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The Urban Shopping Centre as a powerful artefact capable of creating important collective spaces

Abstract

In the last decades, the obsolescence of major equipment (oldest bullrings, railway stations, military facilities, old hospitals, unused factories, etc.) and the existence of urban voids in most European cities (generally old peripheral areas which have transformed into interstitial areas without a particular use) has created exceptional conditions for the emergence of a new urban typologies in central cities, namely retail areas, usually known as Urban Shopping Centres. At the same time, the phenomenon of urban shopping centres in city centres has been followed by an increasingly rich and intense debate throughout the academia. In this context, a controversial issue remains unclear: are these artefacts generating new collective spaces capable of creating synergies with public space? Or, on the contrary, will they introduce ruptures and compete with public space? This article tries to address this contentious issue arguing that in the observation of certain circumstances the urban shopping centre is in fact a powerful artefact capable of creating important collective spaces.

Keywords: Shopping Centres, Types of Collective Spaces; Degrees of Freedom; Forms of appropriation.

1 Introduction

What is the difference between a shopping centre, a museum or a cultural centre? What is the difference between a specific public space of the compact city and a collective space generated by an urban shopping centre? Are these spaces so different? (Fig 1) We know that a public space is a legible and complex space, where individual freedom is allowed to express itself, though in a controlled manner, a space that may be appropriated through different ways, according to the uses and activities that may occur there. A collective space generated by a shopping centre will also be a public space if the conditions applicable to public spaces may there also apply? The statements on the shopping centres and the collective spaces that they generate have been and still are quite critical and negative. Margaret Crawford, a distinguished Harvard professor, whose intellectual work significantly focused, during the course of the last decades, on malls in the American context, in one of her most popular publications¹ highlights some of the most controversial ideas about malls. Among all ideas quoted, three summarize some key concerns or threats posed to the city by shopping centres and from which the media, through the controversy they generate, were able to take advantage with great capacity. Hence, it is important to mention them, here, because they are indeed those that will help us to articulate our hypothesis: the first idea is that these spaces have no architectural, urban or civic interest, as they are thematic and poor spaces, where fantastic worlds are produced with no relation to the place; the second idea is that, inside the shopping centres, all freedoms are lost, be them individual or collective freedom or freedom of expression; the third idea is that these spaces are always designed under a mechanism, named as *The adjacent attraction*, which consists in juxtapose multiples out of context objects, to create a state of disorientation, of floating suspension, solely aiming at the activation of consuming impulses and little concerned with social interaction and the different forms of appropriation of the space.

¹ "The World in a Shopping Mall", in Variations in a theme Park, Michael Sorkin

them, a wide variety of uses occur. It is interesting that some say that it is not so much the passive leisure, like cinema, which plays an important role in these facilities, rather the active leisure or experiences, through which the user participates in the activities provided. They speak, for example, of the amusement parks located in the malls, equipped with games of all sorts, some already including the brand new game playstation and other game appliances, such as wii. They also mention new sports zones aggregated to the shopping centres, as sky interior slopes, bowling or special gymnasiums including all kinds of health and beauty services and where people do not just go for exercising but also for nutrition visits, aesthetics, a.s.o.; finally, they speak of gastronomic leisure and of the increasing shopping centre's attempts to provide best or medium quality food offers as well as distinguished restaurants, led by the best chefs, gourmet bakeries, high level cafés or modern lounges, which provide exquisite and refined moments of relaxation and meditation.

We start then from this first debate (further developed in the theoretical framework of a doctoral research that shapes the present statement) to anticipate the working hypothesis and to line up the assessment criteria that will allow us to draw some conclusions.

The hypothesis that led us to the development of the investigation is this: *Some urban shopping centers not only created new collective spaces in the compact city, as sometimes the qualities of these collective spaces exceeded the qualities of traditional public spaces, thus converting them (as stated Solá Morales) in the significant places of contemporary life.* Which means: if malls rather than create uninteresting collective spaces generate quality collective spaces; if instead of imposing its users very controlled spaces, they provide safe spaces with less restrictive control and if the experiences that their users can get inside, do not turn them into mere consumers, but restore their citizen's status, enabling the execution of various activities (such as access to a service, have a meal, a meeting or simply visit a cinema) then we can say that the civic qualities of collective spaces, that are generated within these facilities, are not very different from the traditional urban public spaces and, in some cases, the civic qualities of the first exceed those of these last.

To determine the validity of the hypothesis, three criteria were chosen, drawn from key debates on the topics of shopping centres. First: the ability of these artefacts to generate new collective spaces, legible and complex. Which is: all those smaller spatial structures that make up the shopping centres, usually interior: the gallery, the square, the park, the foyer, the passage, the corridor, etc. Second: the degrees of freedom provided by these spaces and their control elements. Which is: a space that is closed by automatic doors, where entries are all marked by alarms, where there are

one or more surveillance cameras, where security agents circulate, subject to a use within a certain time schedule is, in principle, a more secure, more controlled and, therefore, a space of less freedom than other not fully closed, where control elements are less and which can be used during the day or the night. Third: the forms of appropriation of these spaces resulting, primarily, from the mix of uses and activities in the same space. Which is: a mono functional place where there are only shops and exclusively used for consumption is quite different from a multifunctional space where there are shops but also, for example, services, restaurants, leisure and cultural facilities and where activities are also varied.

Finally we organized a sample or a corpus of case studies, composed of representative objects of the universe studied, both in Lisbon and Barcelona, primarily supported by three criteria - size, shape, and location. (Fig 2) We have selected three case studies in Lisbon and three in Barcelona. Depending on the size (very large, large, medium or small size), in Lisbon, the choices were, respectively, Colombo Shopping Centre, the Vasco da Gama Shopping Centre and the Shopping and Entertainment Complex of Campo Pequeno; in Barcelona, we opted for the Shopping Centre La Maquinista, L'Illa Shopping Centre and the Shopping and Leisure Centre Maremagnum. Furthermore, these facilities also correspond to different formats: La Maquinista corresponds to an open mall, shopping centre Maremagnum to a closed mall and L'Illa to a mall opened and closed at the same time. In Lisbon, we could not find an open shopping centre thus, we decided to choose two closed ones (Colombo and Campo Pequeno) and one open and closed (Vasco da Gama). Our interest was also to establish a spatial criterion through which the analyzed spatial facilities could become representative of the different locations that one can find in the city. Maremagnum and Vasco da Gama are inserted into a festive area of the city, both context marked by the presence of the water - Lisbon by Rio Tejo, and Barcelona, by the sea. L'Illa and Campo Pequeno are inserted in consolidated areas of the compact city. And in the cases of La Maquinista and Colombo Shopping Centres are inserted in obsolete unoccupied areas of the compact city though under renovation.

The current thoughts² have two purposes: on the one hand, to enrich the knowledge on collective spaces blossoming in the compact city and, on the other hand, to assess the opportunities and threats arising for the construction of the city, for the qualification of its collective spaces and for the urban development and

² The work here summarized fits into the framework of a PhD research that the author has undertaken in recent years in the Departament d'Urbanisme i Ordenació del Territori d'Superior Technical School of Architecture of Barcelona Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain

transformation, from the insertion of shopping and leisure centres.

2 Types of collective spaces

Collective spaces generated by huge leisure and consumption facilities, usually known as shopping centres, are the new urban spaces arising in the compact city which complete the traditional public spaces and generally extend or expand them. The present work aims, therefore, to highlight these new spaces, characterizing them, showing their qualities and defects and, whenever possible, trying to establish the appropriate comparisons with their counterparts, the public spaces. Per the analysis of the six case studies we have been able to draw three conclusions, below presented. (Fig 3)



FIG. 3 Framework of Types of Collective Spaces (Author: Pedro Bento)

The first and most important conclusion we reached is that, indeed, these facilities create new collective spaces in the city and with great urban interest. As referred to while following the presentation, new squares, streets, galleries, halls, passages, corridors, terraces, gardens, food courts / markets, a.s.o. are created. Which is: a whole set of spaces that did not exist and that, now, extend and expand the traditional public space.



FIG. 4 Plaza d'Anglesola / L'Illa Diagonal Shopping Centre (www.arqpress.net/index.php/paginasver88)

FIG. 5 Calle de las Naus / La Maquinista Shopping Centre (Author: Pedro Bento)

Plaza d' Anglesola (Fig 4), as it is named by L'Illa shopping centre, with a trapezoidal area of about 65m long, 23m wide and an amazing 30m height, on which you can walk on two levels or down to a third one, has a stunning magnitude. And the light that floods the space through its enormous skylights, crossed with the light coming through the glass panel, which occupies one of the facades of the square, is absolutely fascinating.

Calle de las Naus (Fig 5), in *La Maquinista*, with a cross section of 21m and 220m length is a very nice open collective space flanked by leafy trees, high lampposts and some arcades on both sides that considerably expand the public space, making room to the sidewalk and the rest areas for its users, while linking two major urban streets. But even more interesting is its longitudinal profile which can be read in different segments.

The galleries of Vasco da Gama (Fig 6) or of Colombo, even with a less suggestive image display extraordinary spatial features. In the case of Vasco da Gama we could see that it was a space developed on three floors, plus a fourth in the food court eastern top, with a height touching amazing 20m, with 120m depth, expanded for 73m more, through a long hallway linking it with the enclosure of the Intermodal Transport Station of "*Oriente*". Moreover, it was crossed by several bridges which introduced very special user movements and was open to the outside, through some fully glass walls and coverage.

Colombo showed a different shaped curved gallery. It developed on three floors and had a longitudinal symmetrical profile in relation to the axis of the project, going up to 200m. Its transversal profile was growing, since 7m on the ground floor up to 16.5 m on the first floor and 20m on the second floor, dimensions enlarged as they approached the centre. And its height was the largest of all the sample galleries. Which is: its height was that of the three plants, amplified by one ogival coverage,

totalizing 25.5 m and in the central floor this one rose 1.5 m to a total height of 27m. A truly phenomenal and prodigious space only undermined by the kind of image to which it was reduced.



FIG. 6 Gallery/Vasco da Gama Shopping Centre & FIG. 7 Main Hall/Maremagnum Leisure Complex (Pedro Bento)

In the case of Maremagnum we saw how the Main Hall (Fig 7) was opened to the public space generating a whole square. A square that is not unnoticed given its particular attraction – a curved glass panel reflecting the image of those who approach it and which allows the catching of a profile of the environment including users from above. Or the secondary halls that approach the square and rear gallery of the Maremagnum from the outdoor public spaces through holes in the facades and through materials on the pavements level that provide continuity to those used in the public spaces.

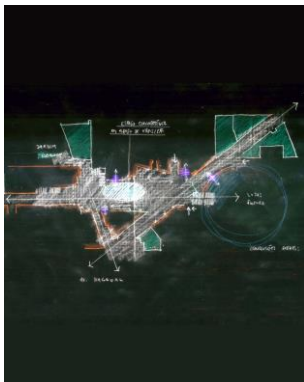


FIG. 8 Passage that lynks C/ d'Anglesola with Av. Diagonal / L'Illa Shopping Centre (Author: Pedro Bento)

Another important space to be noticed is the Passage (Fig 8) that tearing apart the ground floor of l'Illa allows Calle d'Anglesola to continue up to the Avenida Diagonal. This is undoubtedly a seductive space considering the way it announces other ones, the way it changes its profile when it smoothly climbs from Calle Numancia to meet Plaza d'Anglesola, to continue, afterwards, horizontally, up to Av. Diagonal, flanked by glass balconies, revealing the indoor shops, bars and services.

Also the corridor produced in the basement of l'Illa, with around 150m long and around 12m wide - which turns in the middle, at 90°, to cross the internal market and meet Calle Constanza - is an excellent example of how a collective space can work as a bypass, linking different public spaces and, at the same time, be so attractive. The design of different planes and lines marked by walls, which move forward and recede, the type of artificial recessed lighting constantly repeated and false ceilings consisting of metal foils giving some sort of rhythm to the space, introduce an unusual complexity, while keeping the legibility. And the remarkable light coming down from the skylight located just before turning, marks that turning point in an infrequent manner.

Moreover, these facilities generate overwhelming terraces. Which is: to be at l'Illa, in one of those little kiosks aligned near the rear facade of the Gallery or at one of the restaurants located on the other side of the garden; to be on the new terraces of La Maquinista, in one of its lounges; to be able to stare at the Port Vell from the terraces of the Maremagnum, or take a look at the Tagus River from the terraces of the Vasco da Gama can be experiences so nice and enriching as those that can be experienced whenever enjoying the interior of a public block (manzana) of Barcelona or visiting any of Lisbon urban parks.

Lastly, we register that some Food Courts and Markets designed by the shopping centres display qualities so or more suggestive than those of their homonymous public spaces. In the case of Campo Pequeno, the insertion of a food court and terraces into the surface, with best quality restaurants, was of an utmost importance to transform and improve the environment and the safety of the public square in which it is located. And, in the case of Vasco da Gama, it represented the creation of a new place to go eat with friends or family.

A point we would like to add and that, somehow, relates to the subsequent conclusion is that, in some cases, new collective spaces emerging from the shopping centre may be the most interesting urban spaces existing in a particular place, neighborhood or city. To give an example that can be visualized, in a place like the one where La Maquinista is located - mostly occupied by warehouses (some totally obsolete), factories and offices vacant or practically closed and high-density

residential housing, yet, highly questionable from the architectural quality point of view- the emergence of the mall has been the object that had generated more quality urban spaces in recent years, in this area of the city. As per all such references, we believe that the collective spaces, generated by the great leisure and consumption facilities shall not be reduced to mere commercial areas nor can they be seen and measured in such a reductive manner as that shown in some drawings and conclusions of some recent research.

The second conclusion we draw is that these large facilities not just created collective spaces but also helped creating public spaces. This applies, for example, to Calle Republica Dominicana, which did not exist before and that La Maquinista helped to mark, through the small buildings inserted in the West facade of the Calle dels Trens, but it is also the case of the square between Vasco da Gama and Estação do Oriente, once a formless space with no urban meaning which, nowadays, almost sets the essential square which precedes the entrance to the Parque das Nações, via the Gallery of Vasco da Gama. And it is also the case, already mentioned, of the square that the main entrance hall, in the Maremagnum, generated. A space that did not exist and that, now, may be one of the most visited public spaces of Barcelona. But it is also the case of the lobbies generated by l'Illa which announce other "cities" or the definition of a city's central axis as it is the Diagonal and that, its 330m of facade helped creating. Unfortunately, this does not occur in other cases. Colombo did not generate new public spaces nor helped to define existing ones, rather an object that could be a landmark or an interesting reference in Lisbon, which Colombo also is not.

The third conclusion we reached is that the type of image of the case studies varies less with the size of the facility than with its location. Which is: if, in malls analyzed in Barcelona the searching is for a sober architectural language, seeking their integration in the surroundings, regardless their size, in the big shopping centres of Lisbon the searching is almost always a theme and a dream and the surroundings are partially or totally forgotten. And this has mostly to do with the shopping centre model implanted or allowed to be implanted in a particular city than, necessarily, with its size. Moreover, we came to realize that there were collective spaces, especially in the case studies of Lisbon, that, although interesting from a spatial and architectural point of view, lost most of its interest out of the type of image used and the theme according to which they have been deliberately decorated, which is the Colombo case and, to a lesser extent, some spaces of Vasco da Gama shopping centre. As per this explanation, we believe that, although the using of a theme, in these spaces, is an important tool in terms of marketing or advertising, it turns into an extremely impoverishing of the environments that they may create; examples found in

Barcelona are enough evidence that one can succeed without losing architectural quality.

3 Degrees of Freedom

The comparative observation of the elements of control, applied in the leisure and consumption facilities - manual and automatic opening doors, gates, electric blinds, video surveillance cameras, security guards, alarms, rules of conduct or behaviour, time schedules of use, a.s.o. - allows us to determine the degree of freedom within the collective spaces and to classify them as limited freedom or maximum freedom spaces. We will seek to understand the dimension of the degrees of freedom within each facility and in facilities as a whole, as well as to determine the importance of the size and the type of shopping centre over their collective spaces 'degrees of freedom. This work had a view of highlighting those elements and analyzing, in detail, each of the facilities, space by space. As in the previous approach, this research involved reading and drawn interpretation of the floors, "in loco" observation and photography. (Fig 9)

From the analysis of the six case studies, we were able to draw, among others, the following three conclusions: that the vast majority of collective spaces generated by leisure and consumption facilities are places where freedoms are limited; that the size of the facility appears to influence or determine the degree of freedom of its collective spaces and that typological difference between facilities does not seem to affect the degrees of freedom of their collective spaces. The first conclusion is that the vast majority of collective spaces generated by leisure and consumption facilities are places where freedoms are limited. Which means: those are places where the user is subject to fixed rules of conduct, where he is monitored and he is limited to use collective spaces within a given time schedule. From the ten collective spaces identified in La Maquinista, only two are of maximum freedom - the South Entrance Plaza Sao Paulo and the North Entrance Plaza Potosi - the remaining eight are limited. In Colombo, just two of the 33 existing collective spaces are of maximum freedom - the Fountain Square and North Lobby. In Vasco da Gama only three of the eight collective spaces identified - eastern and western entrance lobbies and train station lobby- are spaces of maximum freedom; in Campo Pequeno, only the helicoidal lobby and the ramp lobby are of maximum freedom; the remaining and most important spaces - the gallery, the food court, hallways connecting to the food court, the circular corridor and the corridor connecting the subway - are limited.

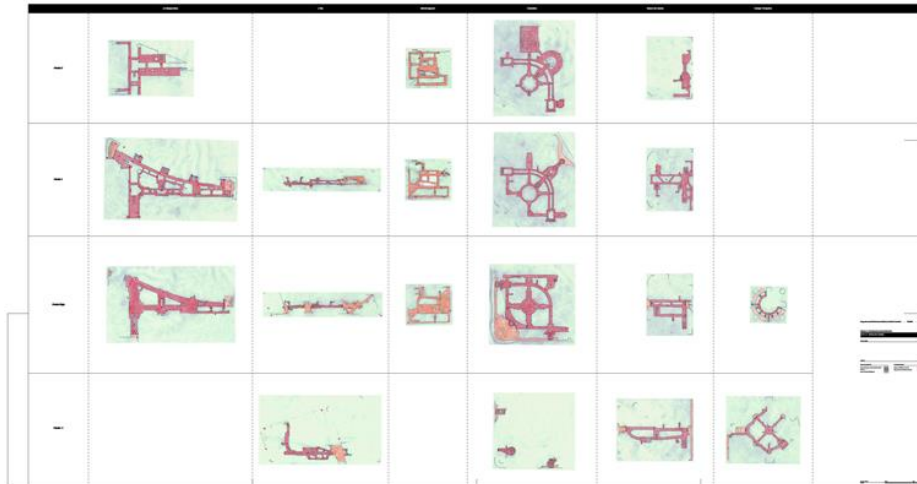


FIG. 9 Framework of Degrees of Freedom (Author: Pedro Bento)

However, exceptions were also identified. In the case of l'Illa Diagonal, five of the seven collective spaces identified are of maximum freedom and in the case of Maremagnum - undoubtedly the most innovative - all collective spaces are of maximum freedom.

The second conclusion is that the size of the facility appears to influence or determine the degree of freedom of its collective spaces. While a small shopping centre can be monitored only by a small security team, supported by a video surveillance system, a commercial centre of great size, though equipped with a significant video surveillance system, always needs a large or even several security teams, plus a significant increase of other control elements, raising the feeling of loss of individual freedom besides of representing a huge cost at the level of support. In these cases, the search for an intermediate solution comprising, at least, some spaces of free access, without so many control elements, similar to what was identified at l'Illa, appears to be the wiser and easier decision to be carried out.

With regard to the case studies analyzed, while Colombo and La Maquinista, both centres of great size, with 475.000m² and 214.000m² Construction Gross Area (CGA), only have two collective spaces of maximum freedom against, respectively, thirty three or ten collective spaces; Vasco da Gama, a facility of medium size, with 160.000m² CGA, increases the number of spaces of maximum freedom up to three, within a total of eight, and in l'Illa, a facility also of medium size, with around 197.400m² (CGA), the spaces of maximum freedom exceed those of limited freedom.

Finally, within Maremagnum, a leisure centre of small size, with around 59.000m² CGA, all collective spaces are of maximum freedom.

The third conclusion we can draw is that the facility typological difference – an open or closed shopping centre – does not appear to affect the degrees of freedom within the collective spaces. Colombo, which follows the type of a closed mall, has only two areas of maximum freedom. And its homonymous, in Barcelona, La Maquinista, which follows a typology of an open mall, has the same number of collective spaces of maximum freedom. Although, at first sight, greater continuity appears to exist between the collective spaces of La Maquinista and the surrounding streets, the truth is that, at night, the space closes and its use is as much limited as in the shopping centre of Lisbon.

Finally, one must refer that the identified elements of control that characterize the collective spaces of limited freedom, do not differ at all from those found in some public spaces, infrastructure and facilities. Which means: the entry into a transport terminal, an airport, an administrative building, a school or the use of a garden, a city park or the use of certain urban infrastructure, such as the subway, is subject to exactly the same elements of control as those in the new collective spaces. That is: the use of manual or automatic opening doors, video surveillance cameras and the presence of security agents. Therefore, we can say that traditional public spaces are also used under specific rules of conduct, which many among them are highly monitored spaces and that some are also subject to time restriction as to their opening and closing.

4 Forms of Appropriation

It aims to demonstrate that one can perform moves in the collective spaces not limited to consuming activities rather covering much richer experiences, such as cultural, gastronomic and children's leisure or the access to a particular service, precisely as it happens in traditional public spaces. The analysis of the distribution of uses and activities give us the opportunity to draw specific conclusions about the diversity of forms of appropriation that collective spaces generated by the shopping centres offer. In that sense, the uses correspond to spaces / premises that constitute the facility and the activities correspond to all such actions / moves that can take place in the collective spaces. Uses are classified into - department stores, restoration, services, general stores and equipment - and activities into - gastronomic leisure (terraces), children's leisure (playground), cultural leisure (multipurpose spaces), rest (rest areas) and information assistance (information spaces). Through the reading and the interpretation of the different floors, the

observation "in loco" and the photographic records, this statement analyzes, in detail, the forms of appropriation of each artefact and its collective spaces and presents some brief conclusions. (Fig 10).

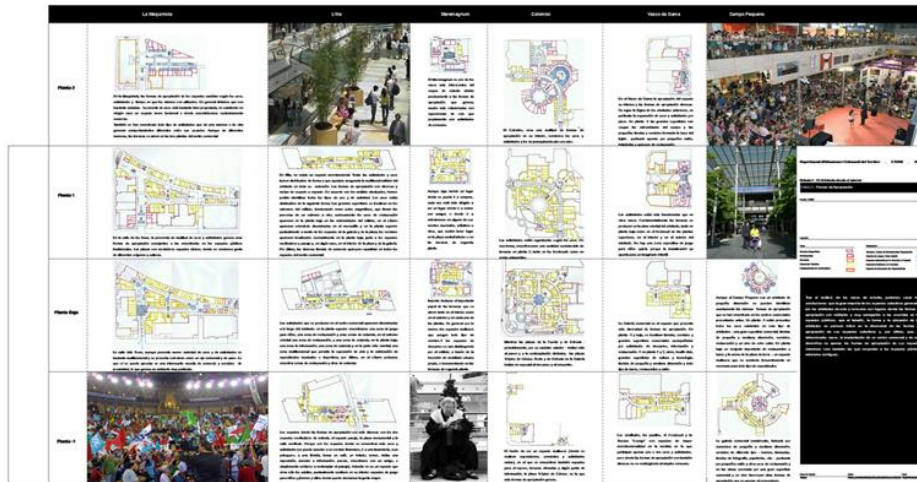


FIG. 10 Framework of Forms of Appropriation (Author: Pedro Bento)

From the analysis of the case studies, we can draw three conclusions: that the vast majority of collective spaces generated by leisure and consumption facilities are places where the forms of appropriation are multiple and very similar to those that occur in public spaces; that the size, shape and location of the facilities do not appear to have influence in the diversity of forms of appropriation of collective spaces and, finally, that in certain cases, the implementation of a shopping and leisure centre diversifies forms of appropriation of their collective spaces as well as those of the relating adjacent outdoor public spaces.

Undoubtedly, in all the case studies, the forms of appropriation are multiple, thus confirming the initial suspicion that malls and other entertainment artefacts cannot be reduced to simple consumer spaces. The presence of different uses and activities in the same space generates multifunctional spaces where, besides consumption, one can develop a set of other moves absolutely similar to those performed in the public space. La Calle de les Nau, at La Maquinista, for example, is an area that offers such a diversity of uses and activities as any commercial street of the city centre. It is flanked by small shops and large commercial areas, but also dining areas and leisure facilities such as cinemas or a playground in the second floor. At the middle of the axis, a multipurpose space stretches, where all sorts of events take place; at its end,

playgrounds for children emerge, as well as other rest and socializing areas, where people often stop to chat or just to look at.

Also the bypass consisting of the sequence of collective spaces – hall/lobby, market and street lobby - in the Illa is set up by multiples uses: commerce, services and restoration in the first floor, restoration in the second floor and one large commercial area, services and restoration in the third. In all three cases, terraces supporting bars and restaurants are inserted, where users of the mall but also workers of the offices on the upper floors and surroundings come to eat, to do some services or just to walk by.

The central square of Maremagnum, though less rich in types of use, since the most of the inside premises are shops, is a multifunctional space where great many events occur, photo exhibitions, a.s.o. Moreover, a small kiosk with terrace is there located, where many users stop to hydrate.

Walk along the Colombo Shopping Centre Gallery, at the ground level, besides the entry into many shops, allows the access to great many services (banking, communication, computers, optical, a.s.o.), to large technologic products stores and to a large hypermarket located behind a significant part of the Gallery. At the same time, small cafes and bars emerge at the points where the gallery reaches the entrance squares and corridors. At the centre of the Gallery, available furniture facilitates relaxation and the staring at the inside movement. On the second floor, the centre of the Gallery becomes a restoration area, embracing a large number of terraces supportive of the food court of the facility.

The gallery at Vasco da Gama Shopping Centre is a place also covering all uses and activities. At floor 1 one finds a mixture of trade and services in the centre, department stores on the top, overlooking Parque das Nações and a hypermarket that overlooks Estação do Oriente. At the ground floor, one mainly finds small and medium-sized shops and a large supermarket. Leisure spaces, such as cinemas, a large commercial area of cultural items and an important set of bars, cafes and restaurants, that turns into the facility food court, emerge at floor 1. At the ground floor and along the Gallery seats provide rest for the users and when it meets the food court, terraces overlook the outdoor, the public space, Parque das Nações and the mouth of the river Tejo. Although on a smaller scale, the Gallery of Campo Pequeno is flanked by a remarkable diversity of shops and services and it is closed by two major locomotives: a hypermarket on one side and a few cinemas on the other side. When its Gallery intersects the corridors that link it to the food court, small restoration uses emerge, such as bars, cafes and kiosks, which diverse the existent forms of appropriation. Then, its users not only are able to go shopping but also they

can access to services, walk by, see a movie, enjoy a meal or hydrate.

From the analysis of the case studies is quite clear that neither the size nor the shape, nor the location appear to determine the forms of appropriation. In all cases, there are multiple forms of appropriation, because all offer mixed uses and activities. It is true that within each facility, spaces exist where forms of appropriation are more diverse than those within others but, as a general rule, they all comply with the multifunctional uses and activities purpose.

In the case of La Maquinista, an object typologically differentiated from others, because of its "innovative" typology of open mall, all uses are generated in the different floors and a set of activities, space by space, emerge, that aims at differentiating among each other and at giving them a certain identity. Thus, one will find a few places with a more cozy shape, others focusing into parties and shows and other, a simple playground. In the same way, one will find some streets, like calle de les Naus and calle dels Ponts, whose profile is rather of a space for slow walking, equipped with seats and of a space to stay and contemplate and another street, calle dels Trains, curved and more addressed to quick and dynamic walk. Also at l'illa, although the type of the facility is not the same, all uses and activities are generated in the three floors, obviously using different percentages. One can find a mix of uses and activities fairly complete at the basement level and ground floor - two large department stores on the extremities of the facility, working as the locomotives of the mall, services and small shops at the entrances and along the collective spaces, respectively; restaurants and bars in almost every collective spaces of the facility. At the 1st floor level, that mixture is not as distributed as desirable and is mainly located at the extremities of the building - large commercial stores and small catering areas supported by terraces and playgrounds.

The Maremagnum rather than a shopping center is mostly an artifact of entertainment. The numerous restaurants, bars and terraces spread over the ground and second floors is evidence of this. Even on the first floor, which houses most of the trading, one can find the harbor of Barcelona offices, restaurants, bars, ice cream stores and terraces. The two multipurpose spaces, located in the central square and in the central terrace of the second floor, open space to great many events and shows, thus turning Maremagnum into a place as multifunctional and rich in forms of appropriation as any other else.

Colombo, due to its large size, concentrates all activities and uses before mentioned and, as a consequence, the appropriation forms are very diverse. However, the mixture of uses is more segmented than in other cases. On the ground floor there is a mix of services and trading quite acceptable, not so much on the first floor, where the

uses are mainly trade. On the second floor we would dare say that there is an organized mixture of uses - restoration, leisure (Fun Park and cinemas) and some trade. However, if one focus on specific areas, generated by the facility gallery, streets and lobbies - one should say that they display very interesting features from the point of view of multi functioning and forms of appropriation. The only spaces where this does not happen is some corridors, especially on ground and first floors, which are effectively mono functional from the point of view of uses and where the all forms of appropriation come down to a single activity, the purchase.

Vasco da Gama is a multifunctional facility like any other, which means that one can find almost all mixed uses and activities in a manner similar to the previous case. At floor -1 there is an interesting mix of uses, on the ground floor that mixture disappears and it reappears at floor 1. The gallery is undoubtedly the place where one gets most of the forms of appropriation and curved and straight corridors, on ground floor and -1 are the spaces where the forms of appropriation are less different and where people almost just go shopping.

Campo Pequeno, like Maremagnum, has a leisure character rather than consumption, and is also rich in what forms of appropriation concern. As we have been explaining, the Gallery of Campo Pequeno is the space where one can make more movements. On the contrary, other corridors and food courts are spaces that tend to be more mono functional and where forms of appropriation are less interesting.

In some cases, these commercial and leisure centres not just diversify the forms of appropriation of the collective spaces inside the facility but also the forms of appropriation of the outdoor, adjacent, public spaces. In specific cases of Maremagnum and Campo Pequeno, one can clearly notice how the adjacent public space undergoes substantial changes. With the new facility, where lobbies work as attraction means, bringing people into the space and the equipment, where terraces invite to stay and to enjoy leisure, immediately, among others, greater surveillance and social control of the public space is enhanced. In the case of Illa Diagonal this aspect is further explored. Not only lobbies and terraces are opened towards a space that, before, did not exist, but also a park with many playing areas, for children and families as well as rest areas for the elderly are generated, providing new experiences of the public space and ultimately new forms of appropriation of that public space.

5 Conclusions

The first conclusion we reached is that, indeed, these facilities create new collective spaces in the city with great urban interest. As referred, new squares, streets, galleries, halls, passages, corridors, terraces, gardens, food courts / markets, a.s.o. The second is that these large facilities not just created collective spaces but also helped creating public spaces. The third is that the type of image of the case studies varies less with the size of the facility than with its location. The fourth is that the vast majority of collective spaces generated by leisure and consumption facilities are places where freedoms are limited. The fifth is that the size of the facility appears to influence or determine the degree of freedom of its collective spaces. The sixth is that the facility typological difference – an open or closed shopping centre – does not appear to affect the degrees of freedom within the collective spaces. The seventh is that, undoubtedly, in all the case studies, the forms of appropriation are multiple, thus confirming the initial suspicion that malls and other entertainment artefacts cannot be reduced to simple consumer spaces. The eighth is that from the analysis of the case studies is quite clear that neither the size nor the shape, nor the location appear to determine the forms of appropriation. And finally, the ninth is that, in some cases, these commercial and leisure centres not just diversify the forms of appropriation of the collective spaces inside the facility but also the forms of appropriation of the outdoor, adjacent, public spaces.

Therefore, aspects that appear to be strictly part of the public domain are not. Moreover, in private collective spaces, one may also find spatial diversity and richness, different degrees of freedom and various forms of appropriation and not just the opportunity to buy. Yet, the most interesting thing is that, in some cases, not just new collective spaces but true new places in the city were generated. We believe that either in Lisbon or in Barcelona some "private" places are more public than traditional public ones. And, although the status of the shopping and leisure center is depreciated, it still is one of the most important urban facilities, nowadays. So, we just can agree with Sola Morales when he refers, in La Vanguardia article, that "these facilities – a shopping center or a peripheral supermarket, an amusement park or a stadium, a large amusement park, a large car parking or a shopping gallery – are the meaningful places of contemporary life."

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