

# Shopping – Integrating the Fragmented City

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The article discusses the fact that much of the current urban theory describes the city as both physically and socially fragmented as a negative result of globalization and other forces, while some architects and writers adopt a somewhat more positive tone, seeing a potential for urban integration with shopping as an integrating program.

The article relates to the Ph.D. project, “Shopping: the potential for urban integration by the integrated shopping centre”. The project uses architectural analyses of a number of new shopping centres to discuss how these work as an integrating factor in the city. This involves discussions on why the city today is described as a place needing integration, and secondly, how the process of fragmentation is taking place. Thirdly the project focuses on whether shopping has the potential to act as an integrating program in the city and how this happens.

Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin’s recently published book *Splintering Urbanism* (2001) serves as a

reference in the discussion of urban fragmentation, and the discussion on urban integration based on shopping is introduced by different writers including those represented in *The Harvard Guide to Shopping* (Chung, Koolhaas et al. 2001).

## **The modern city is a broken city**

The modern city is often described as fragmented. ‘Sprawl’ is a term commonly used to describe the scattered condition that represents a crisis in the traditional category of ‘city’ and ‘country’. Descriptions of the regrettable condition of the entropic fragmented city and the mourning of a lost ‘unity’ are present in parts of the literature of social sciences. It is also present in much of current architectural and planning theory, having direct consequences for decisions and plans that are actually realized.

There are many different descriptions of the fragmented modern city, and many analyses of how the development from monocentric urban form to “sprawl” has happened. Some have pointed out that social fragmentation of the city is caused by the ‘loss of place’ as

a result of globalization and modernization (Norberg-Schulz 1978). Social fragmentation again leads to a less homogeneous society with an increased focus on security, and the formation of social 'enclaves' (Beck 1992). The focus of much literature on social exclusion and surveillance has a tendency to render the underlying forces as overpowering and unavoidable, and to suggest that the city is on the edge of an abyss where planning has for ever lost the struggle for a good and just city for all. The 'loss of place' also has another side, it has led to an interest, especially in the arts, in the leftover areas of the modern fragmented urban landscape, to the alternative cultures that develop here and their mutational influence on culture and social forms (GUST 2002). Other writers, based in planning and geography, have investigated how infrastructural developments result in increased spread and dispersal, leading to physical fragmentation of the city.

The American architect and author Albert Pope delivers in his book *Ladders* one analysis of how fragmentation of the city occurs (Pope 1995). It is, he argues, a result of an 'erosion' of the homogeneous infrastructural system represented by the urban grid that structures much of especially the North American urban landscape. As a result of modernization and globalization, certain elements in this infrastructural system are prioritized; certain streets are upgraded to highways, creating accessibility for certain parts of the city to distant locations at the expense of neighbouring urban areas. This results in the isolation of some local areas and local street-systems, often physically cut off from the surrounding city. This uneven distribution of accessibility leads to variation in the volume of public life and in the degree of social control in public spaces, ultimately resulting in a defensive withdrawal by certain social groups from the social and public space of the city. The urban landscape is 'fragmented' into disconnected enclaves and dead-end streets, and privileged spaces are established outside the continuous public 'arena' represented by the homogeneous urban grid. The privileged enclaves in the fragmented city, the shopping centres, gated communities etc. are not only the end result of this process, they are, according to Pope, also partly responsible for the fragmentation

of the underlying collective space of the city by supporting the development of prioritized infrastructural systems. Implicit in Pope's reading of the city is that only the continuous urban space is capable of expressing true 'collectivity'. Urban space and public space are synonymous or related, in the sense that if the collective or public space is defined as a place you can be, then the in between space and the modern fragmented city is a place you cannot be. In other words, designing the physical form (and space) of the city is to 'design' it as a social form (Albertsen 1993: 181). This perspective on planning and social life is "... not only leftovers from previous theories of architecture, but actual urban politics and urban planning." (Pløger 2002).

Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorph point out two important perspectives on public space, that relate to discussions on the fragmentation of the city. Referring to Ulrich Beck (1992), the first deals with the 'dark side' of urban fragmentation where avoiding the unpleasant or the unknown, often in the form of alternative social practices occurring in the spaces between urban 'fragments', are primary motives (Hajer and Reijndorph 2001: 53). The second deals with the simultaneous radical proliferation of events and 'positive' places in a new and much larger and more comprehensive city. Even though globalization and liberalization are often accused of destroying and fragmenting authentic historic urban environments, they have also created many valuable new places in the city that start 'acting' like public domains, even though they do not necessarily meet the traditional definition of a 'public space', such as being public property. A new public domain is, according to Hajer and Reijndorph, based on the exchange and physical encounter between strangers. In the exchange with the other lies the act of judgment, the awareness of one's own and shared values, and the possibility to adjust them, leading to the formation of social intelligence in the individual (Hajer and Reijndorph 2001: 12). They claim that the idea of a neutral public space that is truly universally open for all is both a notion without a sense of history. It may even be dangerous, leading to a lack of sensibility for the emergence of new public domains and for the potential transformation of the present conception of publicness. This contributes to a feeling

of 'loss' of unity and common social and democratic space. This 'loss' is one represented in much of the literature on the fragmented city as an urban 'dystopia' by authors such as Michael Sorkin (1992).

### **Splintering Urbanism**

In *Splintering Urbanism* Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin presents a number of accounts of urban fragmentation. The book plots the development of modern urban infrastructural networks from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and describes how they contributed to the integration of society and nation states at the time. This integration has become ever scarcer as the 20<sup>th</sup> century has progressed, and the welfare state in its comprehensive infrastructural realization has been transformed and liberalized into a much more heterogeneous and diverse society, resulting in fragmented urban form.

The massive construction of national infrastructural systems gave, in its early days, rise to what Graham and Marvin call the 'Modern Infrastructural Ideal'<sup>1</sup>. This ideal was, in its heyday, very much a tool for integration; the scale was the nation state and the justification used was the 'common good' of the welfare state. The idea of society- and nation-wide planning based on infrastructural development, was seen as a precondition for an emancipatory modernism (Graham and Marvin 2001: 41). The act of modernization was from the beginning a question of connecting 'islands' of infrastructure, thereby delivering equal services to everybody everywhere. In this way, the construction of infrastructure was seen as a 'democratization' of society, giving equal possibilities to all – an act of integration.

The modern infrastructural ideal was always a reflection of the technical ideals of the society of the day, rather than a comprehensive critical understanding of its actual integrating potential. Graham and Marvin point out the fact that, even when integration was the ideal, the actual construction of these networks led to massive physical disruptions of the city and social discontinuity in the relocation of entire classes of society, leaving open 'wounds' in the city. Thus the modern infrastructural ideal did not reflect a given physical or social situation, but was rather a 'wish' for the future,

an articulation of utopian ideals, forming the basis for the "urban visionaries ... Ebenezer Howard (with his garden cities), Frank Lloyd Wright (with his decentralized Broadacre City model), and Le Corbusier (with his *Ville Contemporaine*)" and the formation of utopian modernism (Graham and Marvin 2001: 64). The utopian modernists all used infrastructure as a means to achieve 'transparency' and order in the functions of the city, and the utopian aspect was translated into a totalizing model for the coherent and comprehensive society. These theories were, according to Graham and Marvin, based on an idea of a simple deterministic relation between infrastructural networks, urban form and representation as well as society and history in general:

...the modern networked city, dominated by notions of order, coherence and rationality, through the harmonious planning of networked connections and urban space, became the very embodiment of the modern project...

(Graham and Marvin 2001: 9)

The rationale of modernism was to 'design away' the muddled character of social life in the city. The complexity of urban life should be resolved in a merging of certain aspects of social life and certain elements of the city (Robins 1999 cited in Graham and Marvin 2001). This is the basis for the modernistic perspective of the city as an organism; an idea that individual elements in the city could and should be identified and separated from the other elements, as if they were organs in a body with specific individual roles to play within an overall structure. Infrastructural networks were, in this context, seen as circulatory and purifying organs, and the construction of them was seen as a kind of 'surgery', where temporary destruction was necessary for long term health (Graham and Marvin 2001: 53). The city as an organism could be domesticated and cleansed, brought under control and made 'transparent'. The categorization of organs had this transparency as its aim, and in the organ-concept lies the nucleus of the modernist mono-functional enclaves that resulted from zoning.

According to Steven Jacobs (2002) the fact that the formation of the idea of the city as an integrated

organism happened at the same time as the city was being obviously physically fractured, actually represents a fundamental paradox in modernism, which it tried to cover over with utopian and totalitarian master plans. The permanent 'disruption' of the city, that was an aspect of modernization, meant that the modernist city never resembled a totality, but was instead caught between the drive for totality on the one side, and the destructive act of modernization on the other (Berman 1982). This internal paradox of modernism in architecture and planning eventually played a part in discrediting it, and the fragmented character of the modern city is a direct consequence of it. In the exposure of this inner contradiction, it became clear, that the consensus on the 'purpose' of the city and on its planning, no longer existed. Graham and Marvin claim that a number of current urban theoreticians still mourn the unity modernism never achieved, and that modernism, even though it is dead, in many ways still exists embedded in the tools used in current planning.

### **Physical and social fragmentation**

The processes of privatization and liberalization of infrastructural networks, what Splintering Urbanism terms 'unbundling infrastructure'<sup>2</sup> Unbundling Infrastructure The process through which standardized and bundled infrastructure is broken apart or segmented technically, organizationally and institutionally into competitive and noncompetitive elements to support infrastructural consumerism. Usually associated with privatization and/or liberalization, are that which, according to Graham and Marvin, forms the basis for the current fragmentation of the city. They claim that attention in planning has shifted from how connections are established locally in the city, to how individual parts of the city relate to a globalized situation and to other distant important places. 'Unbundling' occurs simultaneously and interdependently in both a physical and a social reading of the city (Graham and Marvin 2001: 33). Diverging infrastructural systems only 'serve' selected parts of the city, avoiding the economically less attractive areas, resulting in the dissolution of the principle of 'cross subsidy' that formed the foundation in the all-encompassing national infrastructural networks. This

is the idea that everybody should be offered the same services, without regard to the actual cost of supplying it to the individual. The current crisis of this notion reflects the departure of an essential political principle of the Welfare city.

Graham and Marvin introduce three understandings of what 'splintering' is:

The first, and the simplest, is infrastructural splintering, dealing with how infrastructural systems distribute and favour certain areas in terms of public and private 'services'. The second understanding is the 'anti-modern' conservatism that is sceptical of things no longer being what they were, and of the transformation of urban life and social forms. The third understanding is what could be called a 'natural' understanding of splintering. This deals with the city as a 'natural' spontaneous form, a result of continuous stable historical processes, as it is reflected in certain modernist and postmodernist architectural theory. 'Splintering' in this sense is the physical explosion of the continuous urban space or structure, resulting in what is experienced as discontinuity in the 'natural' growth of the city. In this last understanding of 'splintering', the 'natural' continuous city has been replaced by an 'artificial' city, whose elements – urban enclaves – stand out as foreign objects.

### **Consumption and the city**

Rather than, in a utopian way, developing the city in its entirety, as suggested by the 'Modern Infrastructural Ideal', current trends in planning aim at making districts competitive. This is achieved by serving certain parts of the city with so-called 'premium infrastructural networks' resulting in the formation of urban enclaves and fragmentation of the city. Graham and Marvin (2001: 11) claim that these 'premium networks' are based on consumption and commercial interests, and that they, along with other current practices in urban design are participating in the process of fragmentation:

... dominant practices of urban design ... are increasingly seen to be working in parallel to support the socio-technical partitioning of the metropolitan and, indeed, societal fabric.

(Graham and Marvin 2001: 382)

They point to two ways in which the modern fragmented city and the process of fragmentation results in social discrimination and segregation. Firstly the 'unbundling'-process means that the uniform prizing of infrastructural services are differentiated in favour of the profitable segments of the city, while segments deemed not profitable, are offered services on unfavourable terms. Secondly, the fragmentation of urban space is met with an increase in surveillance and the control of 'public spaces' in and between the enclaves (Graham and Marvin 2001: 232–233). The profitable segments of the city are being increasingly privatized and oriented towards 'shopping' and 'entertainment' for those who can afford it. Entertainment is the new archetypical program of these privatized segments or enclaves, and their 'interiorized' spaces. This development contributes to the blandness or inhospitable character of the residual in-between areas<sup>3</sup>.

The success and proliferation of interiorized activity, and the fact that its nodes can be placed anywhere as islands whose connective tissue is a sea of formlessness and nothingness, has left the outside amputated, mostly inhabitable, and quite often a space of threat.

Graham and Marvin are sceptical of the formation of entertainment-based enclaves, and claim that they ignore overall cohesion in the city. They also claim that the semi-public space in these projects is not truly 'public' because it is privately owned or privately controlled, even though they argue elsewhere in the book that 'public space' has never been truly public in the sense that it was completely value-neutral and completely socially un-biased (Graham and Marvin 2001: 232).

### **Urban noir**

The shift from modernism's functional 'organ' to the 'enclave' of the modern contemporary city happens parallel to the shift from an optimistic belief in the concurrence of form and function, to a rendering of the excluding and unwelcoming character of the urban fragment, the enclave, in the literature of urban theory. A number of writers portray the fragmented city as the place where the traditional urban life, as Jane Jacobs (1961) and other critics of modernism described it, no

longer exists. The city has been segregated into enclaves and non-defined infrastructural zones, what used to be streets, in-betweens.

According to Graham and Marvin, certain spaces in the fragmented city cannot be totally segregated, and under pressure, 'counter flows' and resistance to homogenization of the social life in the enclaves will emerge. The dialectics between private and public has always characterised the city, and just as the Modern Infrastructural Ideal and the modernist vision of the city were always more technical and ideological ideals than realities, the totally segregated, privileged space of the enclave will never be able to completely withdraw from its surroundings (Graham and Marvin 2001: 386). They claim that "urban life is more diverse, varied and unpredictable than the common reliance on US-inspired urban dystopias suggests." (Graham and Marvin 2001: 392). There is a tendency to overlook or ignore the potential for transformation of social practises in the fragmented city, and the possibility of resistance it represents (Graham and Marvin 2001: 398). However, they also point to the danger of overestimating these powers of resistance, and argue that action needs to be taken to hinder extreme consequences of urban fragmentation. New styles and instruments in planning, and new kinds of urban design that abandon or question out-dated notions of the city, as well as new understandings of the scale and complexity of the city need to be developed through new forms of spatial imagination and new policies (Graham and Marvin 2001: 303, 406).

On one hand Graham and Marvin in their book develop a criticism of modernism in planning by exposing its inner contradiction between totalizing ideal and inherent process of fragmentation. On the other hand they question the present urban situation, where modernist transparency in the relation between the social and physical aspects of the city has been replaced by fragmentation and a much more complex picture. Current developments in the city are, they claim, based on "a new urban vision (...) based on sealing, closure, privatism and internalisation rather than on openness and free circulation." (Graham and Marvin 2001: 302). The book cites John Kaliski and Rob Shields, sugges-

ting that enclaves and socially undefined in-between spaces are the basis for new social forms in the city. John Kaliski claims that the critics of modernism idealized traditional urban life and elevated it to a 'frozen' state that no longer reflects current conditions, and names Mike Davis, Michael Sorkin and Fred Dewey as Jane Jacobs' successors. Kaliski claims that it is in the globalized and surveyed semi-public enclaves of the fragmented city that you find the kind of social life that the writers of 'urban dystopia' accuse them of suppressing. These enclaves are, he claims, the very places where social processes take place, and new social practices are being developed. (Kaliski (1994: 7) cited in Graham and Marvin 2001: 397).

But this argument appears to be considered marginal by Graham and Marvin in relation to the overall danger of fragmentation, and the book, to some extent, takes on some of the tone of "Blade Runner-style dystopias" (2001: 398) they mention in the book:

... it still seems likely that the processes of splintering urbanism outlined in this book will work to underpin more and more starkly polarised economic and social geographies of closely juxtaposed privilege and disconnection within many – perhaps most – contemporary cities. (Graham and Marvin 2001: 405)

The final chapters of the book list a number of theoretical approaches to a new positive integration of social understanding and infrastructural development, but leave an impression of impotence on behalf of parts of urban theoretical literature when it comes to dealing with the fragmented situation, and the final push towards new 'models' for theory and practice in the city is left to architects like Rem Koolhaas and Jon Jerde.

### **The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping**

The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping (Chung, Koolhaas et al. 2001) is the result of a studio at the Harvard Design School under Rem Koolhaas and consists of a number of investigations and essays by the individuals involved. It maps the development of shopping- and entertainment based commercial environments that, according to Graham and Marvin, are archetypical for the enclaves of the fragmented city.

The short version of the book is that shopping is everything. Shopping as phenomena and metaphor increasingly encompass our environment, new public buildings in the city adopt the spatial principles of shopping, and most planning and architecture is either a product of, or inspired by shopping. The book accumulates data to prove this point. It traces the conditions for the dominant role the retail program has in the city, and how it, rather than accelerating fragmentation, actually works as an integrating force, binding seemingly incommensurate urban elements together in new urban form.

The book is a search for sources of knowledge about the role shopping has in the city. It presents a long list of themes and persons suspected of being behind its success, and map a number of theories might explain it. Samples from the list of contents include "Air Conditioning", "Bit Structures", "Brand Zone", "Coopetition", "Disney Space", "Ecology", "Gruen Urbanism", "Jerde Transfer", "Junkspace", "Mobility", "Psychogramming", "Relearning from Las Vegas", "Resistance", "Thou Shalt Not Shop" and "Ulterior Spaces". The book also sketches the genealogy of shopping, tracing its origin from Antique markets and souks to the arcades that represented the first modern shopping environment. It points to the mall as the epitome of pure shopping and the airport as the present incarnation of the qualities of the 'frictionless' shopping environment. These environments no longer reflect traditional conceptions of space, and lack the stability of traditional architectural space as they are constantly being modified and updated (Leong 2001: 498).

At the same time as the book unfolds the hegemony of shopping in the city, it discusses the paradoxical fact that the shopping mall, as we know it, is a dying race, and that in the United States, a large number of malls will be abandoned in a few years. It argues that this, rather than heralding the downfall of shopping, actually demonstrates its overwhelming success. Shopping has now abandoned the bounded form of the mall and conquered urban space and the city as a whole. In the decades of the mall, which are drawing to a close, shopping was something different from the city, situated in peripheral environments.

This distinction, the book argues, is no longer possible.

### **An instrumental urbanism**

In his article "City of Shopping" in *The Harvard Guide to Shopping*, John McMorrough argues that over the last fifty years, a reversal of the relationship between shopping and the city has taken place. Originally "shopping (as an activity) [was] taking place in the city (as a place), [but now] the city (as an ideal) is taking place within shopping (as a place)." (McMorrough 2001a: 194). Shopping centres were at first 'moulded' on the urban spaces of the traditional city and the important discovery in the mall was that urbanity could be created outside of, and independent from, the city. Where shopping used to 'depend' on the city, the shopping environment of the mall has shown itself to rival the city at delivering 'urban' qualities such as density of experiences and crowds of people. In the separation from the city, urbanity became operational as "...an instrumental urbanity" (McMorrough 2001a: 201) in shopping. Since the invention of the shopping mall, the city has become more and more 'inhospitable' as traffic has increased and the middleclass have migrated to the suburbs, and it has ultimately had to 'relearn' urbanity from the attractive spaces in the mall.

What shopping does, according to McMorrough, is to integrate completely different and disparate elements of the city in a continuous and fluid urban experience. This happens through two different processes. The first concerns the way large urban programs subjugate themselves to shopping as the model for urbanism. This is exemplified in the frictionless way libraries, schools, town halls, corporate headquarters etc, all take on the spatial organisational system of shopping. They are organised around 'streets' or 'plazas', treat guests as 'customers', carry out surveys of 'customer satisfaction' etc. A common organizational system is voluntarily adopted, joining different elements in a continuous urban system. This is an example of shopping as an 'instrumental urbanism'. The second process is about the construction of dense 'urban' experiences and crowded social environments, using composition, and compression of program. This is another applica-

tion of 'instrumental urbanism', using people intensive programs like shopping and entertainment to establish the crowd of people that seems to be a prerequisite of a social or even public space. It is the quality of this space that forms the basis for the success of both malls and pedestrianized city centres. Planners and architects today employ the shopping 'model' either consciously or unconsciously in the design of public space in the city. It is used in urban revitalization projects, and in the reinvention of 'identity' that dominates the agenda of urban planning. Today, it can be argued, successful urban public space is synonymous with shopping.

According to McMorrough, under modernism, shopping was synonymous with the shopping mall. The mall was located outside the city and was considered to be an inward-looking and self-contained enclave in the suburb, with no interest in its surroundings. After the fall of modernism shopping is no longer contained within designated zones, but takes on a 'revolutionary' potential for programmatic integration across the strict divisions of the modernist city. Shopping points beyond itself, and carries an emancipatory promise and a libidinal drive that transcends its own physical extension at the same time as it is dependent on the establishment of perceptual borders in the city, inside of which 'urbanism' can be established as a social attractor (McMorrough 2001a: 194).

Shopping according to McMorrough (2001a: 201), has been so successful as a strategy for the city, that it no longer makes sense to separate urbanity from shopping, and the criticism of shopping that is present in parts of urban academic literature, and the call for resistance against commercialization of the urban space, has become irrelevant.

### **Criticism of shopping**

Commercialization and shopping are often criticised in both public and political debate, as well as in academic urban literature such as *Splintering Urbanism*. Olve Krange and Åse Strandbu (1996) have identified two types of criticism of shopping centres, which can be generalized to apply to shopping environments on the whole. The first is the conservative criticism that mourns the changes of shopping habits and the

restructuring of society that consumerism has brought about. The second is the leftist intellectual criticism, which denounces shopping for its distortion of the 'true needs' of the masses through commercial manipulation. Daniel Miller et. al. terms this line of criticism "the commodity regnant". In this account, shopping figures as an index of the imminent or actual decay of Western civilization resulting from commodification." (Miller, Jackson et al. 1998: 8).

According to Miller (1997), one important inspiration for this line of criticism is Walter Benjamin's *Pasagenwerk* (Benjamin 1991). This work describes and analyses the 19<sup>th</sup> century Parisian arcades as an expression of urbanity. Benjamin expresses ambivalence towards the arcade and its magnificent appearance. On the one hand they reveal capitalist society in all its garish horror, and on the other hand they present a picture or promise, if incomplete, of an ideal future, acting as a potentially positive didactic force:

Benjamin was unusual in perceiving a true democratic potential in this new industrial capacity, but with regard to the arcades this is perceived to be merely a frozen embryonic form.

The arcades provided, in a kind of grotesque parody, an image of what a genuine expansion of material and technical progress might provide for a population. As a result this imagery is important as a resource for the imagination of a future, which was an important political tool within the present.

(Miller 1997: 34)

Jane Jacobs and other critics of modernism in the sixties continued the leftist intellectual criticism and warned of the disappearance of integrity of public life and space in the city (McMorrough 2001b). Jacobs, in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) lists a number of aspects giving 'The Village' in New York, where she lives, its special urban life and atmosphere. They deal with the mix of functions, the differentiation of hours of use (24 hour-activity), the pedestrian-friendly short block-lengths that ensure compression of experiences, and finally the sufficiently dense concentration of people in the street. McMorrough claims that the construction of urbanity in the



work of Jacobs and others actually represented a 'liberation' of urbanity from the traditional city, resulting in the creation of a 'recipe' used in the construction of shopping centres. This development has, in turn, through the 'liberation' of shopping from the traditional city, unintentionally created a precondition for the development of the interiorized enclave in the fragmented city. It made it clear that shopping could be used as a context to create 'urban' environments, hereby rendering entire urban areas, based on shopping and entertainment, as 'artificial'.

The construction of artificial urbanity was also the starting point of the revitalization and pedestrianization of urban space that has taken place in the last decades in American and European cities. The strategy of 'artificial' urbanity was successfully applied to urban revitalization projects in what literature describes as 'Festival Marketplaces' (Crawford 1992). These new 'artificial' districts spread during the 70's and 80's in the US and inspired the current wave of similar transformations of central urban areas in Europe and elsewhere. Despite the fact that they 'overlay' historical urban centres, these districts are based on an 'artificially' enhanced urbanism, as a tool to strengthen the competitiveness of certain districts and enclaves over others in the fragmented city or urbanized region.

The 'artificiality' of these districts relates to the notion of 'staging' urban life, making them compatible with the debate on postmodernism in architecture, that, in the 60's and 70's, represented a liberating force against the hegemony of modernism. Unfortunately the corresponding theoretical constructions soon





melted away due to a lack of resolve and a flight of design into 'hopeless' formalism that matched the one abandoned in modernism (Miller 1997).

One architect that currently stands out as a prominent designer of this new kind of urban environments is the American Jon Jerde. His work focuses on people intensive programs, and has developed, through projects like Horton Plaza in San Diego, a model or 'recipe' for revitalization of abandoned downtowns with shopping and entertainment as program.

### **Shopping and sociality**

Modernism in planning and architecture reduced shopping to its utilitarian aspect, and referred it to the functional category 'services' in the zoned city. The modern shopping environment, whether the shopping center or beefed-up downtown, has transformed itself. It now constitutes the meeting place and the place for production of 'social surplus' in the fragmented city: "Consumption, an ambivalent and multi-faced activity, takes on more and more social functions as a form of sociality." (Shields 1992a: 111). Rob Shields points to

the shopping mall as the incarnation of a postmodern space where contradictory and overlaying social practices refutes the rational segregation in modernism (Shields 1992b). He claims that shopping environments always have been attractive. Even under modernism, the total banishment of the social to the private sphere was never complete. There were always places that conserved elements of old-fashioned messy public life, even though it often happened on commercial terms. Shields argues that, "Perhaps exchange and consumption are latent functions of social centrality." (Shields 1992a: 105). Sociality survived modernism in the theme park (Shields 1992a: 109) and the shopping environment of today incorporates entertainment as an important aspect of the shopping experience, to the extent that shopping and entertainment have merged, and any such environment can be described as belonging to both categories.

Splintering Urbanism and other parts of the current literature on the city, claims that public space is disappearing in the fragmented modern city. According to Shields (1992a: 103), "The public nature of a site crowded with other people is inescapable and undeniable." The new shopping environments with the ingenerated entertainment program of the fragmented city have to be acknowledged as the new public spaces of the city, simply because they are populated.

### **Shopping in the fragmented city**

According to Graham and Marvin, the course of the current fragmentation of the city is the process they call 'unbundling infrastructure'. It is a result of liberalization and privatization of infrastructure, and implies the exposure of infrastructural services to marked mechanisms and through this, the development of an 'infrastructural consumerism'<sup>4</sup>. Paradoxically consumerism and shopping, through their choice of references in Splintering Urbanism, also emerge as a model for opposing fragmentation. They mention the architect John Kaliski and the architecturally trained Rob Shields as writers who do not represent the urban 'dystopias' that render the city as hopelessly fragmented. They also refer to the architects Rem Koolhaas and Jon Jerde, as examples of how strategies can be developed to respond to this

tendency. Kaliski and Shields deal with the emergence of new social practices in the fragmented city, and Shields specifically points to the commercial shopping environments as the place where such developments take place. Jerde and Koolhaas both investigate how architecture can establish a connection between the experience of space, social processes and urban scale. They study shopping environments as archetypical of this connection and Jerde has utilized shopping and entertainment as integrating programs in large urban projects. They seem to agree that shopping and entertainment are the last urban programs that produce attractive spaces on an individual and social scale. Functioning as an attractive social space, shopping acts as a catalyst for urban transformation. It also functions as the new public space in the fragmented city and hereby as the arena for transformation of culture and social forms.

Interestingly, the two are mentioned side by side in Splintering Urbanism. Jon Jerde is a commercial architect, whose practice has become internationally renowned for large casino-complexes, theme parks and shopping centres. He has often been ignored or accused of having ulterior motives by the academic architectural discussion. In the architectural development of his work, he does not uphold the paradoxical modernistic commandments of authenticity and novelty, but quotes freely from different historical and regional architectural styles. Koolhaas as an architectural critic who continuously through his writing calls attention to the need to revise the self-image of architecture and urbanism (Koolhaas 1994b). He is also seen as an architectural 'genius' by the profession, capable in the architectural language of his practice to give form to complex societal and contextual circumstances.

A declared ambition in the work of Jon Jerde (1999) is to counter fragmentation and reintegrate the city, a practice Graham and Marvin refer to as 'rebundling' (2001: 223). His production is characterized by the integration of small and large size programs in complexes that acquire urban scale and qualities. He uses the term 'armature' to describe the structure of these big projects. Projects based on an 'armature' are "... bigger than a building, yet smaller than a city." (Jerde 1999). They consist of people-intensive programs

and are based on shopping mall as the generator of crowds. According to Jerde, the mall was the place where public social life survived the fragmentation of the American city. This 'model' facilitates social interaction through the introduction of 'instrumental urbanity' – recognizable urban spaces and urban life.

'Armature' reflects a move towards complex multi-programmed hyperbuildings with urban qualities parallel to Koolhaas' concept of 'bigness' (Koolhaas 1994a). Bigness is for Koolhaas the only remaining option for architecture and its programs to relate to the fragmented city, by adopting its scale, and hereby to "... reconstruct the Whole, (...) reinvent the collective..." (Koolhaas 1994a: 510).

In *The Harvard Guide to Shopping*, Koolhaas launches another concept: 'junkspace'. 'Junkspace' is a modern form of spatiality that characterises shopping. It is an increasingly all-encompassing homogeneous spatial principle, without traditional architectural order: "There is no form, only proliferation." (Koolhaas 2001: 410) In 'junkspace', architectural expression is subjugated the ability to adapt, and the concept appears as a kind of theoretical framework for the pragmatic appropriation of visual expressions in the work of Jon Jerde.

Jerde and Koolhaas are used as positive references by Graham and Marvin in *Splintering Urbanism*, indicating a way towards new thinking and urban reintegration. Both can be said to utilize shopping and entertainment as the new integrating 'ideal' in the fragmented city, constructing urban environments that can be optimized for maximum efficiency without the limitations posed by ideas of historic authenticity. However, quoting Francisco Cerver, Graham and Marvin emphasize the artificiality of the new developments

they represent; they are "... more "city-like" than the city itself; that is, they are a distillation and intensification of the concentration that the city symbolises" (Cerver 1998: 29 quoted in Graham and Marvin 2001: 226). Even though the book agrees with Jerde and Koolhaas on the goal, the reformulation of urbanism and reintegration of the fragmented city, it does leave an impression of being critical towards the tool represented by the 'artificiality' of 'instrumental urbanism'.

### After fragmentation

From the structural perspective presented by Graham and Marvin, prioritized urban enclaves or shopping centres are considered both the reason for, and the evidence of, urban fragmentation. The shopping centre was associated with the death of the city or of downtown shopping in modernism-critical literature, and the subject of the romanticization which formed the dystopic tone that lingered in later writing and architectural thinking on sprawl penetrating into architectural thinking in general. Recently, however, some architects and writers have pointed out that the traditional distinction between centre and periphery no longer seems viable: neither monocentric nor polycentric models seem to adequately describe the current situation. Sprawl is here to stay, and dispersal and discontinuity rather than order and concentration are the fundamental preconditions of this city. A transformed image of the city deals with 'filling' the urban landscape, or differentiating densities, in what used to be called sprawl (X. d. Geyter Architecten 2002). Both positions acknowledge the radical transformational potential of shopping as an urban and spatial phenomenon even though literature views as a destructive force that which architects view as a force potentially strong enough to reenergize the current entropic social landscapes of pervasive urban sprawl.

The subject of shopping has only recently entered mainstream architectural debate as something other than service subjugated to the primary objective of housing. This has been marked by the sudden interest in the otherwise prior 'black-sheep' architects like Jon Jerde. While Jerde is very specific about the 'healing' and integrating aspect of his architecture, Koolhaas in



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his role as 'eye-opener' insists that it no longer makes sense to counter fragmentation of the city and the resulting sprawl. Architecture in its traditional form no longer has any hope of 'healing' the city, only by inventing radical strategies like 'bigness' (Koolhaas 1994a) and accepting radical driving forces like 'shopping', does the architect have any future in the city. Books like the Harvard Guide to Shopping (Chung, Koolhaas et al. 2001) appear to be an attempt at hammering the realization into architectural thinking by amassing a sheer quantity of research, and a variety of theoretical excursions and explanations.

This realization amongst architects not only deals with the seemingly inevitability of the transformational force of shopping in urban development, but also expands its field to the social aspects of consumerism in urban life, in accordance with different writers that shopping centres (and other consumption-based environments) may even represent spatial mechanisms that "... engineer compromises that allow people to live with ambivalence, based on their understanding of the contradictions that are evident in their lives; the same suburban, semi-detached compromise that is viewed by others as hypocrisy." (Miller, Jackson et al. 1998: 132)

## Notes

1. Modern infrastructural ideal The ideal of rolling out monopolistic, standardized and integrated infrastructure networks to cover a city, region or country that was associated particularly with the period 1850–1960. Closely associated with the idea of the natural monopoly, the theory of public goods and Keynesian policies. Graham and Marvin (2001: 426)
2. Unbundling Infrastructure The process through which standardized and bundled infrastructure is broken apart or segmented technically, organizationally and institutionally into competitive and noncompetitive elements to support infrastructural consumerism. Usually associated with privatization and/or liberalization. Ibid.: 430
3. The success and proliferation of interiorized activity, and the fact that its nodes can be placed anywhere as islands whose connective tissue is a sea of formlessness and nothingness, has left the outside amputated, mostly inhabitable, and quite often a space of threat. Sze Tsung Leong (1998: 196) cited in Ibid.: 261
4. Unbundling Infrastructure The process through which

standardized and bundled infrastructure is broken apart or segmented technically, organizationally and institutionally into competitive and noncompetitive elements to support infrastructural consumerism. Usually associated with privatization and/or liberalization. Ibid.: 430

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