

## **SHOPPING IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT: EFFECTS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR ON THE DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY OF SHOPPING CENTERS**

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### **Abstract**

Shopping has been a never ending activity for human beings throughout ages. Societies have developed specific traditions of shopping in accordance with their cultural, social and economic values. As a result, different forms of spatial organizations serving the so called shopping activity ensued. Worldwide, the final form of shopping manifested itself in Shopping centers, which corresponds to a specific terminology in Turkish, AVM.

The very first AVM in İstanbul was Galleria in the Bakırköy district. Its emergence revealed a fact that AVMs were very profitable investment and they proliferated all over İstanbul and other major cities in Turkey. In an effort to satisfy consumer population needs, increasing number of AVMs were distributed all over urban area. But, a systematic analysis for the sustainability of AVMs failed to follow their proliferation. As for the distance between two AVMs, the important factor is the density of prospective users, accessibility, trade types and variety

This paper is an attempt to analyze this topic via some chosen AVM examples in İstanbul. The study starts with the phenomenon of shopping and its historical development. Activity and tradition of shopping and its reflections on spatial organization through ages in Europe, Anatolia and Asia are searched through related literature. The 20<sup>th</sup> century version of shopping places namely shopping centers or AVM as it is named in Turkey, are studied in historical context.

### **Introduction**

There is growing body of academic literature on shopping centers. Researchers are studying the factors that make shopping centers attractive for users. Literature reveals that both spatial and non spatial factors act upon consumer behavior. According to Ooi and Sim (2007) enhancement of shopping experiences through the employment of exciting trade types and activities can exert a significant magnetic attraction on shoppers. It is seen as shoppers' common expression that going up to higher levels and observing the immediate environment from a wider angle of vision was an exciting experience (Kowinski,1985).

According to existing research, when an AVM reaches its objectives of retail capacity another AVM shows up in a close proximity (Beyard and O'Mara, 1999).

## **Methodology**

The study involves investigation of the physical qualities of shopping centers through some haptic and emotional qualities

- Qualities of shape and form
- Qualities of materials
- Qualities of lighting
- Qualities of color
- Qualities of decoration

The samples of this study consists of 4 shopping centers from İstanbul.

Design criteria for shopping centers are studied under some main headings such as

- Accessibility
- Functionality
- Contextuality
- Circulation

## **Results**

After 2001, with the emergence of foreign investment AVMs proliferated. A thorough spatial investigation of İstanbul AVMs revealed that, majority of them are located on the European side of İstanbul. Two major axis indicated a stronger proliferation. First one is the new CBD of İstanbul, on the metro line of Beşiktaş-Maslak axis and second one in close proximity of a major housing district, namely Bakırköy. While the typical user population of AVMs are families in Bakırköy district, students, white collar working people and mostly who care about their life style besides families are the typical users on the Beşiktaş-Maslak axis.

This study indicates that especially the European side of İstanbul has reached its optimum level as far as AVMs are concerned

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Four AVMs are taken as examples and studied through location, design and sustainability. The study revealed that how much of the expectations of the users are met by the AVM is the main indicator of how sustainable it is.

As for a temporary conclusion it can be said that architectural space is not only physical space but rather lived space. The rule is applicable to shopping centers too. Their sustainable existence is not explained by their geometry or other measurable entities but go beyond that.

## References

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