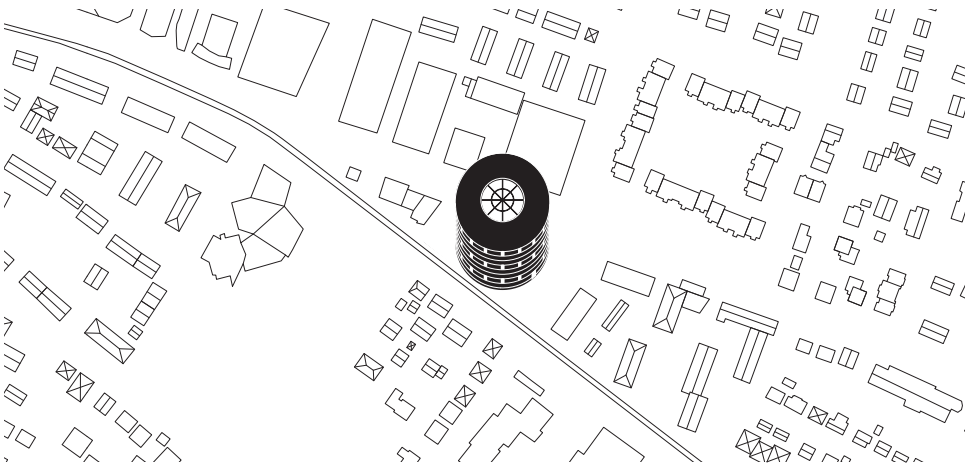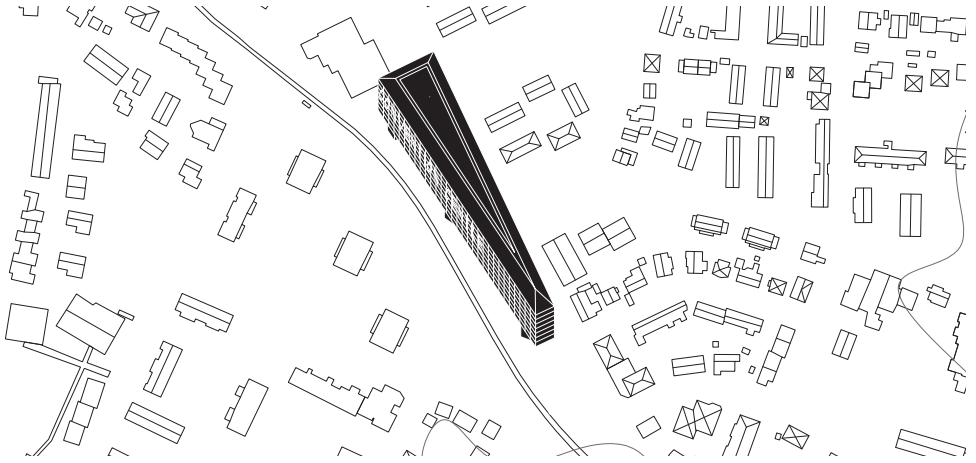
Image

The Educational Centre

Within a reality overwhelmed by too much irrelevant informations, especially by the means of technological devices, the society continuously desires to acquire more and more actual knowledge. Three different attraction points become the new public centres of the agglomeration, generating an important social life along with an educational centre. The three buildings offer an efficient accessibility by being situated alongside the tram line which connects the city centre of Basel to the agglomeration. In this way the principal axis S-W is enhanced, and the eventual displacements from one centre to another is direct and easily ensured by the tram stops. In fact the citizens are not only able to comfortably move between the different educational centres, but they are also benefiting of an efficient connection from the city centre towards Muttenz.

The new learning centre prioritizes the adult and elderly population, due to the fact that the children, teenager and partly the young adults already attend educational institutions such as schools or universities. On these grounds, also the other ages can get access to the informations and knowledge, which generates a public space where gather and meet within the residential agglomeration.

Therefore, the consumption of knowledge replaces the material consumption becoming the engine of this new communal centre. The knowledge is consumed through three different public programs: the library, the museum and the convention centre. This latter is the one located closest to Basel. This connection enables the participation of a broader public compared to the other two buildings, and for this reason it contains a constant accessible program as a convention centre. The museum, where history and knowledge can be contemplated and absorbed in a collective way, take place along the tram line between the other two buildings. The third building of the educational centre is the library, situated within the intersection of the N-S axis, is mainly used by the residents of the agglomeration, even if open to everyone.

The combination of these three buildings can be perceived as different types of sanctuary, prison and theatre at the same time. The educational centre turns into a physical and mental sanctuary, as the residents can escape their noisy lives by remaining within a calm environment. Due to the never ending consumption of knowledge, the residents relocate themselves in a voluntary prison, where the end of acquiring knowledge is out of sight. And the perception of a theatre is obtained as the three buildings represent a sort of stages within the urban fabric.
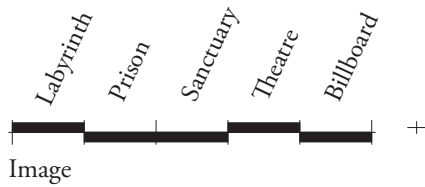
Ideal

Adaptation

0   25   50   100   150 m

0 50 100 250 500 m

Scenario 5

Child　Teenager　Young adult　Adult　Retiree

Social interaction

Knowledge　Entertainment　Nature　Physical activity　Service

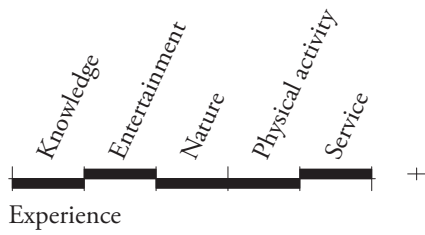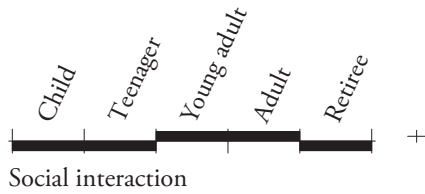**Experience**

Labyrinth　Prison　Sanctuary　Theatre　Billboard

**Image**
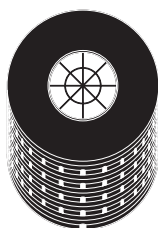
The Multifunctional Square

Within a society mainly based on a fast pace, excess and digitalization, the efficiency of services and logistics become a primordial need that requires to be optimized. The new central square offers a sheltered multifunctional public space for the agglomeration. It does not only provides logistical spaces, where it is possible to receive and pick up the digitally ordered merchandise, but it is also a space where temporary events and entertainments are offered. In order to give access to as many citizens as possible, the multifunctional square is located within the N-S axis, between the well-visited train station and the often used tram line, which connects Muttenz with the city centre of Basel. This new central square become the logistic and entertaining centre for the social life of the agglomeration.

The multifunctional square is mainly conceived for the younger adults or the adults in general. Due to its central and strategical location, the square gives a momentary rest to the crossing travellers, coming from the train station after their working days. It is a space where the social interaction between the citizens occurs naturally and spontaneously without any constraints. This absence of boundary is also reflected by the generic and multifunctional architecture.

Due to the increasing surplus of different services, offered within the cities and agglomerations, today's society is permanently using these services to the point of starting to consume them. Therefore, by creating a space which can include any type of different services within one location, the citizens do not have to cross the whole agglomeration for an haircut, a key duplication or to collect a parcel. The proximity of the services and their central location allow an incredibly gain of time, along with an increase of beneficial social interactions and entertainments. In fact, next to services there are also entertaining programs, such as markets, concerts, lectures and public viewings. However, as the name already implies, the multifunctional square mainly contains temporary facilities, which can be adapted depending on the specific need and time.

The temporary programs and the possibility to vary the layout of the plan according to the different functions leads to an architecture which needs to be kept to the minimum. At the same time, the generic grid, within which different programs can take place and change at any time, generates the image of a labyrinth. Within this latter the citizens are automatically drawn into the multifunctional space and lose themselves within the generic space of the square. Further, the same space which can be staged in several ways, can also recall the image of a theatre.

Ideal

Adaptation

0 50 100   250   500 m
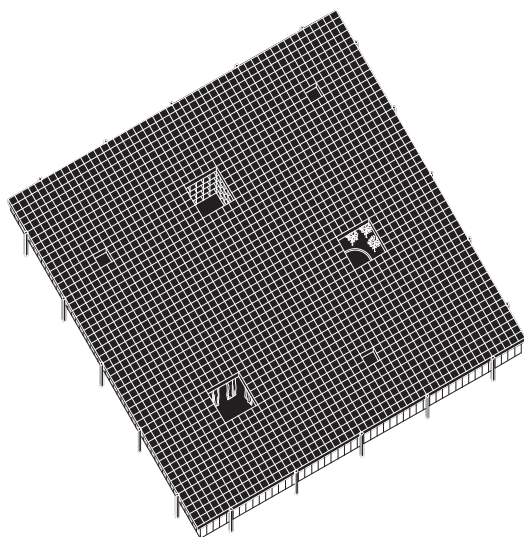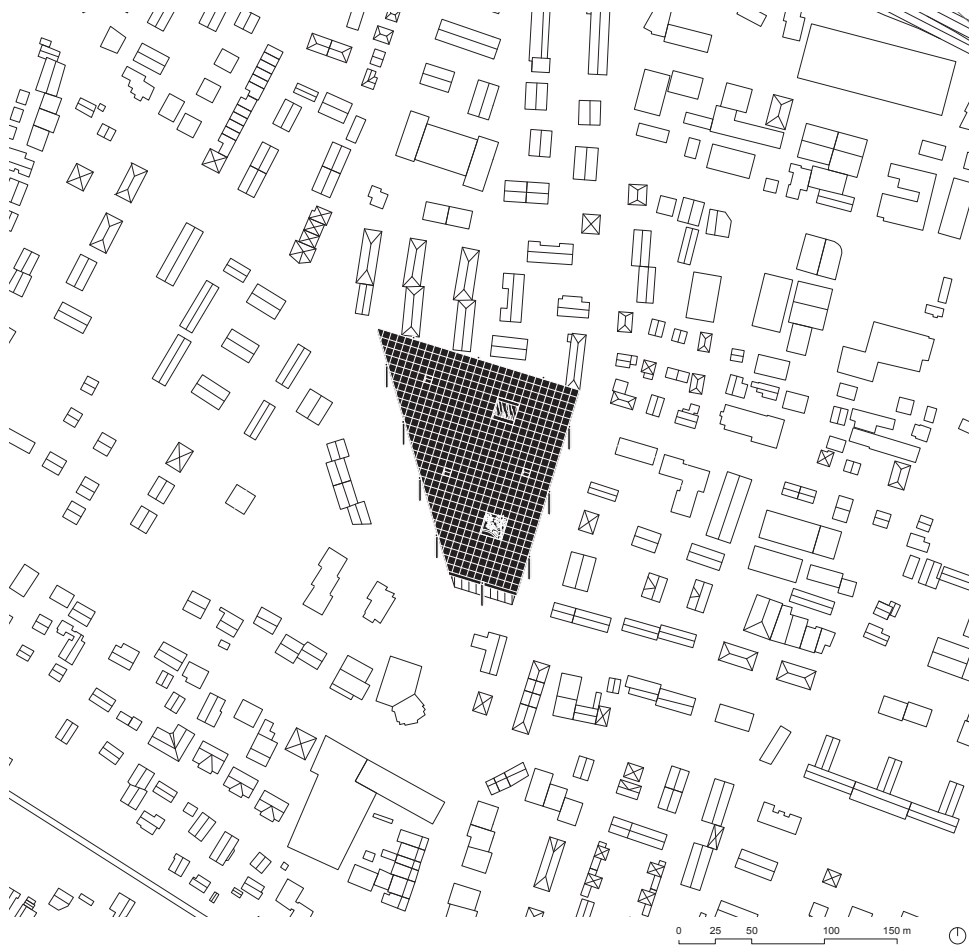
6
Conclusion

A new consumption

We have never experienced a reality deprived of consumption. Since the early civilizations, consumption has always been and always will be the primal influential factor capable of defining our social behaviour and physical space. The society, which we took into account, lives in a reality where the primary human needs of survival are so easily ensured that they are no longer considered as daily concerns. In other words, the main concern of this society is the pursuit of a purpose that gives sense to life. In this regard, *consumption* represents every single feature that the society needs in order to give meaning to life and not just to survive.

On these grounds, consumption is more than a value, it is a principal need. Not other need than consumption has been a generator of so many successful and essential gathering spaces within our cities. In this terms, consumption is a generator of architecture. Primarily architecture allows us to successfully coexist within a physical space. Today precisely this latter is more and more threatened. The so-called *public space*, which comprises all these physical spaces, enables our social life as citizens.

In a world where individualism and technology are getting more significant than major daily commodities and physical gathering spaces, the question we have tried to answer is: what will enable people to live their social life in an increasingly digitalized world?

The age-old liaison between retail and public space demonstrates that public space always needs to be activated by specific programs in order to be successful. For many years, these programs have been represented by retail. In fact, this latter is to be considered as one of the most successful activator of public space until today. Retail is clearly related to consumption and is defined as *material consumption*. If it disappears, other programs need to be introduced in order to reactivate the public space which however, will still related to consumption. In fact, precisely for what it has been previously analysed, public space can not exist without consumption. If material consumption disappears from the physical city, a new form of consumption needs to be introduced. This latter is what has been defined as *immaterial consumption* of experiences.

Experiences are what today's society needs to consume in order to socially interact and thus, to activate the public space. Within the increasingly digitalized reality and the faster pace of the society,

experiences, according to us, can successfully respond to these critical circumstances. Firstly, they are not replaceable by digitalization and secondly, they can be adapted to any need and desire.

The entire analysis, including the previously presented scenarios, is a partial response to this contemporary issue. Besides giving matter for reflection, the scenarios also demonstrate a degree of adaptation, which needs to be deeper investigated. However they offer a concrete response to what an immaterial consumption of experiences could be. Each scenario represents a particular answer to a specific aspect of the contemporary society. For this reason the totality of the scenarios are complementary and can coexist within a same situation. The proposal of different specific scenarios arises from the fact that the reinvention of the new gathering machine can take place in different forms and host different types of experiences. This is due to the fact, that the new machine is strictly related to the site and the society for which it is conceived. However, these new machines have one thing in common: Their purpose is to become an efficiently connected attraction points.

In this sense, the scenarios are a current, but partial response to the concerns of our contemporary society, which is constantly changing. However, the need of social interacting and with it the physical gathering spaces, which has been called so far the *public spaces*, will not change.

Real public space or is it just pretended?

As it has been previously defined, the *public space par excellence* is a space which is laid out for citizens as a public service, without any constraints in terms of accessibility or time. Opposite to this term, we have also defined the *pretended public space* as a space which is often in the possession of a private owner, who can therefore decide for whom and when the space is accessible by implementing specific constrains. The question which arises at this point, is if a public place really exists in our contemporary city, or further, if it has ever existed.

What we consider to be one of the first public spaces in history is the agora. Already then, this space contained restrictions in terms of accessibility.[1] Therefore, it could be stated that the agora demonstrates the begin of the pretended public space, as it was not accessible to the totality of the population. The same goes for the majority of the spaces that in the current language are defined as public space. Nevertheless, the agora was still the most successful and accessible space for social interaction within the city.

Inside our contemporary cities there are decreasingly spaces without constrictions in terms of space and time. There are only few left, which are not owned by private corporations. At this point,

1 Marta Kwiatkowski, Stefan Breit,Leonie Thalmann, "Why the public space doesn't exist", in *Future Public Space*, GDI Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute, 2018.

instead of differentiating between a public space par excellence and the pretended one, we could talk about different degrees of pretended public spaces.

The spaces which can nearly be identified as a public space par excellence are the previously seen *transit centres*. In fact, they do not only represent one of the most used spaces within a city, but above all, they are the most accessible and visited ones. In this sense, the transit centres have an incredible potential to become the strategical sites for these new machines, as these latter can be able to transform them into the new social interacting space par excellence.

Precisely because of these considerations, the questions we ask ourselves are: does the transit centres have the capability to become the new agora within the contemporary cities and agglomerations? By taking into account the previously seen scenarios, could these transit centres have the potentiality to become the new gathering spaces capable of ensuring the social life?

Lastly, in our opinion the introduction of a new machine capable of providing experiences and located within strategical urban place can enable people to live their social life in an increasingly digitalized world. However, it is architecture, which enables experiences to be performed. The experiences are not fixed programs, on the contrary they change depending on the society, space and time. For this reason, the architecture which embodies these experiences has to be easily adaptable and capable to host various kind of programs. By achieving this aim, architecture will be able to keep up with the fast pace of the everyday life.

In this sense, the previously proposed scenarios are a specific architectural response to contemporary issues which are likely to change in the future. Therefore, the more the experiences and their architecture will be capable of adapting to the changing society, the more they will have the potential to successfully reactivate the public space.

0 50 100   250   500 m

Bibliography

Aristotle, and Thomas Alan Sinclair. *The Politics*. Rev. ed. Penguin Classics. Harmondsworth, England New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 1981. **Augé, Marc**. *Non-Lieux: Introduction à Une Anthropologie de La Surmodernité*. Paris: La Librairie Du XXe Siècle, 1992. **Banham, Reyner**. *Theory and Design in the First Machine Age*. 1st MIT Press paperback ed. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1980. **Beaudrillard, Jean**. *La Société de Consommation*, 1974. **Benjamin, Walter**. *The Arcades Project*. 1st paperback ed. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002. **Coleman, Peter**. *Shopping Environments: Evolution, Planning, and Design*. 1. Edition. Amsterdam,: Boston: Elsevier, 2006. **Furter, Fabian**, and Patrick Schoeck-Ritschard. *Zwischen Konsumtempel Und Dorfplatz: Eine Geschichte Des Shoppingcenters in Der Schweiz*. Baden: Hier und Jetzt, 2014. **Gargiani, Roberto**. *Rem Koolhaas / OMA: The Construction of Merveilles*. Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2019. **Gargiani, Roberto**. *Archizoom associati: 1966-1974 : de la vague pop à la surface neutre*. Milano: Electa, 2007. **Gehl, Jan**, and Birgitte Svarre. *How to Study Public Life*. Washington: Island Press, 2013. **Geist, Johann Friedrich**. *Arcades, the History of a Building Type*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1983. **Gosseye, Janina**, and Tom Avermaete. *Acculturating the Shopping Centre*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2019. **Gosseye, Janina**, eds. *Shopping Towns Europe: Commercial Collectivity and the Architecture of the Shopping Centre, 1945-1975*. London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. **Gruen, Victor**, Anette Baldauf, and Michael Stephen Gruen. *Shopping Towns: Designing the City in Suburban America*. Minneapolis: Universtiy of MInnesota Press, 2017. **Hardwick, M. Jeffrey**. *Mall Maker: Victor Gruen, Architect of an American Dream*. Philadelphia: Universtiy of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. **Hornby, Albert Sydney**, and Sally Wehmeier. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. 7. ed., [Nachdr.]. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009. **Koolhaas, Rem**. *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping. Project on the City 2*. Köln: Taschen, 2001. **Koolhaas, Rem**. *Junkspace: Repenser Radicalement l'espace Urbain*. Paris: Payot & Rivages, 2011. **Kowinski, William Severini**. *The Malling of America: An inside Look at the Great Consumer Paradise*. 1st ed. New York: W. Morrow, 1985. **LeCavalier, Jesse**. *The Rule of Logistics: Walmart and the Architecture of Fulfillment*. Minneapolis: Universtiy of Minnesota Press, 2016. **Lefebvre, Henri**. *The Production of Space*. Oxford, OX, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1991. **Lynch, Kevin**. *The Image of the City*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005. **Maitland, Barry**. *Shopping Malls: Planning and Design*. New York: Nichols, 1985. **Matz, Claudia**. *Warenwelten: Die Architektur Des Konsums*. Baden-Baden: Tectum Verlag, 2018. **Pevsner, Nikolaus**. A *History of Building Types*. A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts 19. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1976. **Smiley, David**. *Sprawl and Public Space Redressing the Mall*. Princeton Architectural Press, 2003. **Venturi, Robert**, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*. 17th print. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000. **Wall, Alex**. *Victor Gruen, From Urban Shop to New City*. Barcelona: Actar, 2005.

Documents

Augé, Marc. 'Non-Lieux'. École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, 1994. **Felix, Christian**. 'Die Landschaft Der Einkaufzentren Im Schweizerischem Autobahnnet: Orte Für Ein Neues Konsumverhalten'. Werk, Bauen + Wohnen, 2000. **Grandchamp, Pierre Garrigou**. 'L'architecture Domestique Des Bastides Périgourdines Aux XIII et XIXè Siècles'. Société Française d'archéologie, 1999. **Gruen, Victor**. 'The Regional Shopping Center.' *Bauen + Wohnen = Construction + Habitation = Building + Home: Internationale Zeitschrift 17*, no. 11 (n.d.): 465–67. **Huber, Werner.** 'Vierzig Jahre "Iädele" Im Shopping Center'. *Hochparterre: Zeitschrift Für Architektur Und Design* 23, no. 10 (2010). **Meier, Hans Rudolf**, and Jürg Kuster. 'Monitoring Urbaner Raum Schweiz Analysen Zu Städten Und Agglomerationen'. Bundesamt für Raumentwicklung ARE, 2009: Monitoring urbaner Raum Schweiz – Analysen zu Städten und Agglomerationen., n.d. **Schütze, Günter**. 'Internationaler Kongress "Handel Und Städtebau" in Brüssel'. *Der Aufbau 2*, 2 (May 1967): 10–12. **Kwiatkowski, Marta**, Stefan Breit, and Leonie Thalmann. 'Future Public Space'. GDI Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute, 2018. **N.S.**, 'Das Einkaufzentrum Glatt in Wallisellen ZH'. *Schweizerische Bauzeitung* 93, no. 11 (1975): 135–41. **Schenkel, Walter**, Anna Bernegg, and Lena Lauermann. 'Le commerce en mutation - Scénarios de la Ville de Zurich'. Szenarien für den Detailhandel un die Auswirkungen auf die Stadt Zürich. Zürich: Stadt Zürich, 2017. **Schuler, Martin**, Pierre Dessemontet, and Dominique Joye. 'Die Raumgliederungen Der Schweiz. Eidg. Volkszählung 2000'. Bundesamt für Statistik, Neuchâtel, 2005. **Suau, Dr. Christian**, and Margarita Munar Bauzá. 'The Mall in the Online Shopping Era.' In *The 4. International Conference of the International Forum on Urbansim. Amsterdam*, 2009.

Websites

Aziza Ravshanovna, Abdukadirova. "The Agora". Last modified June 21, 2017. http://7wonders.uz/en/wonder/view?id=1220. **Basel Landschaft**. 2019. "Wohnbevölkerung nach Nationalität und Konfession per 30. September 2019". Last modified December 19, 2019. https://www.statistik.bl.ch/web_portal/1. **Cambridge Dictionary,** Cambridge University Press, 2019.https:// dictionary. cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/sanctuary. **Cambridge Dictionary**, accessed december 12 2019, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/ logistics.**Confédération suisse**, Cambridge University Press 2014, "régions d'analyse", Accessed December 26, 2019, https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/fr/ home/statistiques/themes-transversaux/analyses-spatiales/niveaux-geographiques/ regions-analyse.html **Gary Rivlin**, "A Retail Revolution Turns 10," *The New York Times*, July 10, 2005, https://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/10/business/ yourmoney/a-retail-revolution-turns-10.htm. **Harper, Douglas**. "Online Etymology Dictionary". 2019. https://www.etymonline.com/word. **Merriam-Webster**, Incorporated, 2019, "https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionarz/ machine **Oxford University Press**, Accessed December 12, 2019. https://www. lexico.com/en/definition/shelter. **Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary**. 2015. https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/exodus.**SRF**. 2017 "Die Zahl der Konfessionslosen steigt".Last modified January 1, 2017. https://www.srf.ch/news/schweiz/die-zahl-der-konfessionslosen-steigt"

Images

4-5 Zahlreiche Kunden warten an der Kasse eines Verkaufsladens der Migros, 1970, Pressedienst Diamant Foto Zürich.

Chapter 2

Redrawn by Cécile Attardo and Rebecca Jordan from several sources.

Chapter 3

47 American Heritage Center. Victor Gruen Collection. Photo: Chester Frieden. (Southdale: Aerial view "Inverted architecture"). Taken from Wall, Alex. Victor Gruen, From Urban Shop to New City. Barcelona: Actar, 2005, p.100. **58** "Eine Kassierin im Konsumverein Chur, 1966, Zentralarchiv Coop. https://blog. bazonline.ch/zoom/index.php/117967/tempel-des-konsums/. **64-65** Areal views from https://map.geo.admin.ch. Modified.

The following pictures from chapter 3 are taken from ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Bildarchiv (http://ba.e-pics.ethz.ch). Part of Shopping Center Spreitenbach, 1970-1974. Reportage mit 418 Bildern (Auswahl):

50 "Shopping Center Spreitenbach" by Krebs, Hans, 17/03/1970. **51** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach" by Vogt, Jules, 03/1970. **56** "Wallisellen, Shopping-Center Glattzentrum" by Krebs, Hans, 1975. Modified. **57** "Spreitenbach, von Norden, Einkaufszentrum, Hauptstrasse nach Dietikon" by Comet Photo AG (Zürich), 04/1970. Modified. **61** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach vor der Eröffnung" by Krebs, Hans, 11/03/1970. **66** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach vor der Eröffnung" by Krebs, Hans, 11/03/1970. Modified. **70** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach vor der Eröffnung" by Krebs, Hans, 17/03/1970. Modified. **71** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach" by Vogt, Jules, 03/1970. Modified. **74** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach" by Vogt, Jules, 03/1970. Modified. **79** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach vor der Eröffnung" by Krebs, Hans, 11/03/1970. Modified. **82-83** (spread) "Shopping Center Spreitenbach" by Vogt, Jules, 03/03/1971. Modified. **88** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach" by Comet Photo AG (Zürich), 13/05/1970. **89** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach by Vogt, Jules, 03/1970. **90** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach vor der Eröffnung" by Krebs, Hans, 11/03/1970. **94** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach vor der Eröffnung" by Krebs, Hans, 11/03/1970. Modified. **98-99** (spread) "Spreitenbach, Bau des Einkaufszentrums Tivoli, Verbindungspasserelle" by Krebs, Hans, 09/1970. Part of Spreitenbach, Bau des Tivoli, 1974. Modified. **101** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach, Rennwagen-Ausstellung" by Comet Photo AG (Zürich), 05/1972. Part of Shopping Center Spreitenbach (AG), 1971. **103** "Shopping Center Spreitenbach" by Vogt, Jules, 03/1970. Part of Shopping Center Spreitenbach, 1970.

Chapter 4

107 "Zürich, Hauptbahnhof, Bahnhofhalle" by Vogt Jules, 09/1963. Part of Zürich für Verkehrsverein, 1963. Reportage mit 19 Filmen (Auswahl). ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Bildarchiv (http://ba.e-pics.ethz.ch). Modified. **112** "Bedienter Lebensmittelladen", Ringier Bildarchiv RBA, F. Aeberli 1973. Taken from Furter, Fabian, and Patrick Schoeck-Ritschard. *Zwischen Konsumtempel Und Dorfplatz: Eine Geschichte Des Shoppingcenters in Der Schweiz.* Baden: Hier und Jetzt, 2014, p.18. **115** "Souvenir postcard from the Walmart Museum", collection of the author. Taken from LeCavalier, Jesse. *The Rule of Logistics: Walmart and the Architecture of Fulfillment.* Minneapolis: Universtiy of Minnesota Press, 2016, p.21.

Chapter 5

134-135 Maps from https://map.geo.admin.ch. Modified. **140-143** Areal views from https://map.geo.admin.ch. Modified. **146** Areal view from https://map.geo. admin.ch. Modified.