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## FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the following Proceedings of the International Conference on Urban Planning ICUP2016, held in Nis on November 18-19, 2016. This is the first conference organized by the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, University of Nis and Urban Planning Cluster, with the aim of bringing together scholars, researchers and students from all areas of Urban Planning.

The ICUP conference explores a broad spectrum of Urban and Spatial Planning issues from both theory and practice. Some of the topics that we are focusing on this year include sustainable development, urban regeneration, urban design, land readjustment, public-private partnerships in urban development, urban management, knowledge-based urban development, smart cities, architectural heritage and various current problems of planning and development. These topics are discussed in more than 40 conference papers from various study areas and diverse places in the world, and therefore provide a valuable insight into contemporary urban policies and approaches. They also make good grounds for discussion at the conference and a good basis for further research. The authors are professors, researchers, PhD students and planning professionals. We are especially proud of our keynote speakers and the members of our Scientific Program Committee, who are eminent experts in their fields from all over the world.

Urban structure is a complex and multidimensional system that is prone to change. Therefore, it requires to be closely monitored by continuous research, which brings up some entirely new issues or sheds new light on the old ones. Given the importance of the planning topics elaborated at the conference and numerous questions that are raised here, we firmly believe that it is our task to continue exploring this matter. Hence, we are striving for the ICUP conference to have a biennial character in the future, and establish itself as a traditional manifestation of the University of Nis.

I take this opportunity to thank all of the authors and co-authors of papers, reviewers, keynote speakers, members of the Scientific Program Committee, as well as teachers and associates engaged in the technical preparation of these Proceedings. And finally, I am pleased to invite all authors from the academic and research community to participate and give their scientific and professional contributions to the future Conferences, for the benefit of all of us.



**Petar Mitkovic**, PhD, Full professor  
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*Chairman of the Scientific Program Committee*

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## SHOPPING MALL VS. OPEN PUBLIC SPACE IN CONSUMER CULTURE FOR ICUP 2016

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper explores the built environment of a shopping mall considering perception by its users. The aim of this paper is to compare the preferences consumers have towards shopping malls and public spaces, by determining consumers' opinion on the (dis)advantages of the shopping malls over features of the city center. The research question is about the competitiveness of shopping mall with open public space with the focus on the main qualities of it. Furthermore, the paper aims to explore the ways in which the inner space of these malls dictates behaviour of their visitors and shape the way how they spend their free time. The methodological frameworks are observations, questionnaires and surveys. Identity of shopping malls versus public places in Belgrade is observed through technical analyses and qualitative surveys using questionnaires. This research suggests that understanding experiences of contemporary urban change in public space requires a broader performative understanding of users' needs and its qualities.*

**Keywords:** shopping mall; identity; Belgrade; semi-public space.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Shopping malls have lately become one of the basic characteristics of cities. Behaviour and interactions of its visitors are defined by the primary purpose of this space - consumption. Potential interactions are reduced to temporary, superficial and formal communication. Simulation of city streets with shops and small squares takes over the role which downtown had, until recently.

Reproducing the city within its walls, shopping center states that experience of the city is safer and cleaner in the climate-controlled and secure conditions, than on the real streets outside.<sup>1</sup> The disappearance of public space and the emergence of pseudo-public spaces with limited access occur simultaneously with the aggression of commercial culture and emergence of cultural spectacle. "The difference between the public and pseudo-public space is that the pseudo-public space represents a privatized public sphere. It, however, seems like a public sphere, but the rules of the game are defined in a way that there are not many "public potentials."<sup>2</sup>

Among the first, notion of pseudo-public space was introduced by Mike Davis, who explained them as a special kind of public space where the admission and behavior of people are strongly constrained by a strong security system. Davis, explaining the fear of the crowds, said that "the designers of malls and pseudo-public space attack the crowd by homogenizing it. They set up architectural and semiotic barriers to filter out 'undesirables'. They enclose the mass that remains, directing its circulation with behaviourist ferocity. It is lured by visual

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Crawford. „The World in a Shopping Mall“ u M. Sorkin (Ur.), Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space(3-30). New York: Hill and Wang, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Srecko Horvat. Znakovi postmodernog grada: prilog semiologiji urbanizma. (Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk, 2007): pp. 139.

stimuli of all kinds, dulled by muzak<sup>3</sup>, sometimes even scented by invisible aromatics.<sup>4</sup> Davis presents an image of total detention, which is the result of the city planning besieged with security measures. Unlike the public space, malls do not have dark, unsafe and narrow streets. Plants<sup>5</sup> are put to refresh the interior, as a reminiscent of nature, while on the other hand, the nature in an unnatural environment, "the presence of nature, albeit tamed in a garden setting, naturalizes consumption, and mitigates the alienation inherent in commodity production and consumption."<sup>6</sup> Significant development strategy is the development of shopping centers in the form of public spaces, but this creates only an illusion of "openness". Shopping centers are largely private, closed and guarded premises: pseudo-public spaces.

A general phenomenon<sup>7</sup> is that the numerous contents of the city center are disappearing along with the opening of the new shopping center. The shopping mall is primarily a *non-place*.<sup>8</sup> Marc Augé, who defined this term, indicates that the super modernity is producing non-places, which are transit and anonymous spaces that allow the fast flow of a larger number of individuals. Since they are deprived of identity, history and meaning as a social construct, non-spaces are not anthropological places. With transition of functions primarily intended for an open public space, to pseudo premises of the malls, purpose of the city square is lost. The streets and the squares of the shopping mall have been designed to create the impression that they are public spaces. However, it is a privately-owned space with movement restrictions and controlled behaviour of consumers, with selective access and video surveillance.

The modern consumer spaces give a distorted picture of social relations. Shopping centers are celebrated as family places where family members can spend their free time together. Everyday life of a modern family is mediated by the consumer society, according to G. Ritzer<sup>9</sup>. Late capitalist forms of social cohesion, such as families or communities, should consume goods to strengthen their relations. According to this author, these new means of consumption are transforming the nature of social relationships.

Since the 1980's the focus of urban planners in Western Europe and developed countries are moved from construction of the new shopping malls to the regeneration and revitalization of the open public spaces. However, in Serbia and ex Eastern European countries, there is a booming process of the construction of new shopping malls. The recent economic decline in Serbia extinguishes glow of consumerism from few decades ago. Only the largest and strongest shopping malls survived, while small local malls, formed inside former department stores, are shutting down. Former local shopping centers, such as *Siti pasaz*, *Staklenac*, *Stari Merkator*, *Cumicevo Sokace*, *Robna kuca Beograd*, are examples of past glory and carriers of consumerism in Belgrade in the 70's of the last century. In the era of global economy crisis, central axis of false consumerism in above-mentioned two shopping malls in Belgrade are low and middle category consumer goods, originating from various Asian countries. As a reaction to that, new shopping streets of high-class consumerism and elite are formed.

## 2. FIRST SHOPPING MALLS

During the last decade shopping centers are beginning to dominate the center of cities and suburbs, as a visual sign of putting the production process before the consumer amenities. Victor Gruen was the architect of

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<sup>3</sup> Muzak is recorded music that is played quietly and continuously in public places, such as airports, hotels, and shops, to make people feel relaxed

<sup>4</sup> Mike Davis, "Fortress L.A." City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles. New York: Vintage Books, 1992, pp. 180

<sup>5</sup> In order to create a more natural environment in large shopping malls, designers are building spacious gardens with all the characteristics of real. Goss (1993: 44) gives an example of Tyson's Corner in Virginia, whose administration has selected 29 large palm trees that were excavated in Florida and kept for 18 months in the shade in order to acclimatize to the conditions inside, before they are placed in the interior of the shopping center.

<sup>6</sup> Jon Goss. „The "Magic of the Mall": An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment“, Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 83, No. 1. (Mar., 1993), pp. 18-47., pp. 36

<sup>7</sup> Борис Костуранов. „Отворено о јавним просторима – чији су јавни простори“. Отворено о јавним просторим , pp. 42.

<sup>8</sup> The author (Marc Augé) defines the non-space of the city as a space that unlike the city can not be identified either as with identity, not as a relational, not as historical space. Non-space the are places of alienation, spaces that occur as a result of postindustrial and networked information society.

<sup>9</sup> Ritzer, G. i Stillman, T. The Modern Las Vegas Casino-Hotel: The Paradigmatic New Means of Consumption. Management, 4(3), 2001, стр 184

the first shopping mall. He proposed mall as a basic unit of urban planning, where the mall becomes a multi-purpose city center. He identifies shopping as a part of a larger network of human activity, arguing that the selling would be better if commercial activities were integrated into the cultural and entertaining activities. Gruen saw designing of shopping malls as a way of producing new urban centers or, as he called them, "shopping towns." He was encouraging designers to program a shopping mall which included many shopping activities, as well as cultural, artistic and social events. He labelled this social integration of commercial activities "architecture of the environment."

Presence of the square and city streets, representing a symbol of the real city content, reminds us of Gruen's idea of shopping malls. Shopping centers have encouraged the development of suburbs and became some kind of community centers; moreover, they have become a part of the American way of life, causing changes in our daily lives and habits. Creating place for public, political, cultural and recreational events, and above all, places of leisure and socialization, they have become more than a "commercial city," but an alternative center of the city. In postmodern times, former role of the city square completely disappeared. In order to understand why, we shall oppose city square as a meeting point with the modern shopping centers as a new "gathering point."<sup>10</sup>

An increasing number of activities related to the traditional contents of the city center, such as work, play, shopping, recreation, public protests,<sup>11</sup> culture, entertainment, health and educational services has been transferred to the "mall."<sup>12</sup> These activities include even tourism, which used to be related exclusively to landmarks of urban city.

### 3. METHOD AND MATHERIAL

The methodological frameworks are observations, questionnaires and surveys. Identity of shopping malls versus public places in Belgrade is observed through technical analyses and qualitative surveys using questionnaires. The aim of this paper is to compare the preferences consumers have towards shopping malls and public spaces.

#### 3.1. Method of survey

Relevant data was collected by online questionnaire, during first two weeks of September 2016. The target population for this study consisted of mostly young people with their families, due to the fact that they belong to the group of people who are active mall visitors, which was noted by observation in largest Belgrade shopping malls. This could be pointed out as a lack of the research, given the disproportion of age groups in relation to the population of Belgrade in whole. A structured questionnaire was developed to measure the customers' shopping motivation, both in the shopping mall and in the largest shopping city street in Belgrade, Knez Mihailova street. The questionnaire consisted of questions concerning shopping motivation, preferences, demographic information of respondents, questions about identity of shopping mall and identity of city center, the connection between them, etc.

The survey was conducted by an online questionnaire, which consisted of two parts:

- Personal details of the respondents and demographic information;
- Specific part of the questionnaire, concerning identity, preferences and choice of shopping space.

The results are based on responses from 138 respondents. Questionnaires and face-to-face interviews were used in collecting data from the target population. Selected demographic information of the respondents, including gender, age, city and employment status, are presented in Figure 1.

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<sup>10</sup> Srecko Horvat. *Znakovi postmodernog grada: prilog semiologiji urbanizma*. (Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk, 2007): стр. 124.

<sup>11</sup> The owners are rigorous when it comes to this situation and respond to it by calling the police to disperse people from the shopping mall (private property, which is presented as part of social life).

<sup>12</sup> Shopping centre or shopping center, shopping mall, or just mall, are synonyms. Shopping center in USA popularly is called shopping mall (Ritzer, 1999.), the term is used for indoor, air conditioned and insured sales area mall (Underhill, 2005)

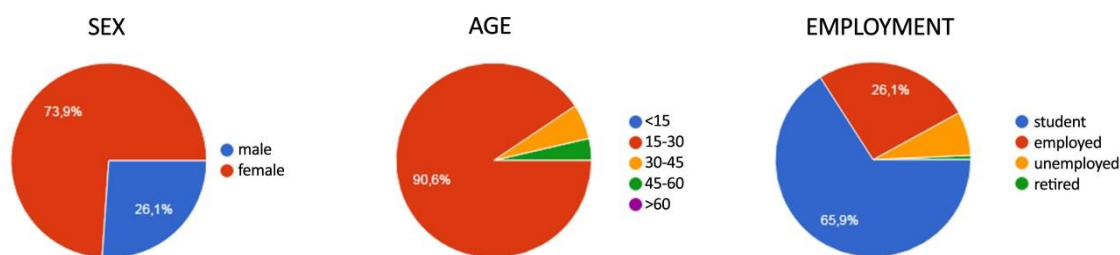


Figure 1: Demographic profile of the sample (sex, age and employment status of respondents)

In total, there are more female respondents, with a prevalence of 73,9% over male respondents, who formed 26,1% of the sample. The age of the respondents shows that in general most of the respondents (90,6%) are between 15-30 years of age, with minority being over 30 years (30-45 – 5,8%; 45-60 – 3,6%). This proves that the sample was composed of all age groups, with target population of younger people from Belgrade (87.7%) and 12,3% from other Serbian cities. Almost 66% of respondents are students, and 26.1% are employed.

### 3.2. QuestionNaire sample

The difference between identities of shopping malls and public places in Belgrade is observed through questionnaire conducted in Belgrade, in Serbian language. Figure 2 shows specific part of the questionnaire concerning identity, preferences and choice of shopping space.

- POSEBNI DEO UPITNIKA
- DA LI ČEŠĆE PROVODITE SLOBODNO VREME ŠETAJUĆI SE ULICAMA I TRGOVIMA LI U TRŽNOM CENTRU?
    - UICE I TRGOVI
    - TRŽNI CENTI
  - ZBOG ČEGA DAJETE PREDNOST TRŽNOM CENTRU? (RANGIRATI OD 1 DO 5)
    - KUMATSKI KOMFOR (TEMPERATURA, NEMA PADAVINA, NEMA VETRA)
    - KONCENTRACIJA SADRŽAJA
    - BEZBEDNOST
    - ROBNI BRENDOVI
    - RESTORANI, KAFIĆI, ZABAVNE AKTIVNOSTI
    - VEĆA KONCENTRACIJA LJUDI
    - LAKŠE SE SNALAZITE SA MALOM DECOM
  - KOJI JE GLAVNI RAZLOG ODLASKA U TRŽNI CENTAR?
    - KUPOVINA
    - KUPOVINA NAMIRNICA
    - RESTORAN, KAFIĆI
    - BIOSKOP I DRUGE ZABAVNE AKTIVNOSTI
    - MOGUĆNOST SUSREĆANJA SA DRUGIM LJUDIMA
    - ZABAVNO PROVEDENO SLOBODNO VREME
    - BEZBEDNO MESTO ZA ŠETNJU DECE
  - KOLIKO ČESTO ODLAZITE U TRŽNI CENTAR?
    - SVAKODNEVNO
    - 2 DO 3 PUTA NEDELJNO
    - JEDNOM NEDELJNO
    - VIKENDOM
    - PAR PUTA MESEČNO
    - KADA SU DRŽAVNI PRAZNICI
    - KADA POSTOJI NEKI PROGRAM/DEŠAVANJE U TC
    - SEZONSKI (LETI, ZIMI, U PROLEĆE ILI U JESEN)
    - NE ODLAZIM
  - KOLIKO VREMENSKI PROVEDETE U TRŽNOM CENTRU U TOKU DANA, TOKOM JEDNE POSETE?
    - <1H
    - 1H-3H
    - 3H-6H
    - >6H
  - DA LI SMATRATE DA TRŽNI CENTAR MOŽE USPEŠNO DA ZAMENI OTVORENI GRADSKI PROSTOR?
    - DA
    - NE
    - DONEKLE
  - AKO STE ODGOVORILI NA PRETHODNO PITANJE DA, ZAŠTO SMATRATE DA TRŽNI CENTAR MOŽE USPEŠNO DA ZAMENI OTVORENI GRADSKI PROSTOR?
    - ŠTA JE TO ŠTO VAM NEDOSTAJE U TRŽNOM CENTRU U ODNOSU NA OTVORENI PROSTOR?
  - DA LI SMATRATE DA OTVARANJE NOVIH TRŽNIH CENTARA UTIČE NA SMANJIVANJE BROJA POSETILACA U KNEZ MIHAJLOVOJ ULICI (KAO I OSTALIM TRGOVINSKIM ULICAMA)?
    - DA
    - NE
    - NE ZNAM
  - DA LI VAS TA ČINJENICA ZABRINJAVA (GRAD GUBI IDENTITET, ZATVARAJU SE RADNJE U CENTRU, CENTAR OSTAJE PUST I SL.)
    - DA
    - NE
    - NE ZNAM
  - AKO DA, ZBOG ČEGA?
    - KAKO BI TREBALO DA IZGLEDAJU OTVORENI JAVNI GRADSKI PROSTOR DA BI U NJIMA PROVODILI VIŠE VREMENA?
  - KOJI SADRŽAJI TREBAJU DA BUDU UVEDENI U OTVORENI JAVNI GRADSKI PROSTOR DA BI U NJIMA PROVODILI VIŠE VREMENA?
    - DA
    - NE
    - NE ZNAM
  - DA LI SMATRATE DA UNUTRAŠNOST TC LIČI NA GRADSKIE ULICE?
    - DA
    - NE
    - NE ZNAM
  - AKO DA, ZBOG ČEGA?
    - PRODAVNICE
    - PROSTOR TC/HODNICI
    - AMBIJENT TC
    - KAFIĆI/RESTORANI
    - BLIZINA
  - DA LI JE ZA VAS BITNA BLIZINA TC
    - DA
    - NE
    - ZAVISI OD \_\_\_\_\_
  - ZAŠTO SE VRAĆATE U ISTI TC?
    - PRODAVNICE
    - PROSTOR TC/HODNICI
    - AMBIJENT TC
    - KAFIĆI/RESTORANI
    - BLIZINA
  - U KOJI TC VIŠE VOLITE DA ODETE?
    - UŠĆE
    - DELTA CITY
    - STADION
    - FASHION PARK OUTLET CENTAR - INDIJA
    - IMMOCENTAR
    - MERCATOR
    - ZIRA
    - KINESKI TC\*
    - ROBNA KUĆA\*
  - DA LI JE TC POSTAO DEO VAŠEG ŽIVOTA?
    - DA
    - NE
    - NE ZNAM

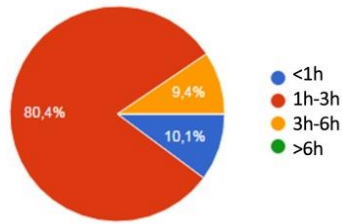
Figure 2: Questionnaire sample

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Time Profile

The research also sought to establish the length of time the respondents have been spending in the mall and how often they go to shopping malls. Findings indicate that the most of the shoppers are spending 1-3h (80,4%) during one visit, while 10,1% spend less than an hour, and 9,4% of respondents spend 3-6h. Results from Figure 3 indicate that more of the half of the respondents visit shopping malls at least once a month (42%) or even once a week (12.3%). However, other half of respondents go to shopping malls rarely, few times a year (31,9%) or seasonally (8%)

How much time do you spend during one visit to shopping mall?



How often do you go to shopping mall?

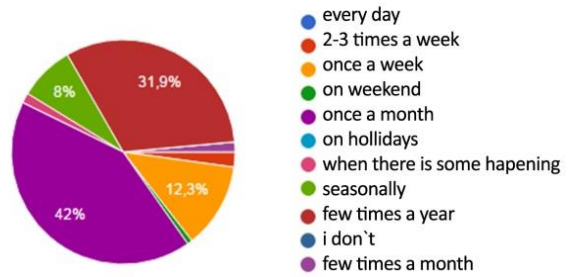


Figure 3: Time profile (time span and frequency of visit).

#### 4.2. Do people prefer shopping mall over city street?

In order to assess why shoppers are preferring shopping malls instead of public spaces and shopping streets, such as Knez Mihailova street in Belgrade, the respondents were presented with a list of seven statements and asked to rate how much they agreed with each of them. The statements were measured on a five-point scale, with following responses: strongly agree-5; agree=4; neutral=3; disagree -2; strongly disagree-1. Average score for each statement was calculated and the results disintegrated by type of respondents, with results displayed below, in Figures 4, 5 and 6.

the climate comfort  
(controlled temperature, no precipitation, no wind)



safety

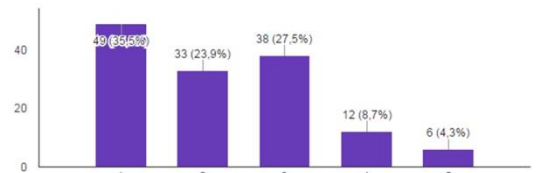
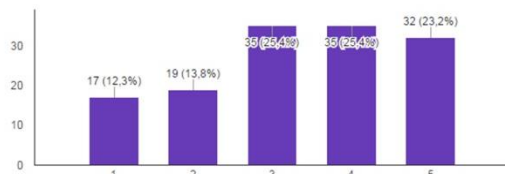


Figure 4: climate comfort (score 3,38) and safety (score 2,22)

Most of the respondents mentioned the positive aesthetics of malls, such as pleasing colors, attractive lighting, warmth, and so on. Overall score for climate control is 3.38. Instead of common opinion that shopping malls are more preferred than city streets because of their safety, the results indicate that this is not the reason why people are choosing to stay in closed mall. Overall score for safety as a factor that makes shopping mall preferable choice is 2.22.

content concentration



people concentration

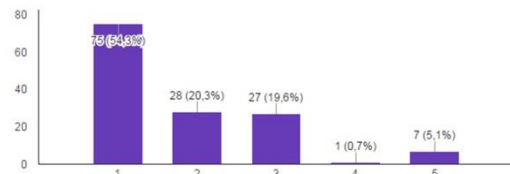
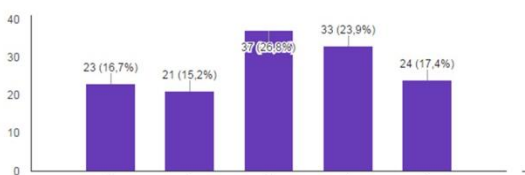


Figure 5: content concentration (score 3,33); people concentration (score 1,81)

75 out of 138 respondents mentioned in negative context "crowds" or "lots of people" in shopping malls. They strongly disagree that big concentration of people is preferable in choice of shopping place. They find the malls noisy, due to constant crowds. Only 7 participants liked that the large concentration of people in shopping malls. However, content concentration is important for majority of the participants.

shopping brands



restaurants, cafes, leisure activities

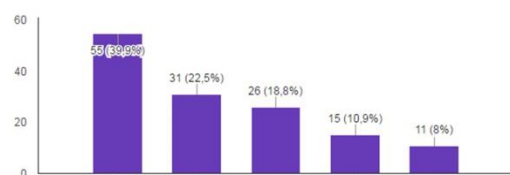


Figure 6: Shopping brands (score 3,10); shops, cafes, leisure activities (score 2,25)

The respondents agree that shopping malls offer many choices through a wide variety of branded stores and food courts. Opposite to a common opinion that leisure activities are important when choosing a shopping place, 40% of participants strongly disagree with this opinion; only 8% of them find it very important. However, some are concerned that there is a shortage of retailers, who meet their changing needs.

It is important to note that 89 out of 138 respondents (65%) stated they do not prefer shopping malls to city streets.

### 4.3. Identity of shopping mall versus public space

Almost half of participants believe that opening of new shopping malls will not affect the reduction of visitors to the shopping street of Knez Mihailova. On the other hand, 44.2% of respondents believe it will not affect city streets at all. Similarly, half of them (47.8%) are not concerned that city center will lose its identity, which can be noticed in Figure 7.

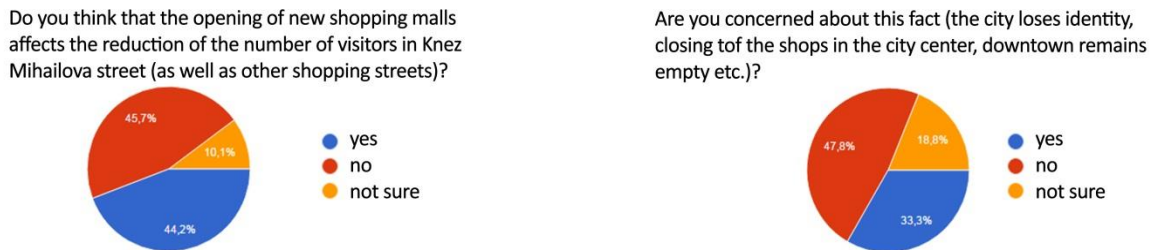


Figure 7: Identity of shopping mall versus public space (opinion of respondents about influence of shopping malls on public space)

We asked respondents who agreed to this statement to provide explanation for that. Some of the answers are:

- “Malls are always the same, generic in every country”;
- “Malls are distracting people from places in the city where they can find all possibilities the mall offers plus cultural heritage, the city's identity, cultural events ...”;
- “City rejects its own tradition and heritage, and blindly throws the Western model, without character and parameters appropriate for us sensibility”;
- “A large concentration of people in the wrong place, sense of values is lost under the shadow of the goods”;
- “Because shopping centers impose a certain system of values, but it is necessary to create a non-leading human interaction”;
- “It emphasizes consumerism, leads to alienation of people inside it”;
- “Malls are not inherently bad, but the desire for capital, poor location, bad architecture, without greater and more noble goal is bad”;
- “It became touristic destination.”

As can be concluded from Figure 8, most the respondents claim that they spend more time walking on city streets (91,3%) than in the closed shopping malls (8,7%). Nevertheless, more than half of them (53,6%) enjoy shopping in closed and guarded premises - mall than on open city streets.

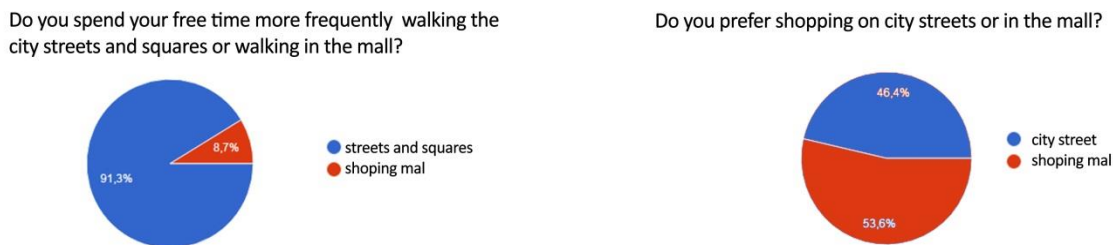


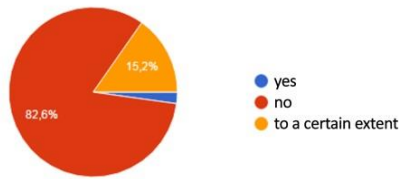
Figure 8: Choice of place (walking and preferences)

### 4.4. Mall compared to the open public space

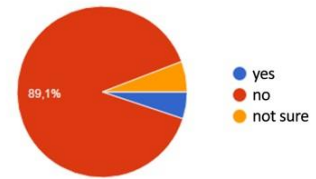
It can be noticed from the results from a sample survey show that 82,6% of people believe that shopping malls cannot successfully replace open public spaces, while 15,2% agree with that statement, and the remainder had not thought about the issue (Figure 9).



Do you believe that shopping mall can successfully replace open public space?



Do you think that interior of shopping mall resemble city street?



**Figure 9:** Opinion of respondents about replacement and resemblance of shopping mall vs. public spaces

A few respondents who agreed to this statement elaborated their opinion:

- “There are more shops”
- “Because it gives more opportunities”
- “Complexity”
- “Because in the mall you can avoid bad climatic conditions without staying at home”
- “Because in the one place you can find greater choice of goods adapted for different budget population, you do not have to go throughout the city”

Simulation of city streets with shops and small squares, takes over the role which downtown had, until recently. Figure 9 shows that participants who agreed with statement that interior of shopping mall resembles city streets (5,1%) said that this is due to concentration of movement, crowded shops, concentration of content and people.

- “they should probably look like the streets, although I do not have that impression, the more I feel like in a box system of streets and squares, benches and greenery in pots, shops around, entertaining “parks”, cafes, ice cream stalls etc.”

On the question “How should open public space look for you to spend more time in it?” participants answered:

- “more vegetation(x29), cleaner(x27), more content and activities(x14), safer (x5)”, “should be more the shelter during bad weather and plenty of greenery, should be more interactive”
- “Lots of variety of greenery and large number of comfortable urban furniture. The less of surrounding traffic and the more space for children to play.”
- “unburdened by spectacle but comfort, small city spaces”
- “the problem is not in open public places but in people”
- “greater concentration of entertainment content, better ambient, they should be multifunctional”
- “more comfort: public toilets, bins, benches etc.”
- “more shops”
- “Tidy in terms of clean or painted facades. Highlight of historical value in the location if any. Unique shop windows. Cafe bars. Interesting events. No beggars or people they distribute leaflets. Music.”
- “They should be covered with free internet and more fountains with water”
- “Decorated space, clean (maintained), with plenty of nature / greenery, clear and transparent but with a certain amount of mystery that draws you to explore more.”

On the question: “What do you miss in shopping malls in comparison with open public space?” respondents answered:

- Fresh air (x57), space (x31), freedom (x9), sky (x8), sun (x4), natural lighting(x4);
- “Feeling of the real time and space”;
- “A choice of movement”;
- “Easy observing the time of day, openness of the view, which has been reduced substantially exclusively to the sky or no view at all”;
- “Width of open space, nature, diverse cafes”;
- “Daylight and notion of time”;
- “No matter how designers are trying to imitate ancient places, city centers or even nature, Shopping mall remains closed controlled space”;
- “Shopping centers can have a garden or can be a complex of low buildings. It is about money, creativity of space”;
- “The diversity of visitors, mostly one and the same group of people are coming to mall.”

#### 4.5. Preferences of respondents concerning choice of shopping mall

What determines where people shop? Why would people visit one shopping center rather than another? These questions are important to developers, planners and the Government. In addition, there is a need to understand shopping as a fundamental feature of modern society. Attributes such as transport links, parking and choice of major stores are well-known determinants of shopping center success.

Used questionnaire surveys are based on the respondents' perceptions of the importance or ratings of attributes of shopping centers.

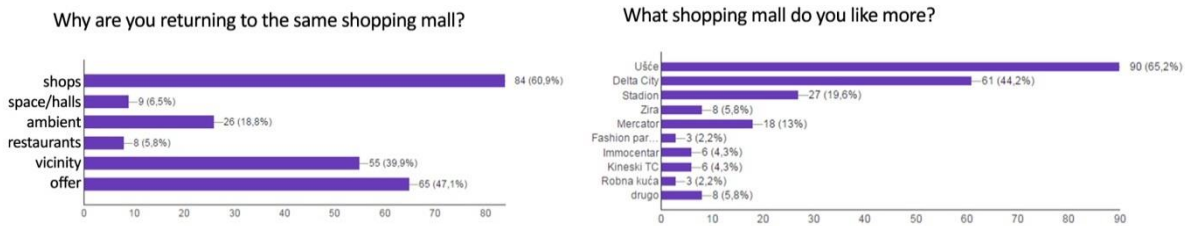


Figure 10: Preferences of respondents concerning choice of shopping mall

This part of survey contains multiple-choice questions. The survey shows that 65.2% of participants think that Usce is the best shopping mall in Belgrade for shopping and entertaining. Just behind Usce<sup>13</sup> is Delta City<sup>14</sup>, with 44.2% of votes, as shown in Figure 10. The importance of local shopping centers is lost, given that Delta City and Usce shopping center, as market leaders in this category, are preferable choice than all the local shopping centers together.

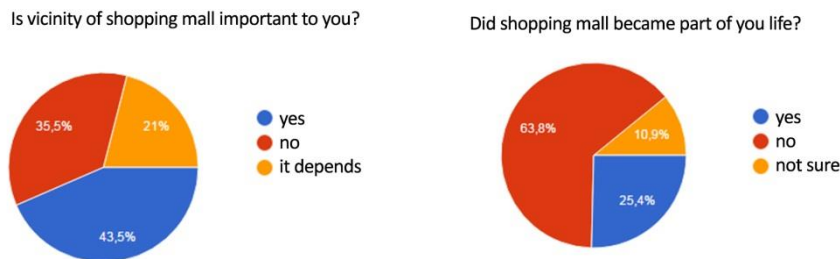


Figure 11: Vicinity of shopping mall and opinion of respondents about mall becoming part of life in nowadays culture.

Figure 11 shows that vicinity of a shopping mall is important to 43.5% of respondents, while 21% of them stated that it depends on their available time, purpose of visit, location of their residence, choice of content and brands, and ease of reachability by public transport, etc. Only 35.5% of respondents stated that vicinity of shopping mall is not important. More than 60% of participants claim that shopping malls did not became part of their life, but 25.4% of them admit that they agree with this statement.

#### 5. LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

This survey contains limitations inherent to all researches. These limitations should be considered when the results of this research are interpreted. The results of the survey, if conducted in other part of the country, may vary. The sample of this survey consisted of 138 active mall shoppers. The small sample size is also error-prone. Shopping motivation in this study captures the general predisposition of respondents towards the act of shopping. It is likely that individuals display different shopping motivations on varying occasions. While this study identified several shopping motivations why consumers go to shopping, it may have missed others. These will need to be measured empirically in future research with more diverse target population.

<sup>13</sup> Usce shopping center in New Belgrade is the largest shopping center in Serbia and the region. At six levels, 130,000 square meters, of which 50,000 commercial space, 150 shops, restaurants, bars, game room, supermarket, a multiplex cinema with 11 halls, etc.

<sup>14</sup> Delta City is situated in New Belgrade, Serbia. It has 85,000 m<sup>2</sup> and 125 shops.



## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Shopping centers are becoming increasingly similar to the traditional city centers and their owners cease being mere traders and become builders of new, controlled urban areas, which take precedence over the streets of the city center, because they provide a higher order, cleanliness and safety, as well as an ideal climate without frost, rain and heat. The results of the questionnaire also showed that comfort is one of the most important qualities of public space required by users. Another result of the survey shows that consumers pick a shopping center to visit by observing the number of stores. During the last two decades, the main open public spaces in Belgrade and Serbia have been losing their commercial function. Instead of the shops, the banks and offices are located in the ground floors, which influence the number of the users. This phenomenon is even more visibly in the mid-sized towns and cities.

It was also found that entertainment within the shopping malls is very important for the users, and that they insist on more activities and functions in the open public space, too. Shopping malls as closed boxes mimic the city center with minimal participation in the immediate surrounding area. The fact is that each of them is trying to keep their customers as long as possible, and, for this reason, music is playing in the parking lot, there are restaurants, bars and other leisure and entertainment opportunities. Almost all new shopping malls have children playgrounds where customers may leave their children and enjoy shopping undisturbed (Horvat connects that to the phenomenon of total space, especially important for the quality of today's postmodern construction).<sup>15</sup> The same codes could be applied on the public spaces.

The interior of the shopping centers is organized as the urban matrix, with streets and squares. The various events, exhibitions, performances, promotions, concerts, etc., are organized on the streets of the shopping malls from time to time. The interior is furnished in a way that resembles the urban space: benches are placed along the promenade, nature elements are deployed throughout the mall. To create the illusion of the urban environment and public space (outside of which there is no other public space), everything is arranged so that the corridors of the shopping center are converted into a pedestrian zone, street, square, park or public space.

The streets and the squares of the shopping mall have been designed to create the impression that these are public spaces. However, shopping mall is a privately owned space with movement restrictions and controlled behavior of consumers, with selective access and video surveillance. The privatization of public space with the appearance of so-called *semi-public space*, spaces that are only seemingly public is the general trend in modern society. In the construction of shopping centers, there is a tendency of design, where design solutions have the scheme caused by the model dominated with the streets and small squares. That means that the shopping malls took over the role of the citysquare both in functional and design relations. In simulation of city center, mall space contains elements such as urban street with benches with nature elements, square with catering facilities and a fountain. Similar to the real heart of the city, street and square have the function of walking, sightseeing windows and socializing.

By simulating city environment, shopping malls are adopting features of the city falsely declaring themselves as a public space. Squares and streets in these pseudo-public spaces are presented as symbols of the real city facilities. What was once a public square, a gathering place for citizens and collective cohesion - today is the shopping center, the pseudo-public space in which private interests completely overshadow any public space, and citizens are welcome as long as they adhere established (consumerist) forms. In this sense, the consumer expects certain homogeneity of the population. Family purchases are motivated by qualitative factors combined with the implementation of free time, and the feeling of comfort and satisfaction. Imitation of physical context leads to neglect of new layers of culture, new needs and construction, and sensibility, even to the negation of any developed and transformed identity.

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