

FROM MARKET PLACE TO THE MARKET AS A PLACE

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Trabalho apresentado no FIRST HOLCIM FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE
CONSTRUCTION. Zurich. September 16/17, 2004

ABSTRACT

Thinking about trends of market places in a process of sustainable development means to consider two main aspects. The first is related to the notion of mass society consumption that changed the meaning of market place -as the place for selling and buying daily goods- to a place where dreams are transformed in needs and consumption has become the main purpose. The second aspect is related to the characteristic of the retail spaces as real estate undertakings.

Considering that sustainable development includes concerns about economic progress, social equity and environmental preservation, the mass consumption society and the people behavior are strongly responsible for the pressure over environment in terms of the use and waste of natural resources; for air, water, soil and visual pollution; and for reinforcing social conflicts as only a few people can have access to many goods while many other people can not afford the basic goods.

In terms of architecture and built environment, this same mass consumption society promotes changes in the concept and meaning of market places. In its origin, market place was the area where people used to meet each other spontaneously for many reasons: for getting fresh water; for resting after a long trip; for attending public manifestation etc. The flow that all these activities were able to generate was the main source for the birth of market place as a place for supplying people with everyday consumer goods. From then on, the evolution of the mass consumption society has promoted an inversion in this statement. Now, consumption is the main purpose in Market Places, Retailing Spaces or Shopping Malls, and social contacts and encounters are just an eventual side effect. Moreover, the consumption was extended beyond goods and services purchases. Consumption invades the world of leisure, culture, experiences and sensations using all kind of persuasion and induction tools for stimulating people to consume. Behind this situation, the retail spaces has been designed as a big scenery where people are involved for all their senses, giving birth to an ethical question concerning this *sensorial architecture* which helps to induce people for consumption. It is possible to extend this same discussion to other types of buildings as Leisure Centers, Hotels, Museums, and even Hospitals.

The second aspect is related to the essence of retail spaces like Shopping Malls, which is a real estate product. This specific situation can put the interest of the real estate entrepreneurs and builders apart of the investors (owners), retailers, consumers and citizens ones. Building with low cost to increase profits for the former does not mean low cost of operation and maintenance for the latter. Environmental impact (water and energy waste), economic impact to retailers and consumers (high space rents and price of products), and urban impact (urban economy and urban design) can interfere in the quality of urban life, mainly in developing countries where the urban development is not under control at all.

PRESENTATION

Thinking about trends of market places in a process of sustainable development means to consider two main aspects. The first is related to the notion of society consumption that changed the meaning of market place -as the place for selling and buying daily goods- to a place where dreams are transformed in needs and consumption has become the main purpose. The second aspect is related to the characteristic of the retail spaces as real estate undertakings.

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What can we add to this first insight to help for changing these trends?

First of all, it is necessary to point out the relationship between the architect and his client, and at the same time to define who are his true clients?

In terms of business architecture, (designed for sheltering profit activities), the client use to be the business man, who know very well his business and want an architectural design to help him to optimize his revenue.

Nevertheless, when we talk about an undertaking like Shopping Malls, which is a real estate development, we are supposed to work for many clients, with different interests.

Then the **first client**, who pays for the design is the real state developer having, most of time, a construction company as a partner. They use to find big investors or, more recently, retirement private funds groups, or even individual investors to be the future owners (**second client**), and then they leave the business..

Most of these second clients did not know anything about retailing development like Shopping Malls. We could say that Retailing as a Science in Brazil is quite recently adopted. In Architecture School, this subject is far from being considered. Then, we don't have architects prepared for discussing good architectural retail solutions to convince developers to change their minds. In our point of view they accept most of the solutions imposed by these big clients. It is even worse when the design comes ready from other countries.

Try to make their business work well, investors contract another firms to manage the Shopping Mall business, which will realize immediately that the cost of operations and maintenance are very high, the pedestrian flow is not enough, the main entrances are not visible, people have difficult to find shops, parking exit or restrooms, parking is not enough, and so on. Of course there are other problems concerning lay-out, tenant mix. The cost to solve some of these problems are transferred to retailers (**third client**). Therefore, when you see the announcement "soon, new store here", read: "one more store close its door".

Retailers transfer the cost to consumers (**forth client**) which are coming back to the street retailing try to find better prices. This is not easy to observe because we don't have too many SC as USA, but at the same time we don't have the same purchase power as in develop countries . Then our limit will come early. And, for surviving, future owners of Shopping Malls have to pay attention to the design quality in two aspects.

The first one has to work in a way of diminishing costs of maintenance and operation, adopting appropriate construction material, design solution for save energy; facilities for cleanness; and so on.

The second one is about how to increase revenues by attracting more consumers. The intention of the design means "Be able of attract consumers, make them stay longer and have the wish to return. We think that architectural design could help in both sides.

Finally, the **fifth client** is the city and its citizen, that is completely forgotten.

Take advantages of he location and its surroundings are very important aspect to improve Shopping Malls business and to improve city image and urban economy. Architects and planners can understand the meaning of good urban insertion. A good dialogue with the urban space can work together with all kind of marketing and business strategies to take advantages from the activities happen out side, (pedestrian flow, traffic, neighborhood ethnical and cultural aspects, and land use). Some location can even acquire the condition of being unique, impossible to be recreated.

This good insertion can make Shopping Malls, more sustainable:

In terms of urban economy (city, SC business; independent retailers),

In terms of environment by saving water and energy;

inters of improving the quality of urban life, creating places where people like to go for meeting people, where consumption happen by chance

In terms of urban design and city image

We think that these are some of the reasons because there are a few examples of good and sustainable architecture concerning Shopping Malls in Brazil.

Market Place (imported style)

Santa Ursula (wall glass) (energy and maintenance)

Vila Lobos (lost the opportunity to be unique)

Tatuapé (didn't take advantage of the surrounding area bus terminal)

Light (problems of layout) bad design and restriction of preservation law

Down Town opening to the urban space

Aero club- opening to the urban space

Brasília- no respect with the preservation city

Finally, I would like to say that this situation is not a prerogative of Shopping Malls. All the undertakings which have the real estate market as their only purpose, they transform architecture in a product to be sold, without a true client, where the offer walks beyond the demand, and a sustainable built environment will be far from our wishes.