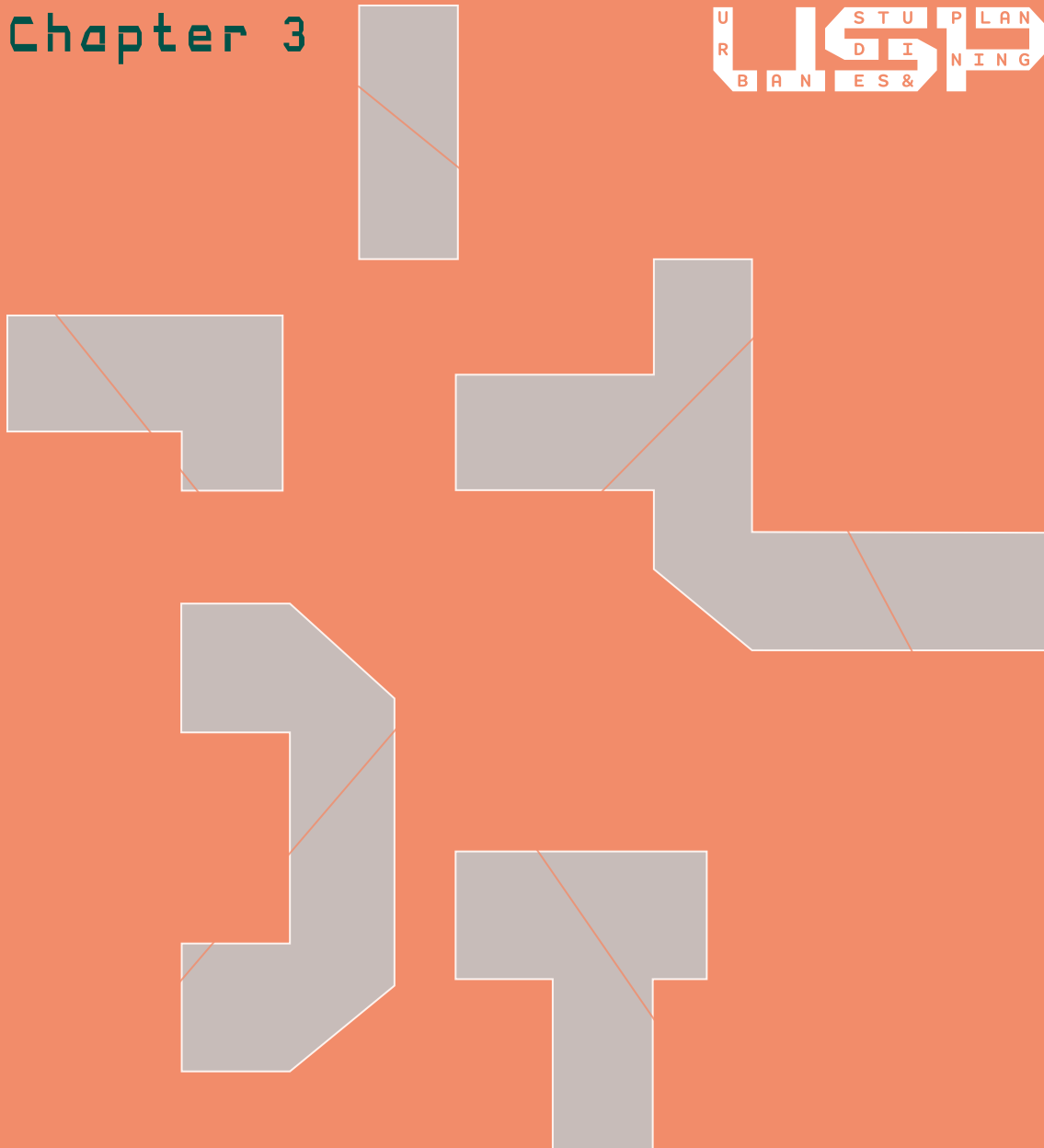
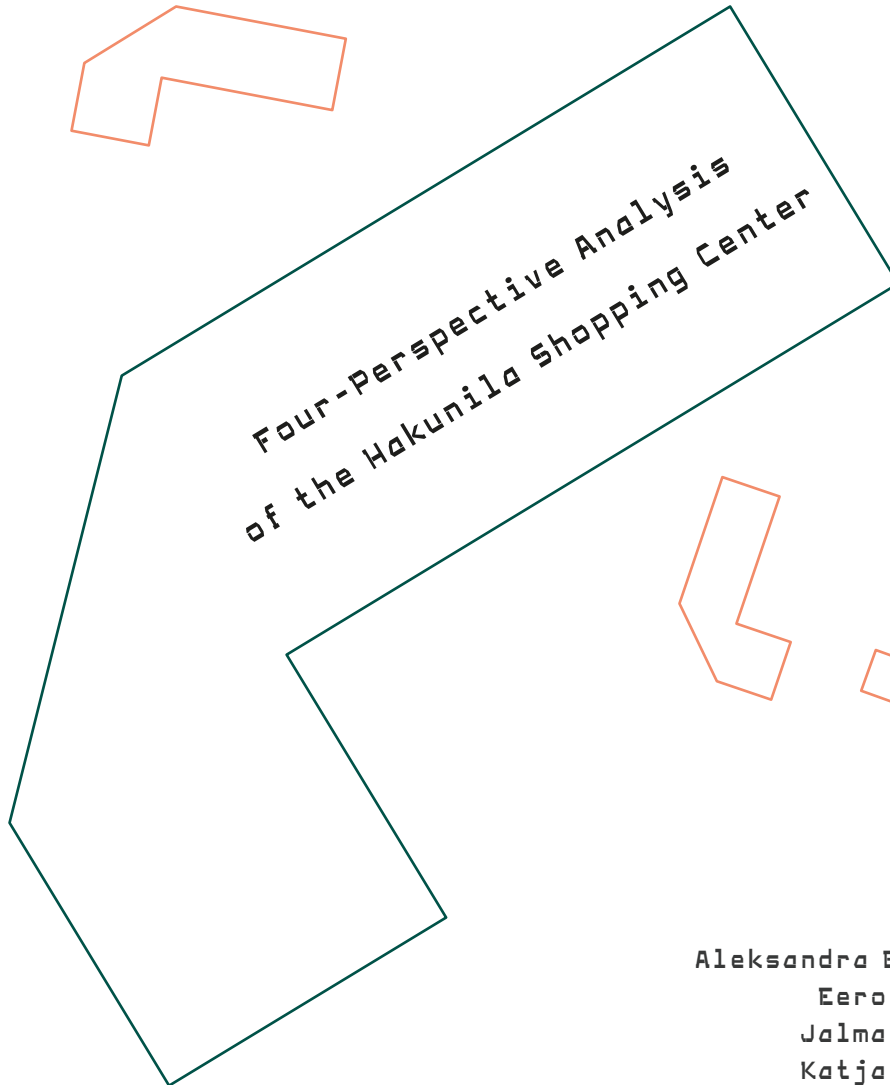


Chapter 3

URBAN STUDY PLAN
DESIGN & PLANNING





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Introduction

Shopping centers (ostoskeskus) represent an older style of building service than contemporary shopping malls (kauppakeskus) and were typically built in the suburbs as hearts of their neighborhoods. In the case of Vantaa, this occurred since the fast urbanization of the early 1960s until the mid-1980s (Heikkola 2014; Jalkanen et al. 2017). The Hakunila Shopping Center (Figure 1) was the last of these small shopping centers to be built in Vantaa (Laitinen & Huuhka 2012). In contrast to covered and closed shopping malls, shopping centers usually have spaces for businesses opening outwards into the public space (Jalkanen et al. 2017). Many of these old shopping centers have since run into problems due to the influence of the building of new malls, not being able to cater to the needs of contemporary consumers, limited space, the changed role of the location, and most importantly, the complex ownership structures that prevent renovation and regeneration in times of economic vitality (Jalkanen et al. 2017).

Helsinki has seen a trend in which big shopping malls have become increasingly popular, which has contributed to the decline of the old shopping centers. At the time of writing, in central Helsinki massive developments are taking place, adding hundreds of thousands of new square meters of shopping malls to the city (Toivonen 2015). As old malls and their public squares are being replaced by these massive shopping malls, it is important to consider the consequences. Kevin Mattson (1999) describes the malls as “total institutions,” as they are designed for making people focus on consuming and shutting out distractions such as socializing or engaging in political activities. Shifting the public spaces from open squares to these introverted complexes both affects people’s opportunities for social interaction and has an effect on how these spaces support the democratic system of our society. Public spaces play an important role in facilitating civic interaction and political assembly, which the shopping malls do not allow (Mattson 1999). The property owners

and developers of the malls want the complexes to be “apolitical,” in order to avoid social or political distractions (Loukai-tou-Sideris & Banerjee 1998, 291). Public spaces play a crucial part in enabling this political interaction and serving as platforms for political discussions, as they are essentially the spaces where people encounter strangers, outside of their work and family spheres (Caramona 2010).

In our study, we concentrated on the Hakunila Shopping Center, illuminating the role of the center as an important public space with local significance. Hakunila is a neighborhood with 11,300 residents in eastern Vantaa (Vantaan väestö... 2017) and the Hakunila Shopping Center provides the majority of its services. The shopping center was designed by Erkki Karvinen, built in two stages, in 1981 and 1986, and is defined as a locally significant example of architecture typical of its era (Laitinen & Huuhka 2012). In our multidisciplinary study on market, space, identity, and power relations, we chose to concentrate on Hakunila, because it is the only important sub-center of Vantaa that lacks a rail connection and is thus an interesting outlier within the areas in the municipality. As we decided to focus on Hakunila, we focused our research on the most focal point of the neighborhood, the shopping center, where virtually all of Hakunila’s services and social activity are clustered. However, according to recent plans proposed by the city planners in Vantaa, in the next decade a new light rail will connect Hakunila to Mellunmäki and Tikurila. Consequently, now is an appropriate time to study the Hakunila Shopping Center, as the development plans also include a proposal to demolish the existing structure and build a mixed-use block containing housing and services in its stead.

In our research, we were sensitive to the nuance and peculiarity that come with analyzing public spaces of a (suburban) neighborhood. We treated the space produced by the structure of the Hakunila Shopping Center as a public square, and as this paper will continue to prove, it provides the qualities of a public square for its inhabitants. We hope that our study contributes





Figure 1. Hakunila Shopping Center.



to the discussion on the character and significance of the remaining shopping centers of the 1960s-1980s and helps the new plans to take their existing social and spatial functions into account.

The built structure of the shopping center produces a relatively large outdoor space, around which a range of private and public services (tenants of the center) are concentrated. Even though the space is part of the real estate owned by the shopping center owners, it is a square used for many activities. To understand why this kind of property can be seen as something like a public square, we must think of it in the context of the suburban neighborhood, or in Finnish, *lähiö*.

In his study, Public and private spaces of the city, Ali Madanipour (2003) analyzes the character of public spaces in different parts of the city - the center, outskirts, neighborhoods, suburbs, et cetera. He stresses the multi-layered division patterns of the city - it is not only the classic public-private, but also various socio-economic and cultural subdivisions. He claims that a neighborhood is "the main manifestation of these patterns" (Madanipour 2003, 119). In addition, he points out that:

[O]n the one hand, neighborhoods show how identity and difference find a spatial shape, while on the other hand public-private distinction works within and across the neighborhoods to frame patterns of social life. It is here that the universality that is associated with public-private distinction finds a particular flavor, as it falls within the distinctive framework of the neighborhood. At the intersection of the public-private and neighborhood systems of differentiation, publicness of public spaces and privacy of the private sphere are both challenged. (Madanipour 2003, 119)

We have approached the shopping center and concept of public space from arrange of disciplinary perspectives. As representatives of various fields of study, we have been especially sensitive to different connec-

tions and intersections within our studies. When approaching this topic, our ambition was to capture the interplay between real estate development, architecturally created spaces, and social structures. We made this the theme of our work by using mixed ethnographic and spatial observations instead of classic architectural site analysis. In addition, we compiled our observations with theoretical studies and statistical/documents study to contextualize our observation results.

The methodology used for this study has its limitations and should be read critically. First, market analyses always lack information due to the characteristics of real estate markets: the trading is decentralized, the units are heterogeneous and costly, the properties have low liquidity, the number of market actors in a specific time or location is low, market information for individual properties is lacking, and there are opportunities for monopoly power (Wyatt 2013, 32). Also, we had to rely on open source material for this study, when in a real development project there would be a multitude of sources of interesting real estate information. Next, ethnographic observations are limited to our four subjective perspectives, and do not directly include the voice of the actors discussed (via interviews or such).

Finally, though we focused on and contextualized the case of Hakunila, we did not go into more detailed comparisons with other shopping centers in Vantaa or the Helsinki metropolitan area. Despite these limitations, we claim that our approach gives an excellent idea of the Hakunila Shopping Center currently, and how the site could be further developed to address the encountered issues.

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First Perspective: Market Analysis

by *Eero Kujanen*

Introduction

We begin the Hakunila Shopping Center analysis from a real estate development point of view, starting with market research of the site. This type of market research is generally used in determining which uses are appropriate for a specific site and in delineating the markets supporting those uses (Fanning 2005).

In property development, market research is performed to determine the highest and best use of the property (Wilkinson et al. 2008). The City of Vantaa has recently published a new plan frame for restructuring Hakunila and the shopping center, while at the same time the shopping center site stakeholders disagree with each other in defining how the site should be developed in the future (Salomaa 2016; Hakunilan keskus-tan... 2017). However, it is assumed here that all stakeholders seek the best use of the site. This is because the concept of highest and best use is central in defining market value (Wyatt 2013, 180). Furthermore, market value is a basic concept in market research. With proper market research the discussion concerning the development can be studied from the perspective of factual productivity of the space and the real estate.

The foundation of property value is provided by the relationship between the economic situation, market activity, and property productivity. The linkages are examined to determine the highest and best use of a site (Fanning 2005). The most crucial part of the analysis is to measure market support, by identifying the demand of potential customers or tenants and the competitive supply of properties. The relationship between supply and demand, both currently and in the future, is examined to find the market support for a possible development. To simplify this particular research, the development of offices is excluded as an op-

tion, and the focus is only on the housing, retail, and services options. However, this does not mean that there should be no office space in the area. The current economic situation in Finland and in the Helsinki metropolitan area is also considered. The economic conditions are surveyed to gain insight into the externalities that could affect the future development (Wilkinson et al. 2008).

Current Land Use and Property Rights Situation

The Hakunila Shopping Center area consists of six areas, totaling roughly 14,800 square meters. In the Vantaa master plan which was confirmed in 2007, the area is marked as "C," meaning an area of center activities such as apartments, workplace activities that are suitable for the central area and office, retail, and service space (Vantaa Map... 2017). The valid detailed plans of the area were confirmed in 1983, 1985 and 1988. In the detailed plans, the shopping center is determined as an area of retail and office buildings (K) with the addition of parking (LPA). The total floor area allowed in the detailed plan is 20,330 square meters. This means that the efficiency ratio allowed by the detailed plan in the shopping center area is $20,330 / 14,800 = 1.37$. However, the current buildings have a total floor area of 10,714 square meters, resulting in an efficiency of $e = 10,714 / 14,800 = 0.72$. The valid detailed plan of the area is depicted in Figure 2.

The two main owners of the shopping center are Hakunilan Keskus Oy and HakuCenter Oy. The largest shareholder in the shopping center is Sirius Capital Partners, a real estate investment company (Hakunilan ostoskeskus 2017). In addition, another real estate investment company, EMP-Invest Oy owns the smaller separate building next to Kyytitie (Skjutsvägen in Figure 2). The market square belongs to Hakunilan Keskus Oy, while the City of Vantaa owns the parking area (LPA) on the plan map. The city also owns the small plot next to Hakunilantie, with a building right of 7,000 square meters and 14 floors, which has never been built (Vantaa Map... 2017).





The property rights can form a major obstacle in preventing the development of a certain area. In this case, there are four owners which most likely have four different interests concerning the area. In addition, these four owners each have multiple shareholders or persons with their own ideas about how and what decisions should be made. The City of Vantaa recognizes the problem of property rights by stating in the new Hakunila plan frame that one difficulty of large simultaneous changes is fitting them to the land ownership situation (Hakunilan keskusta... 2017).

Statistical Overview on Hakunila

er inspection is made of the Hakunila major region, district, and postal code area (depending on the available information), which is then compared to other areas in Vantaa or in Vantaa as a whole.

The unemployment rate in Vantaa has decreased to 9.9 percent in September 2017,

the lowest it has been in four years (Vantaan työttömyys... 2017c). At the end of 2016, the unemployment rate was 11.9 percent. The unemployment rate was rising steadily from 2011 until 2015, when it started to decline. The decline is about the same in each of the large areas of Vantaa (Tilastokatsaus... 2017).

The unemployment rate in the Hakunila large area is the highest in Vantaa, having been 14.5 percent at the end of 2016 (Hakunilan keskusta... 2017). Figure 4 shows the distribution of unemployment rates in postal code areas in Vantaa in 2014. The Hakunila postal code area (01200) has the highest unemployment rate in Vantaa with 18 percent of the workforce unemployed.

The average annual income of the people in the Hakunila postal code area in 2014 was € 21,548. In Figure 5, the postal code areas

depict the household incomes, and Hakunila is the second lowest income area, after Koivukylä-Havukoski. By comparing Figures 3 and 5 it can also be seen, that the people with the lowest incomes tend to live in the densest apartment building blocks. The average usable annual income of Hakunila inhabitants has been growing slowly in recent years, from approximately 21,300 euros in 2012 to 21,550 euros in 2014.

Macroeconomic Factors, Real Estate Market and the Future

The economic conditions can also be approached with other macroeconomic considerations in mind. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth in Finland was strong in the first half of 2017 and the GDP growth for the next three years is expected to be 2.1

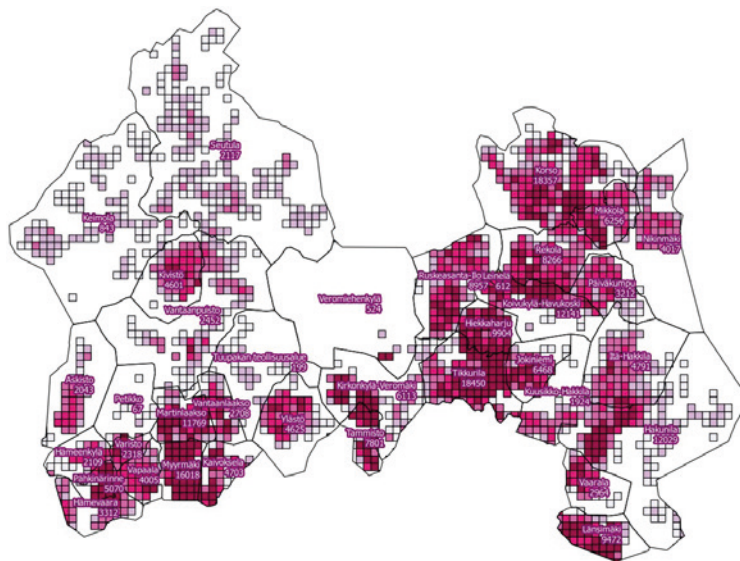


Figure 3. The population in Vantaa (data: Statistics Finland 2016, 2017a).

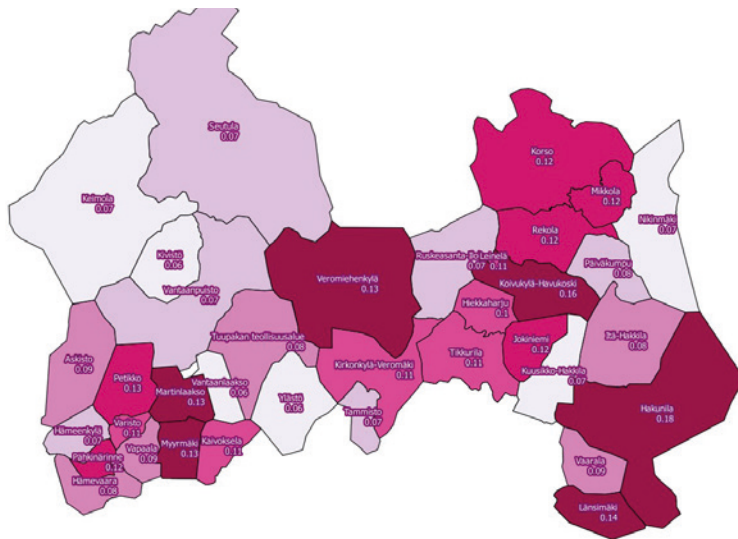


Figure 4. Unemployment rates in Vantaa (data: Statistics Finland 2016, 2017a).

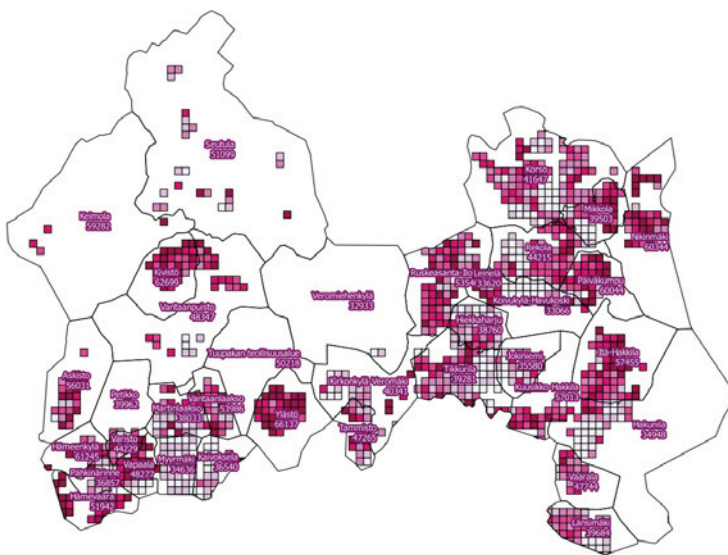


Figure 5. Average household incomes in Vantaa (data: Statistics Finland 2016, 2017a).

percent, 1.7 percent, and 1.4 percent respectively. The economic growth will mainly be caused by private consumption and investment. There is also expected to be growth in inflation, though less than in the rest of Europe (Economic outlook... 2017).

The real estate transaction volume in Finland reached an all-time high in 2017. This was largely due to the increased interest by foreign investors and the general growth in macroeconomics (Market report... 2017). Macroeconomics refers to the general level of prices, employment, and output in the economy. Macroeconomic influences concern real estate markets in many ways. For example, the current stage of the economic cycle and the ratio of new to existing space are dependent on the macroeconomic situation (Wyatt 2013).

The commercial real estate market is continuously affected by different forces of change, as Saija Toivonen and Kauko Viitanen (2015) point out. It faces threats in the changing property requirements and the changing environment. This is because the real estate market is usually slow and rigid in fulfilling new needs. However, through proper future research and knowledge about forces of change affecting future demand, owners of commercial real estate can be prepared for changing environments and stay profitable and vital.

There is a risk that the owners of the Hakunila Shopping Center will make unsustainable decisions that would have far-reaching consequences for the future. This is because of the possible lack of sufficient knowledge about future development and the network of forces of changes. The future commercial real estate market is a sum of a range of objectives, causes, and events of many actors; development does not take place in a vacuum (Toivonen & Viitanen 2016).

Toivonen and Viitanen (2015) found nine categories of the forces of change in commercial real estate in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Each of these categories can also be seen to have meaning in the case of the Hakunila Shopping Center and are related to the change of demand. These nine cate-

gories are: globalization, action optimization, differentiation, technology as an enabler, urbanization, aging population, environmental pressure, safety, and search of meaning.

Toivonen and Viitanen (2016) examined the subcategories of these nine categories in their follow-up research with a method called futures wheel, through which ultimate future influences were found for the forces of change. These influences were categorized into 14 themes that represent the future themes of the commercial real estate market. Furthermore, the 14 themes were divided into three main themes: real estate, market, and ideological themes.

The real estate future themes include: comfort, image, distinctive spaces and elements, technicality, safety, and geographical location and transportation connectivity (Toivonen & Viitanen 2016). In the Hakunila Shopping Center, comfort could mean increasing recreational activities and customer satisfaction, or adding elements that increase comfort and relaxation. The image theme suggests that the shopping center should consider standing out from the mass to attract tenants and customers, and also take the virtual image into account by creating a certain image in social media and keeping the website up to date. The Hakunila Shopping Center must also highlight the distinctive spaces and elements in the shopping center offerings, to satisfy the demand for distinctiveness. In addition, the technical nature of real estate is ever increasing, and to answer to the future technical requirements, the shopping center must not neglect this development. The safety theme relates to Hakunila by the need to feel safe in the public spaces of the shopping center. Finally, the Hakunila Shopping Center should acknowledge the geographical location and transportation connectivity theme, by emphasizing accessibility by pedestrians and cyclists and by taking into account the public and private transportation connectivity. Also, the shopping center stakeholders should consider how to utilize the location in image creation and marketing.

The market themes include interaction, demand for services, segregation, and need



for special knowledge and expertise (Toivonen & Viitanen 2016). The interaction theme means that people, products, and services physically interact with each other, which is a distinctive advantage of the Hakunila Shopping Center, and real estate in general, and which should be emphasized. The demand for services is also highlighted in the future, and the shopping center could tackle this by distinctive and diverse services, individual customization, and entertainment. The segregation theme refers to the specialization and segregation of real estate. Finally, it is becoming increasingly important to possess special knowledge and expertise. The Hakunila Shopping Center should make sure that they have expertise in a range of fields to address the future demand and complicated market structures.

The last themes to be discussed are the ideological themes, which include quality and the redefinition of attractiveness, integration of space types, diversified demand and versatility of commercial real estates, and owner occupancy vs. tenancy (Toivonen & Viitanen 2016). High quality can be understood differently by different people, thus the shopping center should think about the target customer groups and what would be high quality and attractiveness from their point of view. The shopping center should also emphasize the flexibility of the new spaces so that the spaces are not strictly for one purpose, where new purposes are not easily adaptable. Diversified demand and versatility of commercial real estate is also a future theme which in a shopping center case could mean that the space should be planned and designed to be highly versatile and flexible. Owner occupancy may not seem very relevant in shopping center real estate. However, the ownership situation in general is something that the Hakunila Shopping Center stakeholders should address. The current situation with multiple owners might not be the best when preparing for multiple future changes and decisions.

The stakeholders of the Hakunila Shopping Center do not necessarily have to implement all of the ideas that are derived from the influences of the future forces of change in real estate markets. Nevertheless, they

should be aware of the changing environment and be flexible for the changes of demand.

Supply Analysis

Market Values and Ongoing Development

In supply analysis, the current retail, service, and nearby housing stock are examined. Current tenants of the shopping center are presented in Figures 6-8. In addition, vacancy rates and market rents were studied to get an overview of the current situation in the Hakunila real estate and housing markets.

The Hakunila Center is dominated by apartment buildings built mostly in the 1970s and 1980s. When analyzing the apartment sales from the past year in the Hakunila postal area, it was found that the average price per square meter in 2016 was 2,127 euros (96 sales). In Vantaa overall, the average price per square meter was 2,400 euros (1,999 sales) (Statistics Finland 2017b). In the apartments sold during the past year, the prices varied between 1,914 and 2,848 euros per square meter. The average building year of these sold apartments is 1979 (ARA... 2017). The average rent of non-subsidized apartments in the area (Vantaa divided in half) in 2016 was 15.12 euros per square meter; while in Vantaa overall it was 15.44 euros per square (Statistics Finland 2017c). No rental statistics are available on a smaller scale. These numbers indicate that the general apartment price level in Hakunila is lower than in Vantaa overall.

New construction of retail space in the Helsinki metropolitan area is now at its highest level of the decade, with some 265,000 m² under construction at the end of September 2017 (Market review... 2017). However, no new retail space is being constructed or is proposed for construction in Hakunila. For many years, the City of Vantaa was planning a new retail center in the old bus plot between the two main roads, Lahdentie and Lahdenväylä, very close to the Hakunila Shopping Center. This plan hindered the development of the Hakunila Shopping Center for many years but has since been cast aside (Hakunilan ostoskeskus 2017). Now there is



increasing demand for the development of the shopping center site.

More new apartment building constructions in Finland were started in 2017 than in any other year in the last 20 years (Market review... 2017). The aforementioned bus plot is now proposed as a place for housing, although there is not yet a detailed plan process. North of that bus plot, on the other side of Kyytitie, there is a valid detailed plan for 39,500 square meters of new housing, which means approximately 900 new residents. The first of these apartment house buildings is currently under construction. The developer is selling these apartments at prices ranging from 3,300-3,800 euros per square meter (Myytävät asunnot... 2017). The asking price for new non-regulated apartments in Vantaa in October 2017 was 4,660 euros per square meter (Kortelainen 2017).

Thus, the demand in Hakunila is a lot lower than in other parts of Vantaa.

Use of Space in the Hakunila Shopping Center

The Hakunila Shopping Center is the largest retail center in the Hakunila major region (Figure 9). Other nearby places with multiple different service or retail providers are the S-market grocery store building on Kannuskuja 2, and a small center of two neighboring buildings on Heporinne 2a / Oritie 1a. The S-market building, located 500 meters away from the Hakunila Shopping Center, was built in 1993. The two buildings on Heporinne 2a / Oritie 1a were built in 1977. There is also a large retail hub approximately one kilometer away, in the Porttipuisto area, housing large stores such as



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Figure 6. The Hakunila Shopping Center layout and 1st-level tenants (source: The drawn layouts and tenants are based on field observation, performed on the 16th of November 2017).

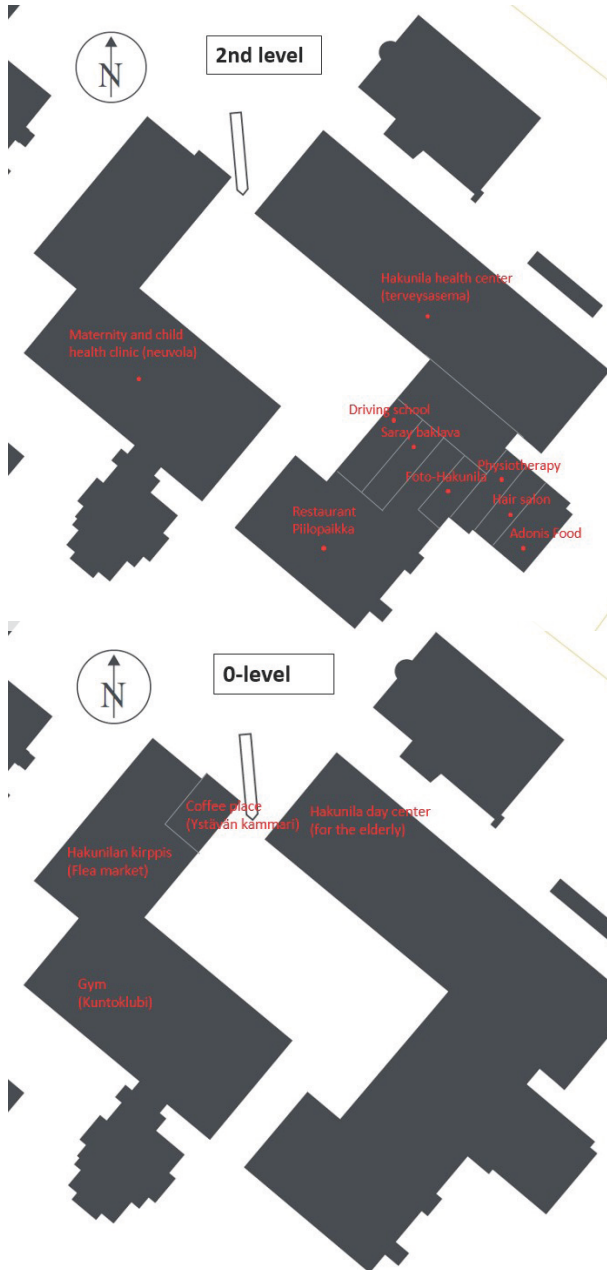


Figure 7. The Hakunila Shopping Center layout and 2nd-level tenants (source: The drawn layouts and tenants are based on field observation, performed on the 16th of November 2017).



Figure 8. The Hakunila Shopping Center layout and 0-level tenants.



Figure 9. Retail locations in Hakunila (basemap: Paikkatietoikkuna 2017).

IKEA, Tokmanni, Hong Kong, and several other furniture stores.

Joni Heikkola (2014) inventoried Vantaa's shopping centers as part of the service network and found that the availability of grocery shops is poor in Hakunila, and that changing the land use in the current retail centers would further weaken the availability. Furthermore, developing the Hakunila Shopping Center for some other use would reduce the already low amount of retail space in the area even more. The closest large grocery stores are in Tikkurila and Jakomäki, several kilometers from the Hakunila Shopping Center. Tikkurila is the most important retail and office center in Vantaa.

Retail occupancy rates have increased in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area during the

last year, except in Vantaa. The occupancy rate in September in the HMA was 94.8 percent, while in Vantaa it had dropped to under 92 percent. The overall retail occupancy rates are expected to increase in the HMA. However, rents and occupancy rates are expected to decline in the small and mid-sized shopping centers, among which the Hakunila Shopping Center belongs. One trend in shopping center premises is also the decreasing demand for retail premises and increasing demand for services like cafés and restaurants (Market review... 2017).

As of November 2017, there are currently two medium-sized vacant spaces in the Hakunila Shopping Center. Thus, the vacancy rate of the shopping center is approximately 4 percent. Some 25 percent of the spaces have changed users or tenants since 2011, when the situation in November was compared

to the situation documented by Karitta Laitinen and Eija Huuhka (2012).

The small retail or service building in Heporinne 2a has two similar-sized spaces, of which one is currently vacant. This space formerly housed a Siwa grocery store which was closed in spring 2017. Vacant space can also be found in the S-market building. At least two of the upper-level retail/service spaces are empty. Combined, these spaces make the vacancy rate in Hakunila rather high compared to the rates in Vantaa or the HMA.

The respondents of the Finnish Shopping Center Barometer expect the retail rents and occupancy rates to decrease in the small and mid-sized shopping centers in Finland as a whole. This is mostly due to the increasing importance of location and public transport. The expectations are exactly the opposite in large shopping centers in the HMA. (Market review... 2017)

The lease length of shopping center anchor tenants in Finland is usually between 5 and 10 years or even up to 15 years. In the Hakunila case, the K-Supermarket is clearly the anchor tenant with the largest space and most customers. Other spaces have shorter lease terms. This is evident through the example of one medium-sized space in the shopping center: in 2011 it was a Nordea branch, after which Kiinteistömaailma leased the space, while in 2017 the space became vacant and has now been vacant for some time. Short term leases and low rents increase the uncertainty for both the shopping center company and the customers.

The supply and demand gap between large and small shopping centers is evidently increasing. Many new large shopping centers have been built in the HMA, while many of the old small neighborhood shopping centers are either in decline or being demolished, to be rebuilt as apartments.

Future Development

The recognizable fact is the need to develop the Hakunila Shopping Center, and the owners acknowledge this (Hakunilan ostoskeskus 2017). However, according to the shopping

center website, the major stakeholders' plan currently is to develop the area based on existing buildings. Daily newspaper Helsingin Sanomat (Salomaa 2016, 2017) also mentioned the owners' diverse opinions about development as a challenging fact when trying to determine the future of the area.

The Hakunila major region has experienced the largest shift in grocery purchasing power in Vantaa to other areas, -43 million euros, of which a major part has been lost to the large centers in Helsinki. Thus, as the City of Vantaa claims, Hakunila needs its own center for basic groceries which would attract the local people (Vantaan kaupan... 2015). Without further action, the money flowing to other areas will certainly increase because of the new residents. The new plan frame of Hakunila proposes the addition of 2,000 square meters of grocery store space until the year 2030, and 11,000 square meters of additional retail space (Hakunilan keskustan... 2017).

Then again, the development of demand towards larger centrally located shopping centers would indicate that a small shopping center would face troubles in any case, whether it were to be renovated and refurbished or not. In Hakunila, there is clearly demand for both grocery and retail stores, but the question remains: would that demand materialize in a local shopping center like the Hakunila Shopping Center, or would people prefer larger shopping malls after all?

The objective of the private real estate owners of the Hakunila Shopping Center is certainly to find the highest and best use of the property with as little effort as possible. The City of Vantaa has stated many times that it would be best to demolish the old center and start from scratch (e.g. Vantaan kaupan... 2015; Hakunilan keskustan... 2017). One could argue that developing the site on the basis of the rather untidy buildings built in the 1980s, while the surrounding area is being developed and densified, cannot result in the highest and best possible use of the site.

The planned light rail line, from Melunkylä to Tikkurila through Hakunila, will also play an interesting role in the fu-



ture scenarios of Hakunila. The estimated completion year is 2030, according to the deputy mayor of Vantaa, Hannu Penttilä. It is believed that the light rail line would boost the development of Hakunila to another level (Kolehmainen 2017). So, what to do with the shopping center in the meantime? When to time the possible re-development and make sure that the site and the buildings would be as flexible as possible for future changes of demand? Because the development cannot be postponed for 13 years, it is evident that the solution should be flexible, expanding if the light-rail line increases customer flows, for example.

One could consider using the Real Options method in analyzing and evaluating the investment value of the property. Real options refer to the possible investment decisions made by firms during an investment project. The main contribution of the Real Options theory is the recognition that investment projects can evolve and change over time and more importantly, that the flexibility and capacity to evolve has value. The conventional discounted cash flow (DCF) methods are one-time analyses, through which future possible modifications are not taken into account (Krychowski & Quélin 2010). The Hakunila area has many interesting future development options, thus the Real Options method should probably be considered in analyzing the investment value instead of the conventional DCF method.

According to the new plan frame, the existing shopping center buildings are to be demolished and replaced by five eight-floor buildings and one 16-floor building. They would include 22,200 square meters of housing and 9,500 square meters of retail and service space (Hakunilan keskustan... 2017). It is noticeable that the amount of retail and service space is less than residential space, but nearly the same as in the current buildings. The additional space is targeted at the surroundings of the current shopping center. In total, the C-area of central activities in the plan frame would have 30,000 square meters of retail and service space.

The introduction to the new Hakunila plan frame states that the vitality of the centers in Vantaa will be improved by infill

development. Also, the centers are to be developed as distinctive and diverse urban environments. Hakunila has plenty of inhabitants, but few commercial services and jobs. The city aims to increase the number of people living in the center of Hakunila by 40 percent. According to the plan frame, the services currently available are not enough to satisfy the demand in Hakunila, thus the purchasing power turns elsewhere (City of Vantaa 2017).

The plan frame does not seem to have based the ideas of the new Hakunila on any market analysis. Of course, the city wants to provide plans that would enhance the area's image, attract new residents, and make the life of the people living there more enjoyable. However, if the plan is too ambitious and there is no business case for the land-owners and developers, some of the plans may never materialize, hindering realistic development. For example, if an area has space for new housing, it does not necessarily mean that new housing should be planned for there: the market value for the new apartments would not necessarily meet the demands of the developer to make the development profitable. Instead, there could be demand for a detailed plan for a park, commercial services, or a sports center. Of course, new housing might be just the thing needed.

The objective of a plan frame is to present the vision and the direction for how the area should continue its development, which is why it should not be taken too literally. That is also perhaps why the city has not focused too much on the feasibility of the plan frame. It is meant to provide guidelines, and it is not necessary to develop each block the way it is sketched in the plan frame. In practice however, it is inevitable that the plan frame will play a significant role in detailed planning and it is the ground for new detailed plans in Hakunila.

Conclusions

In the final stage of this Hakunila Shopping Center market research study, a SWOT analysis of the site is presented (Figure 10). It shows that the Hakunila Shopping Center has



Strengths

- The location in Hakunila center
- The most important shopping center in one of the six large areas of Vantaa
- Little local competition for commercial services
- New housing being built nearby
- Growing economy
- Future light-rail line

Weaknesses

- The fragmented real estate division
- Ownership issues and differing opinions on development
- Poor public transportation
- Socioeconomically segregated area
 - No diverse demand and bad reputation
- Large building mass increases demolition costs
- Land elevation changes on the site

Opportunities

- The light-rail line from Mellunkylä to Aviapolis
 - New customers and inhabitants
- Growing population
- Continuing growth of Helsinki metropolitan area
- City's will to develop the area
- Enabling technologies and following the forces of change

Threats

- Lack of interest from investors
- Still increasing segregation
- People prefer large shopping centers
- The light-rail rail is cancelled, leaving Hakunila out of the rail connection



Figure 10. SWOT-analysis of the Hakunila Shopping Center.

pressure for development from many angles: the buildings are deteriorating; the space does not attract tenants; the people shop elsewhere; the detailed plan is outdated; the city has ambitious plans for the development of Hakunila; and the owners are seeking a high but safe profit.

The situation can be helped with proper market research. It has been discovered that developing the site based on its current buildings would be rather imprudent; the future of the Helsinki metropolitan area, of Vantaa, and of Hakunila is growth. On the other hand, the new plan frame seems to be an exaggeration of growth. Thus, the answer is somewhere in the middle.

One thing is certain: the shopping center site will be a central and key location in the future of Hakunila, but only if the actors take future demand into account and make rational decisions based on proper research. Future forces of change and their possible influences on the Hakunila Shopping Center were presented to provide an idea of the possible changes in future demand. In addition, the Real Options method was briefly introduced to evaluate possible future decisions in an investment analysis. These approaches provide key insights in understanding the development needs of the shopping center, especially when examined with other approaches in this Hakunila Shopping Center study.

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The Hakunila Shopping Center as a Liminal Public Space

by Jalmari Sarla

Entering the Liminal Space

This chapter deals with some classic and contemporary definitions of public space and different kinds of evaluation systems that have been proposed to measure the quality of urban design in public spaces. The Hakunila Shopping Center is analyzed here as a public space based on the quality criteria discussed, and the concept of liminal space has been used in understanding the nature of the Hakunila Shopping Center. In addition, several related study topics that arise from the ideologies of shopping center designs and urban space debates are proposed.

The term public space has had many definitions throughout the years. The classical Greek agora was a realm for political debates. Much later the modern concept of open space was introduced, consisting of urban outdoor areas like streets and parks. In the contemporary context, we increasingly operate with a somewhat blurry notion of generally accessible space, hosting social functions that can be either publicly- or privately-owned (Tonnelat 2010). The term space, itself, is usually described in the urban design debates by its physical qualities and functions (Carmona 2011). This chapter will mostly deal with the public space-related analyses discussed by Matthew Carmona (2011) and Jan Gehl et alia (1971, 2006).

Carmona (2010) argues that critical discussions on public space often establish two opposing standpoints regarding the role and the extent of regulation. The first is that spaces should be regulated and increasingly maintained in order to arrive at desired outcomes. The second contradicts that, stating that it is essential to decrease municipal control when aiming to create or

maintain a better quality of public spaces. This dichotomy, however, does not provide an analysis nuanced enough to understand a context as complex as debates on the quality of public space.

Some have also pointed out the need to broaden the understanding of what public space ultimately is (Banerjee 2001; Carmona 2011). The Gehlian point can be made, that designers of urban space should be increasingly focusing on the concept of public life, in addition to the public space itself. This is because much of the social functions we relate to liveliness and successful public spaces, take place in privatized environments, such as bars, shops, and other service locations (Banerjee 2001; Tonnelat 2010). Tridib Banerjee (2001) calls these third places, while making an adequate point about how the positive effects of social interactions in urban space can just as easily be achieved in privately owned spaces facilitating these activities. As a critical note to the issue, it can be seen that civic activity and previously-public functions (e.g. retail, banking, public, and official affairs) are increasingly dealt with by individuals in the private sector, which ultimately leads to a general recession of public in favor of private (Carmona 2011).

Carmona (2010) looks into different ways of characterizing neglected and non-regulated urban space: for example, slack spaces (Worpole & Knox 2007), in-between spaces (Loukaitou-Sideris 1996) and liminal spaces (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001). These terms are overlapping in their definitions but for the purposes of this research, liminal space is used. Liminal spaces are defined as spaces with poor management, a neglected appearance, and low social control. When public space is poorly maintained, it is used by fewer people, which decreases the likelihood of it being prioritized in the public maintenance processes of the municipality. These two forces are interlinked and strengthen each other's effect (Carmona et al. 2003, 111). However, it appears that as liminality increases, the possibility of reclaiming the space for non-commercial uses and activities opens up. Additionally, these undermanaged places can be socially important as they



are characterized by looser social control and, thus, enable different activities that possibly need to be realized in society one way or another (Worpole & Knox 2007; Carmona 2010).

According to Ken Worpole and Katharine Knox (2007), observational studies on urban design and skateboarding exemplify this. They found that park users did not experience an increase in disturbance in parks that allow skateboarding anywhere, when compared to parks with more strictly designated skating areas. Similarly, those parks with designated skating areas did not in fact decrease the disturbance to other park users. These findings suggest that it might be socially advantageous to allow more organic use of public spaces instead of over-designing them.

Subsequently, liminal space is proposed as a useful concept to aim to understand the nature of an urban space like the Hakunila Shopping Center. The Hakunila Shopping Center is liminal in its physical state as well as in its concept, representing a shopping center typology from a bygone era (the 1980s). Widely deemed outdated, many of its counterparts are being or have been regenerated with contemporary interpretations of high quality public space that provide services for their neighborhood. In the sections that follow, some of the proposed frameworks for evaluating public space quality are discussed further and applied to the Hakunila Shopping Center, in order to understand its characteristics as a liminal public space.

Frameworks for Assessing Public Space Quality

Urban scholars have proposed many systems for evaluating the quality of public space. Many of these criteria can be useful in trying to understand the reality in a certain space. Stephen Carr et alia (1992) discuss the responsiveness of a space with five important qualities: aversion to danger, ability to experience calm, opportunity to spend time without active participation in social functions, conversely the opportunity to take part in social functions, and the po-

tential for the diversity of new encounters and surprises.

Probably the most widely known system for public space quality assessment, upon which Carr et alia (1992) also build, is Jan Gehl's 12 Quality Criteria. The criteria have since been refined, but the concepts which were originally presented in his classic book *Life Between Buildings* (Gehl & Koch 1971/2011, 129-182), deal with elements like protection from traffic and noise, walkability, and it being possible to linger and sit. In Gehl's theory, the ground floor is the most important part of a building from a human's perspective, as it is the point where the city (understood as the life and totality of functions), and the built structure (the block or a building), coincide with each other (Gehl et al. 2006). Gehl et alia (2006) argue that the more varied a façade is, the better it connects the indoor spaces with the streets, by attracting and facilitating important urban functions like lingering, relaxation, and other leisure activities. Respectively, blank walls create blank urban experiences.

The importance of the first floor can be also understood through sensory experience, as the closer you get to a building, the more impressions you can get from it in addition to sight alone. Thus, the angle of observation and the position of the observer shape our spatial experience (Gehl et al. 2006). According to Gehl et alia (2006), first floors have become increasingly closed and unimaginative due to the expansion of the property spaces of retail units and other functions. This is part of a socio-political and consequently architectural process, where the connectivity between buildings, urban space, and the people is increasingly lacking. It is also a believable hypothesis in the Finnish context, and can be recognized in the Hakunila Shopping Center (Figure 11).

The Site: the Hakunila Shopping Center

Several site visits and ethnographic observations were conducted during morning and afternoon hours on November weekdays. The objective was to gain an understanding of





Figure 11. The northern edge of the square in the Hakunila Shopping Center is an illuminating example of the point made by Gehl et alia (2006) about large retail units creating closed facades (photo: Jalmari Sarla).

the spatial experience and overall current state of the public space in the Hakunila Shopping Center. Attention was paid to the functions of the square, flows and activities of people, the edges, and the constraints of the space. Public space quality was analyzed based on the frameworks discussed in this paper.

The public space inside the Hakunila Shopping Center is a rectangular-shaped non-covered square that is encircled by three building masses creating four edges on the southeastern, southwestern, northeastern, and northwestern sides of the space, each of which contain roof extensions to provide shelter from the rain. Behind them, one can see apartment high-rises and some other buildings, for example a church, that create a backdrop to the facades. There are three entrances to the square in northern, southern and eastern corners (Figures 12, 13), the latter one being covered by a glass roof above the second floor. The northwestern portion of the square has five concrete pools, with round evergreen bushes that reach the height of an average human and

block some of the views from the edges. The tiling on the ground, walls, and pools are visibly worn down, and their state becomes noticeable especially during rainy weather as the uneven ground creates many puddles around which people navigate. Some of the murals painted on the worn-down surfaces are also already somewhat decayed. The mere presence of the murals is an indicator of liminality that is lacking in contemporary shopping malls, which is further discussed in the Conclusion.

Most of the facades in the square are open and create the capacity to see human activity in and out of the built structures (Figure 14). These open facades host a pharmacy, kiosk, hairdressers, and a pizzeria. The flea market, which stretches along the southeastern edge of the square, has its front illuminated with a warm light, which provides the square with the most capturing sights of people and activity. Accordingly, on many of the times observed, this edge of the square drew the most people lingering and standing around. Next to it, there is the longest closed façade of the square,

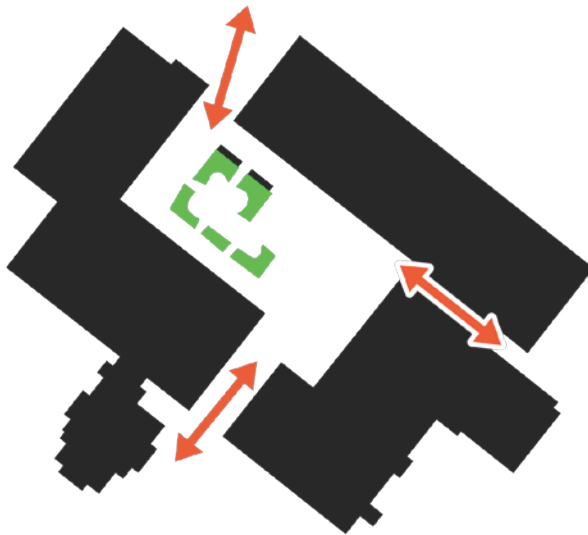


Figure 12. The Southern entrance to the Hakunila Shopping Center has some of the more open facades in the square (photo: Jalmari Sarla).

Figure 13. Entrance to the square and directions of inward and outward flows.

which is created by the supermarket (see Figure 11). Some of the edges contain semi-open facades. For example, the shabby high-walled terrace of a bar on the northwestern edge is constructed in such a way that prevents any meaningful interaction with the square. All the while, it still represents a physical extension to the public space and, thus, functions as an obstacle rather than as an active contributing element to public life.

When it comes to the visibility of public life, the overall appearance of the square was lively during site visits. The square was empty of people only on short and rare occasions. Looking at the performance of the square according to the qualities of responsiveness proposed by Carr et alia (1992), it can be argued that there is a relatively safe general feeling, due to the presence and visibility of multiple people at all times, as well as the lack of very closed corners to the space. Opportunities to linger and encounter other people are provided, as there is only pedestrian traffic, which also creates an atmosphere of ease and calm. As mentioned earlier, the bushes in the pools create obstacles, by preventing the sight from one edge to another. On one hand, this might be of importance regarding the notion of safety, but on the other hand, might

provide important seating and wind cover. In addition, as the only green elements in the square, they also offer important visual stimuli, while having arguably relatively little value in terms of ecosystem services.

While the framework proposed by Carr et alia (1992) is generally useful, a more comprehensive view can be achieved by using Jan Gehl's 12 quality criteria (2017) in evaluating the public space quality. The criteria are divided into three parts: protection; comfort; and enjoyment. Each of these is further divided into 3-6 specific questions. In applying this framework, one is able to generate a holistic understanding of the quality of the public space. The evaluation of these criteria was conducted standing roughly in the middle of the square by the concrete pools. In this instance, the space was not evaluated according to the proposed numeric scores, but rather the topics described in the criteria were reflected upon in the context of the Hakunila Shopping Center.

When observing the conditions through the first topic of protection, the Hakunila Shopping Center performs quite well. There is relatively little likelihood of being disturbed by traffic or being involved in an accident, as the space is accessible



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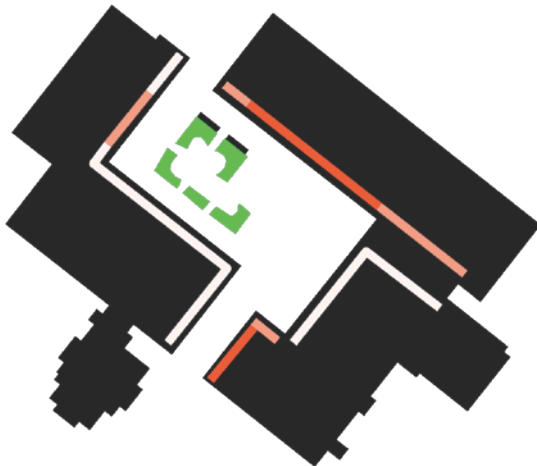


Figure 14. Open (white line), semi-open (light red line), and closed (red line) facades.

for cars only through the relatively narrow southern entrance. During our observations, some cars (e.g. pizza delivery, taxi, and police cars) were present in the square, but their speed was sufficiently low to suggest that the drivers were aware they had entered a zone of active pedestrian use. The space is also accessible to different types of people as it hosts general services like KELA, the social services office, a health center, a grocery store, a youth center, and a flea market. Accordingly, users of all ages, many ethnicities, and both genders were observed during the studies. No observations were done at night when the impression might be different regarding the number of people, lighting, and the uses of the space. The only services that are open in the late evening are the bars, which suggests that the activities might be slightly less diverse compared to the lively midday scene.

Structurally, the buildings provide a functional cover from traffic noise and enable a pleasant soundscape, that is often completed by an accordion player. The sound from outside or inside the square is low enough to enable conversations. Little pollution is present in the square. Additionally, the building masses seemed to block the harshest winds, and the roof extensions circling the whole square provide shelter from the rain. Flooding did not seem to be a huge problem, but the decayed tiling on the ground easily created puddles which made the overall appearance somewhat untidy.

The next theme in Gehl's criteria is comfort. In terms of mobility and accessibility, the square is generally functional. There are three entrances, all of which are accessible by wheelchair. Moving inside the square is effortless and all the paths lead to logical places without any irrelevant turns or detours. The concrete pools, however, create obstacles for some natural flows to and from the northern entrance. Still, the value they bring in seating and placemaking arguably surpasses the obstructing aspects.

The square offers sufficient conditions for lingering and idle activities, like socializing and leaning on the walls under

the rain cover. Nevertheless, the seating conditions could be better and more plentiful. Today, one can only sit on the decayed concrete pools, but there is sufficient empty space to increase the number of benches. Visibility of people and activities is quite good in the square, as the majority of the facades are either open or semi-open (see Figure 14). However, there is one poorly-designed aspect of it: the only benches present face each other in a circle-like fashion. This decreases views and does not create a private-enough setting for spending time in a group, when disturbing use (like extensive drinking), takes place on the other side of the circle. The only truly interesting storefront is the flea market, which has put home light fixtures on display by the window. Despite its upsides, when considering the scope of generally possible activities in urban space, The Hakunila Shopping Center falls somewhat short as it is rather exclusively characterized by the activity of passing through, and there are virtually no attempts in the urban design to facilitate other activities like playing or social exchange.

The last topic for observation is related to different aspects of enjoyment. When observing the scale of the surrounding buildings, it can be characterized as a very human scale. Two-story buildings encircle the square, and some high-rises are seen behind them, which add to the visual experience of the architecture. The distance from one edge to another is so small that all humans are easily visible from any place in the square. Climate protection is mostly considered by the aforementioned roof extensions on the edges of the square. However, seating opportunities are not provided under the extensions, but instead provide some wind protection via proximity to the thick bushes. As for the aesthetic experience of the square, the major positive effect is created by the mural art at the eastern entrance. Otherwise, the quality of the materials and design of the shapes seem quite outdated and decayed, but one is able to imagine their pleasing visual appearance in a newly built or renovated state.



Conclusion

By discussing public space debates and visiting the site several times, the goal of this study was to understand and assess the public space quality of the Hakunila Shopping Center. Based on the evaluations and observations made as a part of this research paper, it can be concluded that the open space inside the Hakunila Shopping Center is a socially functional urban square that is actively claimed by its users. In its own terms, it can be seen as a good quality public space that provides services and creates opportunities for active social life within the neighborhood.

There are several ways through which the quality of public space in the Hakunila Shopping Center could be improved. Based on the values of public life discussed, the main improvement would be the opening of the closed facades. Supermarkets should make it possible to see products and people inside through the storefront and let the light from the inside extend to the urban space. Following the example of the flea market and hairdresser, the bars especially should open

their storefront windows rather than tape them closed. This would allow the lingerers to see other people and activity, and it would increase positive social control, both inside and outside. Additional and improved seating could be added in the middle of the square to facilitate social exchange.

The Hakunila Shopping Center and its public square are liminal places in their nature, as their distinctive quality is the decayed appearance of the materials in facades and tiling. It is also liminal in the sense that there seems to be uncertainty about the future of the space. Will it be replaced or regenerated? What is the current value to the residents and the businesses? The most visible signs of this liminality of the Hakunila Shopping Center are the colorful murals on each “gate” to the eastern entrance alley (Figure 15). They are visual representations of the notion that this property does not have a clearly set and implemented vision of the future. Instead, it is an in-between sort of place, literally and figuratively; literally, in its outdated appearance, and figuratively with its position in between many masters: the design,



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Figure 15. The eastern entrance through an alley-like covered path has been painted with murals to increase the visual stimulus of the façade (photo: Jalmari Sarla).

the planner, and the owner. The art on decayed blank walls exemplify a citizen-driven and non-commercial regeneration process that is not present in non-liminal semi-public places of commerce (e.g. private shopping malls like Itäkeskus or Kamppi). It can even be argued that Finnish shopping centers built in the 1960s-1980s generally share these qualities and have entered a status of liminality through the change in mainstream designs of shopping centers, economic transitions, and changing ideologies behind planning and development.

Shopping center design represented by the Hakunila Shopping Center is characteristic to Finnish and Helsinki region suburbs built in the decades of Finnish urbanization spanning from 1950s to 1980s. Studying Hakunila Shopping Center opened up interesting wider topics for further study:

1. Comparative analysis from a Gehlian perspective emphasizing public life, walkability, and human scale observations: the 1960s-1980s Finnish suburban shopping centers (case Hakunila/Kontula), early 2000s shopping centers (case Kamppi/Iso Omena), and contemporary mixed-use typologies (case Myllypuro).
2. Comparative analysis of different shopping center designs as facilitators of political and civic activity. Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee (1998, 291) discuss the commercialization of public space leading to active suppression of political activity in favor of consumption in public spaces, which is a process driven by the owners and developers of contemporary semi-public urban spaces. Studying how this phenomenon is present in comparison to the 1960s-1980s-built open-air shopping centers (Hakunila, Kontula), and the commercially exclusive indoor shopping mall designs (Kamppi, Pasila, Kalasatama).
3. Comparative analysis of the level of social control in different shopping center designs. The plans proposed in Hakunila follow the example of Myllypuro, where a transformation took place in the 2000s of a 1960s-built outdoor shopping center into a mixed-use housing block with

ground level services. As the mixed-use development gets realized, the intensity of social control and the liminality of the previous urban space are likely to change.

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Design for Identity

by Katja Toivola

Introduction

The place where I am living has no significance for me as a geographical concept, but as my home. (Schutz 1962)

Understanding how the built environment enables and influences human behavior and supports daily rituals and errands seems like an essential quality of space for a designer to understand. It is therefore quite surprising and sometimes troubling to realize that this understanding is lacking, and sometimes missing, from the way in which designers approach our physical environments.

How is identity tied to a physical place? How do people use spaces, and what makes a space that encourages interaction, empowerment, and enables people to go about their daily routines? The difficulty of answering these questions means that there are limited tools for designers to measure these abstract characteristics of physical environments. In general, urban designers have been very good at analyzing and understanding the physical aspects of the environment, and perhaps parts of the cultural context they work in. Even so, the approach often focuses more on the physical traits of the environment and the image of the city from an aesthetic point of view. The absence of clear and well implemented theories for the sociocultural aspects of spatial design becomes more understandable when the reasons for these shortcomings become clearer. These problems are discussed in this paper.

This chapter focuses on the identity of a space, and how it could be approached as a topic of analysis. Identity is closely linked to culture, and in many respects understanding and mapping the identity of a place is also an understanding of the culture. In my opinion, identity is culture manifested in some specific place/phenomena. It is the subjective interpretation of the

culture we live in, and which parts of it we see as our own, and subsequently want to adopt and express. Therefore, an important part of this chapter is understanding the mechanics of culture and how it is possible to dissect them into more easily observable, concrete examples.

I intend to explore the behavior patterns of the people in the Hakunila Shopping Center, based on a literature review and subsequent theories, a map analysis, as well as observational site visit field notes (e.g. photos, sketches, et cetera). The main question, stemming from theoretical background and literature review, is how people use the center, what activities take place, and how the activities manifest themselves.

Theoretical Background

Understanding the Socio-cultural Aspects of the Physical Environment

The built environment functions as a framework where conceptual systems can exist. (Rapoport 1976)

In attempting to understand sociocultural aspects and their connections to the physical environments, it is necessary to turn to other scholarly fields, as understanding culture in its physical enclosure is an interdisciplinary mission (Poyatos 1976). Anthropology, sociology, cognitive neurosciences, and many other disciplines can all provide valuable ways for exploring the human-environment relationship. In theory, all the designer would need to do is to take this information and apply it to the design process.

Combining urban design with theories about human behavior and cognitive functions at first glance might seem like an essential combination of design and theory, but the connection is more difficult to accomplish than one might think. As Kimmo Lapintie (2017) puts it, the urban and regional context is such a complex one, that when scientific theories attempt to generalize and create theories from phenomena relating to the urban context, the designer is faced with the abstract nature of those theo-



ries. That leads to struggles of bringing those principles into practice. Architect and anthropologist Amos Rapoport (1976) also articulated this problem that arises when trying to combine something conceptual with something concrete, but that it means that the answer we are seeking is to be found in the congruence of these two things.

Several disciplines have advanced the way in which people understand the relationship between humans and the physical environment. Marco Lalli (1992) provides an extensive overview of what the following theories have provided over several decades: environmental psychology, geographical psychology, and urban sociology. The summary certainly makes it clear that there are many different ways of approaching this topic, whether it comes to variation in the spatial scales, or how one defines experience.

Environmental psychology has approached the topic from a cognitive perspective, exploring how humans orient themselves in the space, and form cognitive maps of their environments. It has been proven that people strongly rely on their image of the city, which consists of memorable aspects of the built environment, such as nodes, memorable edges, and landmarks (Lalli 1992). These are theories that Kevin Lynch (1960) has drawn upon in his classic *The Image of the City*, in which he defined the parts of the city that are important in order for it to be easy for humans to navigate, as well as how this image is created. In sort, this approach is focused on how people orient themselves in the environment, how they encode, process, and organize information about their environment.

It is also important to both condense our experiences of space down to this image, as Talja Blokland (2009) and Maarit Wiik and Helka-Liisa Hentilä (2003) point out, and to understand that the space does not remain to us as tangible monuments and edges. Instead, we create a sentimental bond to places, shifting the emphasis from the physical to the social aspects of the environment. The more familiar one becomes to a place, the more one perceives the environment as an extension of oneself (Hentilä & Wiik 2003).

Experiencing space is a subjective practice and is even affected by race and class (Blokland 2009), which means that the human perception of place is also connected to social constructs, not only to physical things. This “individual experience” -approach takes us closer to the subjective realm of the theories, which could be seen as being connected to the phenomenological approach, another contribution of human-centered geographers. This approach focuses on the experience of the built space and the emotional attachment to space and has influenced work relating to place identity (Lalli 1992). Lalli sees the two most important contributions of the phenomenological approach as offering “insights into emotional, cognitive or behavioral meanings of things, environment or persons” (Lalli 1992, 287). Another highly subjective approach is the concept of person-in space, whereby the person and the environment in which she exists in is considered to be an “indissoluble unit.” This approach attempts to avoid the dichotomy that the separation of the person and environment creates, by conceptualizing a “unitary person-environment relationship,” suggesting that reality only exists as a part of the human experience (Lalli 1992, 287).

This approach can be seen as being connected to Hentilä’s and Wiik’s (2003) arguments about the physical and conceptual environment as being an extension of oneself, where social constructs, such as networks and relationships, are also an integral part of the whole. A contemporary approach to how the environment affects people has begun to emerge, as cognitive neuroscience has advanced and made it possible to get empirical results on how human minds are influenced and shaped by our physical habitats (Goldhagen 2017). This approach can be seen, in part, as building on Lynch’s (1960) theories about how human minds process and store information about location and space. Additionally, it makes a strong case for the person-in-environment concept: “humans are pervasively integrated in their environments,” (Goldhagen 2017, 29) arguing that we have more knowledge now than ever before on how our environment constantly shapes us.



Congruence of the Physical, and the Conceptual Environment

The phenomenological approach is tied to the specific subject who experiences the space. When approaching the context from this phenomenological approach, by using ethnographic methods in order to understand the Hakunila Shopping Center square, it creates certain problems that need to be taken into account. One of the challenges with the subjective approach is erasure, which means that parts of the observed or surveyed community does not become represented for one reason or another, either by being left out of the “narrative” of the neighborhood, or simply not being physically present and therefore not being observed. Talja Blokland (2009) concluded in her research concerning the identity of a New York neighborhood, how damaging this erasure can be as a phenomenon. In her research, the ones being left outside the identity of the neighborhood were the members of the black community, the reason partly being that they did not feel a part of, or welcome in certain parts of the neighborhood, because of having a strong stigma associated with them. Another reason for the black community being left out was the fact that the white middle class and the Italian community had stronger voices and participated more in the building of the community, which Blokland calls placemaking. The question of who has the loudest voice in community meetings, or who is overrepresented, is a common concern that needs to be considered when drawing conclusions regarding a place such as a neighborhood. As Blokland describes it, the risk is the systematic exclusion that occurs when certain ethnic groups are left out of the narrative of the neighborhood, and therefore are easily left out of the political decision making process (2009, 1595).

Rapoport (1976) has advanced the understanding of the social functions of the built environment by lowering the level of abstraction, in order to connect the conceptual and the concrete environment. Rapoport defines and dismantles the theories to make it easier to connect them with real-life examples, and to understand the congruence between theory and practice. Culture is

the central theme in his attempt to breach this gap, and he divides the term into four different sections, that also include some connecting questions. For this study, Rapoport’s section 2 (1976, 14) is perhaps the most relevant one:

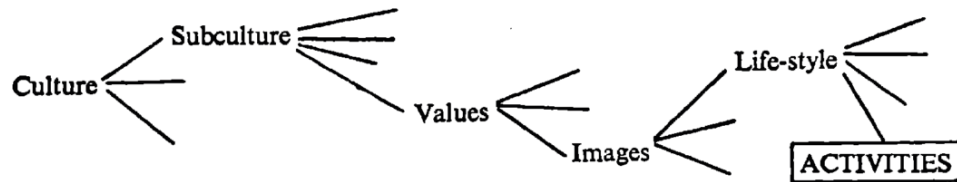
In this section we are interested in how various forms are used. We would want to have a description of space organization in terms of differences in uses. The general purpose of this area of concern is to relate regularities of behavior to those of space organization and specifically to discover behavior settings, where various activities occur, and the rules defining when places are used, by whom, how, and under what conditions. For example, what are the domains and places used by sex groups, age groups, and various other (which?) special groups? What is the use of different parts of the environment by different groups at different times, and what is the relation of the rules about space organization to rules about manners, behavior, avoidance, and so on?

Question 2 How is this unit used – who uses which parts for what, when, and under what conditions? Are there rules which restrict the use of various parts by various groups and individuals?

To further aid the process of picking apart some of the abstraction, Rapoport categorizes culture depending on the level of granularity, providing a possible framework to understand how culture manifests in space (Figure 16).

Rapoport (1976) also indicates that people in fact behave differently in various settings, depending on what is appropriate in that cultural context. A good example would be napping in public space, which in some cultures is common, whereas in others it would be quite an unusual sight and an activity mainly done by homeless people. According to Rapoport, this means that the built environment actually provides “cues for behavior” (1976, 10), and that the environment therefore conveys a form of nonver-





| <i>Culture</i> | <i>World View</i> | <i>Values</i> | <i>Life-style</i> | <i>Activities</i> |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| There are very many definitions of this concept in anthropology. At the very least it is in some way about a group of people who share a world view, beliefs, values, etc. which are learned and transmitted. These create a system of rules and habits which are consistent and related (at least theoretically). | This is clearly part of culture, is related to choices, and reflects an ideal. It is still difficult to use and operationalize. (See for example, Jones 1972; Szalay and Maday 1973; Szalay and Bryson 1973.) | These are part of a world view and are easier to identify, but still too complex, at this stage, to link to the built environment. Values are frequently embodied in images. | This consists of manners, rules, choices, role allocations, allocation of resources, etc. and has been more usefully used in relation to the built environment – e.g. the concept of <i>genre de vie</i> in French cultural geography; see also Michaelson and Reed (1970). | These are the most specific and may offer the most useful entry point into relating built environment and culture. Starting with activities, it might be possible to identify differences in life-style, values, world views, images, and culture as they relate to the built environment. |



Figure 16. Aspects of culture and their relation to the built environment (Rapoport 1976).

bal communication which the users interpret. This means that the process of design is in part coding information, which the user then decodes in the space (Figure 17).

A designer is most probably familiar with what the physical environment necessitates, but the conceptual environment is not necessarily so well known. In order to connect the conceptual and the physical environment, Rapoport (1976) distills the cultural domain down to activities. These activities are further divided into the following four components, by which they can be analyzed: (1) the activity proper; (2) the specific way of doing it; (3) additional, adjacent, or associated activities that become part of an activity system; and (4) symbolic aspects of the activity.

If we consider an example like shopping, the activity proper could be shopping for groceries, for instance, and the details about the specific way of doing it would involve what products were bought, how long is spent in the store, and what means of payment was used, et cetera. The associated activities could be: socializing, listening to music, or any other activity one might do while shopping. The symbolic meanings could be numerous; some could be more mundane, like providing food for the household or buying beer for the weekend, but the activity could also relate to status, if the store in question would be a higher end store. What is also useful to understand about these categories is that the variability, the number of different possible “answers” increases as we move from describing the actual activities (category 1 and 2), to the more abstract meanings (category 3, and especially 4). This is often related to environmental choices, which means that people express symbolic values by choosing where to live, and where to spend time and money.

By analyzing activities through these categories and understanding the differences between their “relative importance,” it is possible to understand better how they affect the built form. This allows us to know how the spaces are used, by whom, for how long, and their relative importance. Basically, this division also makes it possible to compare activities to each other.

For defining identity, analyzing the symbolic characteristics of the activities in particular could provide one way of understanding why these activities take place, and the significance they hold to the individual. The other categories also provide valuable information that could be important in order to understand the social and cultural dimensions of the place. These classifications are also useful ways of distinguishing between which activities are latent (present but not visible), and which are manifest (visible to the eye).

Field Study Observations & Map

The field study in Hakunila included ethnographic observations at the site on two separate days, which were each divided into two separate intervals. The purpose of the visit was to map the activities of the shopping center square, and thereby draw conclusions on how the activities taking place in the square relate to the identity of the place. A conceptual identity map was produced based on the observations, in order to tie the observations to the site.

Time constraints restricted the visits to two, both on weekdays. This means that some groups such as pensioners, unemployed, and people on parental leave were overrepresented. However, these are groups which need services the most, especially since there are many services used by these groups (Kela, flea markets, the public health service center, and the “breadline” or “bread queue” [leipäjonon]). Eastern Vantaa and especially Hakunila has several food distribution points (Hävikkiruokaa jaetaan... 2015).

The observations were documented on maps of the Hakunila Shopping Center, with each observation interval having its own map, which were later combined into one map (Figure 18). The purpose of the maps was to make it easy to connect the activities to the specific locations, when analyzing the material. Static activities were marked on the map, along with information about the people performing the actions (gender, age, and in some cases other remarks). The flow of people was documented by counting the number of people entering/exiting from the four points



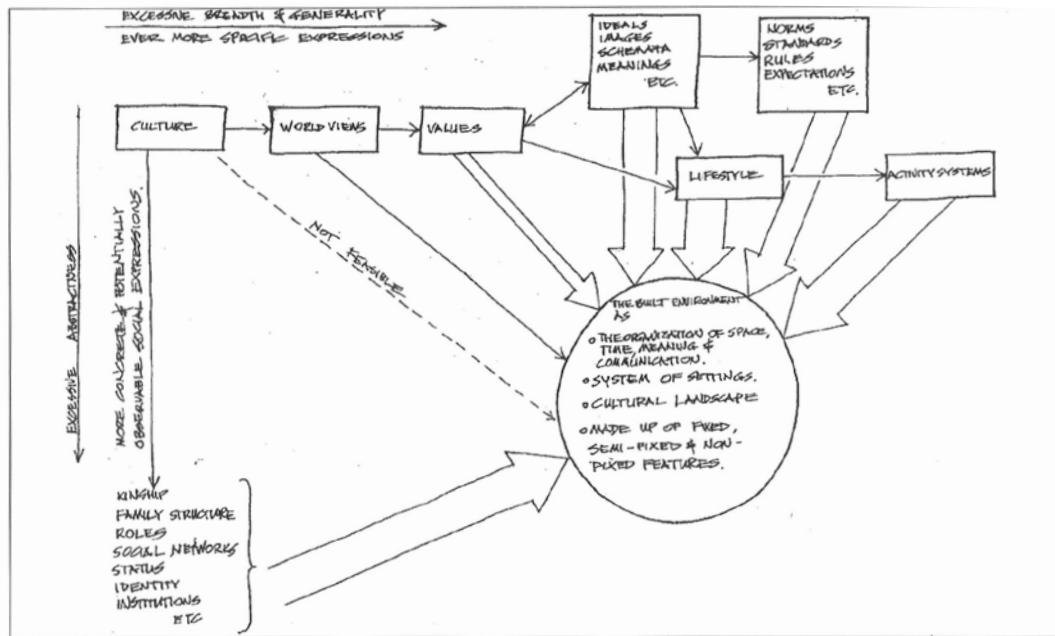


Figure 17. Dismantling culture, a diagram depicting the level of abstraction and feasibility of connecting cultural concepts to the systems of the physical environment (Rapoport 2001, 147).

of entry to the square, as well as marking the most-used paths on the printed map. In addition, photos and general notes were collected. The site was visited on 16.11.2017 between 9.00 and 13.00, and on 24.11.2017 between 8.00 and 14.00.

The majority of the people observed in the square seemed to be those of lower income, and the biggest demographic represented during the day was that of white elderly people. Most of the visitors to the square mainly came to use the services, but in the case of the elderly, the errands were often combined with some socializing, that often took place outdoors in the square. The biggest flow of people was to and from the grocery store, which was visited by all groups of people crossing the square. Other busy services were the Kela social insurance services office, which was mainly used by immigrant families and elderly people; the two large flea markets in the shopping center, which were both very busy during the day, and also especially popular among the

elderly and immigrants; and the R-kiosk was popular among middle-aged and elderly men, who spent time there playing the slot machines and smoking outside the door.

In addition to the elderly, there was a constant flow of people representing different age and ethnic groups, but the ones who lingered in the square were mainly the (white) elderly; middle aged white men affected by alcoholism (based on the fact that they were drinking alcohol in public before 12:00); and men aged between 25 and 50, many of them immigrants. The stagnant activities were almost exclusively done standing while the benches in the square were barely used during the time of the visits.

Socializing was the main reason for people staying in the square (sometimes while smoking or drinking), and this activity was mainly done by the elderly. In a couple of cases, young men of an immigrant background would stand in the square by themselves without any apparent reason. During



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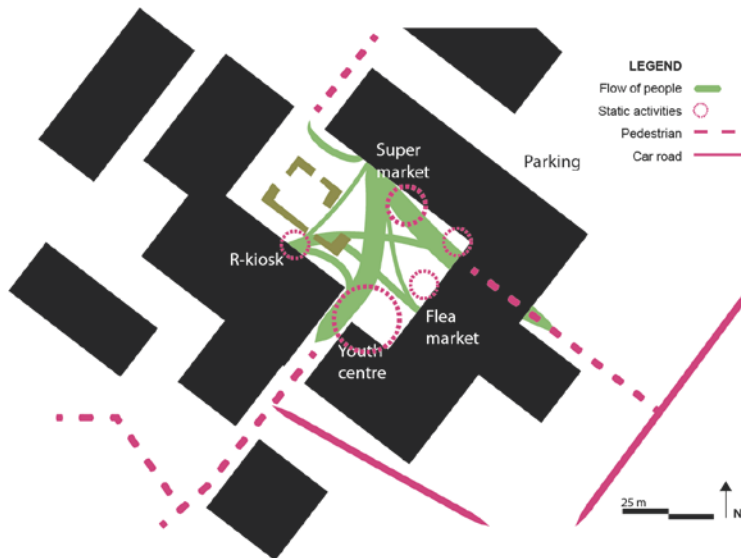


Figure 18. Combined observations done from the two site visits, mapping out where different activities during took place, as well as the movement of the people in the square.

one of the visits on the 16th, an elderly lady had acquired permission from the city to put up a small stall for selling second hand, and handmade goods, and many people approached her stand, sometimes staying for several minutes to chat (see Figure 19). One man stood in front of the local pub at 8:55, waiting for it to open. Two men spent over twenty minutes in one spot outside the health center, smoking and drinking a beer.

An event that attracted many people into the square for a long period of time was the bread queue. The first people started gathering in front of the youth center (see Figure 20), where the food would be distributed, around 11:00 waiting for well over an hour for the food to start getting distributed. At the most there were around 20 people in the queue, most of whom were white elderly or middle aged, but with some younger people with immigrant backgrounds, who did not participate in the socializing, and who stood some distance from the queue. The atmosphere in the day was calm, and despite some people drinking in the area during the day, there was no disturbance during the time of the site visits. Many of the people who stayed to socialize in the square appeared to know each other, chatting casually to each other. Overall, the square was used in a very versatile way, especially considering the chilly weather, and is probably quite busy during the summer months.



Figure 19. Hakunila shopping Center square (photo: Katja Toivola).

Figure 20. Hakunila shopping Center square (photo: Katja Toivola).



Conclusions

The Hakunila Shopping Center square is clearly a place where people from the surrounding areas go to use the services because of the diversity of services available, but it also clearly has an important social function, especially to the elderly. Having the square located in the middle of the services allows people to cross paths and meet on their way to and from taking care of errands, as well as functioning as a place to go simply to socialize. Such was the case for one talkative man in Romani clothing, who sauntered around the square in the morning, without any other apparent reason than to chat to passers-by, many of whom he clearly knew from before.

What also seemed to be the case in the square, based on the calm atmosphere and casual socializing that took place among the people using the square, is that there was a sense of non-judgement, since most people in the square were of the same social class and how casual the interaction between people was, at least from an outsider's perspective. There are no latte cafés or what could be referred to as "signs of gentrification," and it allows the lower-class people of the area to take the space into their own use, without having to feel looked down upon by people of a higher social class. They clearly use the space as their own, in a comfortable way, as the lingering clearly signals that they see they have a right to be in the space.

Based on these observations, it seems likely that this function of the square could be quite fragile, and that by building and re-developing the area, and creating features of gentrification in the square, the current users might not be comfortable using the square as they currently do. This is not to say that different social groups cannot live together, but it is quite rare to see such a strong community, and especially of people from a similar social status using the space in a way that was seen in the Hakunila Shopping Center. What this means for the shopping center and the area more generally, is that there is clearly a demand for non-consumer related spaces for

these existing communities to use and meet in. Activities such as putting up stalls or pop-up flea markets, and other informal placemaking activities, are not possible to arrange in shopping malls. Not having spaces that enable these kinds of activities would certainly mean something valuable to the community would be lost. Not only does this concern placemaking activity, but also socializing and lingering, which big shopping malls usually want to prevent. The previously mentioned men drinking beer would certainly have been removed from a shopping mall complex, but in the Hakunila Shopping Center, however, no one seemed to be bothered by these men, and they were just as much a part of the community as anyone else in the square.

Doing an ethnographic study of a site that is not related to physical aspects of the place provides a new perspective and a deeper understanding of the place, compared to what conventional architectural analysis focuses on, which are usually the physical and statistical aspects of the place. Adding an identity-focused part to the analysis could help achieve what Rapoport describes as (1976, 24), "creating a better fit between spatial organization and culture communication behavior and human activities." Understanding characteristics of a group of people is challenging, but what is even more difficult is translating this knowledge into physical plans and designs. However, this essay has hopefully shown that just a small amount of ethnographic study can reveal quite a lot about the identity of the community using the space.

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Power Relations in Public Space from a Feminist Perspective: Public Presence

by Aleksandra Borzęcka

From Gendered Division to Feminist Agency

This chapter explores different ways of understanding how power structures and relations influence the ability to be present in public, as well as the ability to participate and act as an active agent for different identities and bodies. Tackling this subject from two angles - through analyzing different theories and practices, on one hand, and ethnographic observations at the Hakunila Shopping Center square on the other - the paper maps out the constraints and opportunities of feminist agency in the area and begins to imagine its feminist future.

The strong gendered division of public versus private space (e.g. McDowell 1983; Rendell 2000), where the private (or domestic) space “belongs” to women and the public to men, is slowly fading. However, patriarchy still stays strong - even in the most gender-equal Nordic contexts - and so does its effect on the usage of public spaces. But what does it mean to “use public space” in a feminist context?

From increasing visibility and representation through public appearance, to the claiming of public space in an act of political protest - as in the case of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo (Torre 2000) - women’s and other struggling groups’ presence in public has the power to create resilience to oppressive structures. Ironically enough, what disables those suppressed groups from being present in public space are precisely those structures and the way that they are reflected in space. Leslie Weisman (2000, 86) writes:

[...] the spatial arrangements of buildings

and communities are neither value-free nor neutral; they reflect and reinforce the nature of each society’s gender, race and class relations. They are shaped by social, political, and economic forces and values embodied in the forms themselves, the processes through which they are built, and the manner in which they are used. The built environment contributes to the power of some groups over others and the maintenance of human inequality.

In other words, public spaces are loaded with various enabling and disabling power relations. In that context, I would adopt the understanding of feminist architecture or spatial practice as: practice(s) which strive to enable the rights of all bodies, identities, and groups in space. I would also stress that an understanding of the power relations is necessary from an intersectional perspective - recognizing the dynamics between different systems of oppression (Crenshaw 1991).

In mainstream urban practices, the most acknowledged “feminist concern” has been women’s safety. However, the feeling of safety itself does not yet enable the usage of public spaces. Feminist scholars have been studying the influence of work, leisure, and mobility patterns on public presence since the late 1980s (e.g. Wimbush & Talbot 1988, Henderson et al. 1989). What is interesting is that the work-leisure-mobility patterns, in some situations, make women more dependent on the usage of public spaces. For example, in connection with public transport usage - women are less likely, in general, to own a car than men, and their travel patterns are more varied since they are also more likely to be responsible for taking children to pre-school, school, and after-school activities (Foran 2013). In her studies of leisure patterns’ influence on public presence, Josephine Burden (1999, 32), found that “public space is not only gendered, but inscribed by age.” While younger women were more present at home, after a certain age (when children left home to start their adult life or when both spouses were retired) it was women who had



much more presence in the community life. Burden (1999, 35) argues that,

"Women are more likely to be involved in work activities at the family and local level than are men, and are therefore better placed to negotiate a sense of themselves as active agents as they grow older and paid work place takes on a reduced structural significance."

Even the seemingly basic and straight-forward issue of safety reveals its complexity when analyzed closely. Safety, or the feeling of safety, can mean radically different things to different groups or individuals. This spring (in the role of "queer activist-architect/researcher") I attended a meeting of a queer youth club in a high school in the "problematic," northeastern suburbs of Gothenburg. While discussing the feeling of safety issue, a group of (mainly) Somali lesbians expressed that the presence of a relative, neighbor, or someone who potentially could know their families, came with a risk of outing, which meant they had to "act straight" in the public spaces of their neighborhood. This meant that their feeling of safety or comfort was often actually higher in places that were more "anonymous," which contradicts the very common desire for creating tight communities "where everyone knows each other."

Planners' understanding of safety often needs a reality check. New York's West Village, probably the most famous gaybourhood in the world, is also one of the starring actresses of Jane Jacobs' iconic *Death and Life*... (Jacobs, 1961). Geographer Johan Andersson (2015), in analyzing the situation of the area from an intersectional queer perspective, argues that Jacobs' beloved notion of natural surveillance ("eyes on the street," also known as a remedy for unsafe neighborhoods), is quite problematic in the modern context of the West Village. In this (or perhaps in every) case, it is particular "eyes" that surveil, judge, and have the structural power to suppress what they find "dangerous." He pointed out how both straight nimby ("not in my backyard") groups

as well as upper-middle class white gay men's "eyes on the street" erased the younger, poorer, blacker, & browner bodies from urban space, and in this case from the queer urban space. Those privileged, civic, surveilling "eyes" then had a direct influence on the police patrol of the area. In this case, the police read trans-women of color - who were making presence in public and performing their gender - as prostitutes, which then obviously created an unsafe situation for the women (Andersson 2015). Jacobs' tool for creating a livable and citizen-driven (or monitored?) city became an enabler of racist-, classist-, and transphobic-oppression.

In the described case, understanding and addressing safety issues would be extremely exclusive without adopting an intersectional perspective. Following Irene Molina (2017, 98): "intersectionality is a perspective that aims to map the landscape of power and - despite its complexity - enables an orientation in the way in which the different dimensions of power interact, thus paving a path from analysis to action." For this reason, I want to move away from reactionary advocating for safety, to instead taking an intersectional approach of analyzing and imagining from the perspective of agency.

Doina Petrescu (2017) describes the practice of her Parisian office "aaa: atelier d'architecture autogérée" ("atelier of self-managed architecture") as "rather than objects, designing agencies." While describing a few of her projects done in the suburban neighborhoods of Paris, she refers to the activities of communing agency, "Instigating commoning activities [...], we consequently challenged the users of our projects to take active positions. The spatial transformation somehow generated transformations within the users themselves and changed their motivations and their engagement" (Petrescu 2017, 103). Following the project development over the years, they realized how the most active agents were, "for the most part, women." This also contributed to the specific type of agency that was created:

We have realized that with this kind of project, we succeed in opening up a space



in which a particular type of feminine subjectivity finds an area of creativity and innovation: projects that are cared for, engaged in and in which you see the results of your engagements with others; projects that teach the patience and attention of the reproductive work. (Petrescu 2017, 103)

In that sense the platform for presence, togetherness, and collective activity evolved into a platform for political agency, showing how public presence can act as a feminist, agency-producing, power-tool.

Building on Petrescu's (2017) theory and practice, and adapting the intersectional approach, looking at the power relations and their effect on public presence in the case of Hakunila, we may start by asking: "What enables and disables public presence and participation of different identities & bodies (in the Hakunila square)? And where is - or can be - a space for feminist agency?" This study puts a special emphasis on the enablers as well as, in the spirit of bell hooks' feminist approach of optimism and taking action (hooks 2000), imagining a feminist future.

While the focus is on the square, it (the square) does not exist or work in a vacuum - it is embedded in a larger system of physical (public) spaces. It also exists in a social network(s), and the functions or services present in the square (and in its larger system) provide different kinds of "spaces" or platforms. In the next part I will take a closer look at those systems from the perspective of the feminist agency that they may or may not produce.

Hakunila Square in a System

Overview of the Hakunila square

Shopping centers are important functional and social nodes in suburban neighborhoods. The outdoor space of the Hakunila Shopping Center forms and works as an urban public square. I would like to take a moment to look at how it ties to a larger system of spaces. The observation of this system was

done by taking a walk from the southern edge of Hakunila, up the square, and then meandering through a series of interconnected courtyards with different public spaces and functions (Figure 21).

On the footprint map (Figure 21) it can be seen how the built structure of the buildings form a series of courtyards. Even though they are all publicly accessible, there is a slight difference between those containing only social infrastructure connected to the house (e.g. playground, garden), and the ones that contain functions or places that act on the neighborhood scale.

This chapter takes a closer look at two places that were identified as potentially producing high agency or participation in community life for various groups. The places were evaluated on the basis of public accessibility to their program, range of activities, and/or addressing the needs of different specific groups. It is critically understood that both the decision about choosing these places as well as the analysis of them is limited to outsider's eye judgement. For example, the structures that Josephine Burden (1999) referred to, in her previously mentioned study, such as various bottom-up organized neighborhood clubs and groups or even associations, which take place in the semi-private/ social spaces, could also contain significant feminist agencies. However, that would require a much more in-depth study and would retreat from the subject of actual public space.

The Käsityökeskus "Square"

The Käsityökeskus courtyard square (marked with an A. on Figure 21) contains a variety of services for different groups: a kindergarten and playground, a pizzeria, a bar, and the Hakunila handicraft center (Hakunilan Käsityökeskus). During the site visit, which was around 9:30 on a weekday, the space seemed quite active, mainly due to the kindergarten children in the playground. There were a few people both in the pizzeria and in the craft center - in the pizzeria was the owner and a few other men, and through the large windows of the crafts center a few women could be seen. It seemed



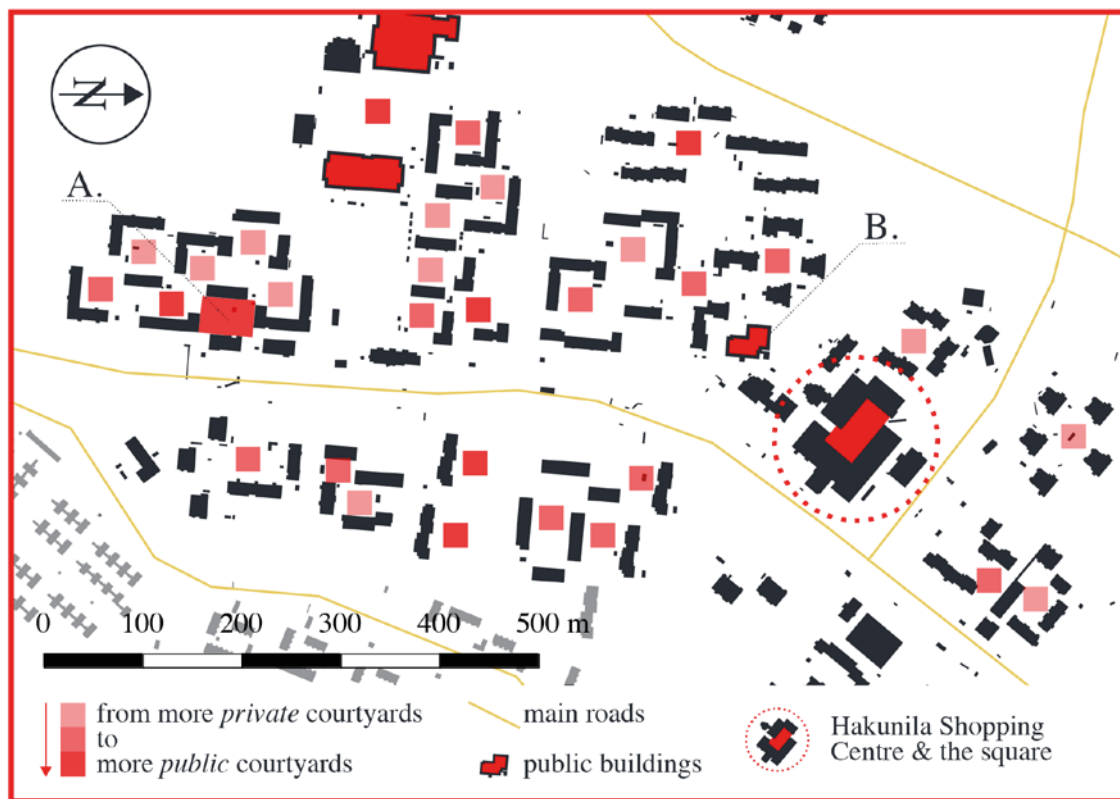


Figure 21. Map of the southern part of Hakunila, showing the system of courtyards.

(at least at the time of the observation) that there was a gender division between those two places, although it can be imagined that the various users of the craft center are frequent customers of the pizzeria as well. Both places had large windows facing the courtyard, giving two different “gazes” on the space.

Through a bit of investigation of the Käsityökeskus on social media, it can be observed that the craft center offers a range of courses and other activities connected to crafts, and it acts as a community center for the area. It can also be seen that the users of this space (both physical and social network) were - to quote Petrescu (2017, 101) again, “for the most part, women.”

It is also interesting to look at how the craft center is making itself and its users present in the space. Through different graffiti (Figures 22, 23) the Käsityökeskus is expanding their visibility and therefore, in a way presence, of different women onto the public space.

The Library

The public library (marked by B. on Figure 21) is in a direct proximity and connection to the central square. It provides a variety of books for different ages and groups - including an LGBTQ+ section, a section with magazines and newspapers, children's books, and so on. It also contains some computer access and a multi-purpose room with a projector that can be booked by members of the (library) community. The Hakunila library is also one of the spaces declared as “free of discrimination” as a part of the Ministry of Justice “Syrjinnästä vapaa alue” campaign (Syrjinnästä vapaa... 2017).

During a visit to the library in the evening hours (around 18:00 on a work day) there were different groups using the premises: children around 10-14 years old having some after-school activities, several adults using the computers, older teenagers looking at and reading books (some alone, some hanging out in a group), and several adults in the newspaper section. The newspaper section was particularly interesting - it almost



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Figure 22. Backside entrance of Käsityökeskus (photo: Aleksandra Borzęcka).



Figure 23. Graffiti below the front windows of Käsityökeskus (photo: Aleksandra Borzęcka).

acted as a public, (charge-free) café - with a few tables and a large wall of magazines. All tables were occupied by at least one adult reading a newspaper.

Another interesting situation concerned a group of older teenagers (4 boys and 1 girl; they could have in their late teens-20s in age), who were previously present in the square. In the square they were wandering around a bit, but mostly spent time in the pizzeria, or rather outside it, smoking. Though they were not doing anything “bad,” their presence was obviously marked in the square by loud conversations. In the space of the library however, they acted very quietly, not engaging in much conversation or reading, but rather just... hanging out. What inspired this shift of behavior - being indoors? Informal surveillance of the librarians? or perhaps the institution of the library itself? Perhaps a library is indeed the place of soft-edge social control as elaborated in the case of Koivukylä (see the “Hanging out in Koivukylä - A study of Social Control and the Youth” chapter of this book).

Presence in the Square - Ethnographic Observations

In order to get a better understanding of what actually takes place in the square, I made an ethnographic observation on site - looking at people flows in the space of the square at different times of the day. This method of analysis is commonly used in architectural and urban practices (e.g. Gehl et al. 2011); however, it rarely recognizes the diversity factors. Adopting the intersectional-feminist approach, I chose to consider several such factors. I looked at gender, age, the fact of walking alone or in groups, walking with a child or stroller, being present in the square for a longer time, and (more in detail during the second day of the study) the presence of people of color. I looked specifically at these factors as they give grounds for making conclusions about who claims the space of the square and when, which is important to define when analyzing the power relations within urban spaces. The classification of age groups is chosen based on the following understanding: 0-11 are children, 12-18



teenagers, 19-35 young adults (possibly with small children), 36-65 adults (possibly with older or grown up children) and 65+ are elderly.

The observation was made in time slots of 30 minutes at different times of the day on two separate days. Each time I was standing in the same place - by the southeastern wall of the square, next to the second-hand store, as it gave the best overview of the space. It is important to note that assigning the age, gender, and race factors could have been inaccurate, since it was done through my own subjective "gaze." The presence of my gaze should also be acknowledged in the space of the square. I was trying not to be obvious in making the notes; I used simple coding (different types of lines marked in appropriate boxes) to make the notes fast and possibly discrete, since it was uncomfortable enough to stand there for such a long time, look at every person passing through the space, and then

make judgements about their age, gender, and skin color. Some people were noticing me and looked curious about what I was doing, but I did not experience any confrontations. During the evening observation - when there was fewer people and mostly men - I felt like some of the men who were "hanging out" in the square wanted to ask me what I was doing, however that did not happen

Day 1

The first observation (Table 1) was made during the morning and lunch hours (7:30-12:30) on a working day (Thursday 16.1.2017). It was a sunny day with temperatures around six degrees Celsius.

The most common age group present was the elderly (65+), both among men and women. In every age group there were slightly more women than men. Around 64 percent of women were walking alone, while for men it was over 80 percent.

Table 1. Data from the first day of observation: 16.11.2017.

| Age | | Women | | | | | Men | | | | | Other or Undefined | | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------|--------------------|-----|----------|-----|----------|
| | time slots | 7:40 - 8:10 | 8:20 - 8:50 | 10:20 - 10:50 | 11:55 - 12:25 | sum | 7:40 - 8:10 | 8:20 - 8:50 | 10:20 - 10:50 | 11:55 - 12:25 | sum | -,- | -,- | -,- | -,- | sum |
| 0-11 | | 10(8)* | 17(14) | 3(1) | 3(3) | 33(26) | 14(8) | 7(2) | 1(1) | 7(6) | 29(17) | - | 8** | 1+ 12 | 16 | 1+ 36 |
| 12-18 | | 15(5) | 7(2) | 1(-) | 1(1) | 24(8) | 14(7) | 2(1) | 2(-) | 0 | 18(8) | 1 | - | - | - | 1 |
| 19-35 | | 21(7) | 31(17) | 47(19) | 46(27) | 145(70) | 24(4) | 21(1) | 22(6) | 50(6) | 117(17) | - | - | - | - | - |
| 36-65 | | 27(2) | 21(7) | 47(13) | 57(11) | 152(33) | 24(2) | 26(3) | 27(4) | 46(5) | 123(14) | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| 65+ | | 14(2) | 37(13) | 60(19) | 72(25) | 183(59) | 13(2) | 31(5) | 43(13) | 67(10) | 154(30) | - | - | - | - | - |
| (sum) | | 87 | 113 | 158 | 179 | | 89 | 87 | 95 | 170 | | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | |
| total during total time of 2h: | | | | | | 537 (196) | | | | | 441(86) | | | | | 3+ 36 |

*The number in brackets represents number of people walking with other(s), including with a child in a stroller. Note that the first number represents all the people, both walking alone and in group.

** The number in blue represents children in a stroller.



When it comes to child caring, there was 52 adults (19+) with children (including people walking with strollers). Out of this 46 were women with children and only 6 were men. There were 35 adults with strollers, out of which 31 were women.

During this time there was no disturbing behavior; the only thing that could have been perceived as potentially dangerous was two men with beers who were wandering around the square for a longer time.

The big, shiny windows of the second-hand store inspired a slower pace of movement; most of the “window shoppers” were women.

When it comes to more permanent presence in the square - there was a woman who had a temporary market outside of the K-market store (see Figure 19). She was present for the whole time of the observation. Her outdoor market encouraged longer presence of other woman in the square, who stopped for longer chats. Other people who were present

longer in the square were: a busker playing guitar, and two women who were advertising some kind of religious content. It was also common for people (mostly men) playing the slot machines in the R-kioski to come out for a cigarette.

Day 2

The second observation (Table 2) was made during the late afternoon/early evening (16:30-19:00) on a working day (Thursday 23.11.2017). While it was not snowing or raining, there was snow lying on the ground. The temperature was around five degrees Celsius.

During the previous observation - in morning and lunch hours - I noticed only around ten percent of those using the square were people of color. In this observation, I wanted to look at this in more detail; therefore, I added a race factor to my observation codes. This method is limited

Table 2. Data from the second day of observation: 23.11.2017.

| Age | | Women | | | | Men | | | | Other or Undefined | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|------|------|------------|
| | time slots | 16:10 - 16:40 | 17:00 - 17:30 | 18:20 - 18:50 | sum | 16:10 - 16:40 | 17:00 - 17:30 | 18:20 - 18:50 | sum | -,,- | -,,- | -,,- | sum |
| 0-11 | | 5*/13 (5/13)** | 2/5 (2/5) | 0/2 (0/2) | 7/20 (7/20) | 5/11 (5/10) | 2/6 (2/6) | 0/3 (0/3) | 10/20 (7/19) | 6*** | 5 | 6 | 17 |
| 12-18 | | 13/22 (10/14) | 2/7 (2/7) | 1/2 (0/0) | 16/31 (12/21) | 9/22 (7/17) | 7/13 (4/10) | 6/17 (3/12) | 22/52 (14/39) | - | 0/2 | - | 0/2 |
| 19-35 | | 16/46 (10/22) | 3/40 (2/24) | 2/33 (2/19) | 21/119 (14/65) | 9/50 (3/12) | 21/67 (12/36) | 20/58 (9/24) | 60/175 (24/72) | - | - | - | - |
| 36-65 | | 7/52 (5/17) | 1/52 (0/13) | 6/49 (2/11) | 14/153 (7/41) | 7/53 (3/13) | 9/77 (2/25) | 8/79 (4/23) | 24/209 (9/61) | - | - | - | - |
| 65+ | | 0/6 (0/1) | 0/6 (0/2) | 0/3 (0/1) | 0/15 (0/4) | 0/19 (0/2) | 0/17 (0/2) | 0/15 (0/1) | 0/51 (0/5) | - | - | - | - |
| (sum) | | 41/139 | 8/110 | 5/89 | | 30/155 | 39/180 | 37/172 | | - | 0/2 | - | |
| total during total time of 1,5h | | | | | 54/338 (40/151) | | | | 106/507 (54/196) | | | | 0/2+ 17 |

*The number in red represents number of people of color. Note that the second number represents the sum of all people, including people of color.

**The number in brackets represents number of people walking with other(s), including with a child in a stroller. Note that the first number represents all the people, both walking

since color does not represent all ethnic minorities. On one hand this method erases minorities, which “pass” (again, for my gaze) as white or Finnish, on the other, it takes into account light skin privilege in relation to public presence, which is also interesting to observe in its intersection with gender. For gender, the problem is analogous - in most cases it is impossible to “read” a trans- or non-binary-gender identity, therefore in this kind of observation those identities are unintentionally, for the most part erased. Considering this, I decided that it is worth adding the presence of people of color factor to the observation.

The most common age groups present were adults (36-65) and young adults (19-35), both among men and women. In every age group there were more men than women. Around 56 percent of women were walking alone, while for men it was around 61 percent. However, when only people of color are considered, the numbers dropped significantly to 26 percent for women of color walking alone and 49 percent for men.

When it comes to child caring - there was 50 adults (19+) with children (including people walking with strollers). Out of this, 35 were women with children and 15 were men. There were 17 adults with strollers, out of which 14 were women.

Around 18:30 there was one peculiar incident that involved a group of teenage boys of color wanting to enter the youth center, however they were denied access, which suggests that perhaps the center has some restrictions on who is allowed or not. This resulted in them making a lot of noise like shouting, quote “fuck you” multiple times, hitting the door, and other such behavior.

Presence in the Square - Conclusions of the Observation

The first striking observation is how the proportion of men and women present in the square changes from the morning to evening hours. During the morning observation, the square was dominated by older women. The number of men increased and became almost as high as the number of women closer to the



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Figure 24. Hakunila Shopping Centre during the evening. View from the first floor (photo: Aleksandra Borzęcka).

lunch hours. During the evening observation the situation was almost reversed - there were more men present in the square and the proportion of women to men decreased with time.

Analyzing the flows in the square, it seems that in general the most “popular” places are the K-market and R-kioski (with a Posti service). The R-kioski seems to be mostly used for picking up packages and for playing the slot machines, where the latter activity is largely dominated by middle-aged and older man. There is a large flow of youth from the youth center in different directions - including the popular connection between the youth center and the library (in the after-school hours).

The space seems mainly like a transit place; however, there were a few exceptions of more permanent presence in the square. Especially significant were: the (usually) men smoking outside the R-kioski and the pizzeria, the aforementioned woman with her outdoor temporary market which also attracted other women, and the group of teens trying to get inside the youth center.

The incident outside the youth center could be understood as an act of resistance to power - in this case power of the institution of the youth center. The power held by the center becomes visible when we adopt Michel Foucault's (1978) thought of studying power relations from the resistance to power. It may be that the center is an important factor in the local youngsters' lives, which the active flow of young people would suggest. Apart from that, the center has the ability to construct its rules and norms, which then the local youth must obey if they want to take part in the center's activities. If they do not, then perhaps the only thing left to do is making the resistance to those rules explicit in the square.

The pizzeria - seen furthest left in Figure 24 - has large windows facing two sides: the square and the street coming from the library to the square. In architectural terms it fits perfectly in the Jane Jacobs (1961) “eyes on the streets” criterion. It is actually the only locality in the square with this quality being so obvious. However,

during the evening hours the “eyes” belong mainly to young and middle-aged men, sitting inside or coming outside for a cigarette. This informally makes them control the square - everyone who passes is subjected to their “gaze.”

What is perhaps invisible to my “gaze” on the other hand - but what came to my attention while reading Nishat Awan's (2017) Mapping otherwise - is the possible cultural significance of spaces like the pizzeria in the Hakunila Shopping Center (or the one next to Käsityökeskus) for groups with a middle-eastern/Arabic background. One of Awan's mappings is of Stoke Newington High Street in London. It reveals the Turkish/Kurdish concept of kahve in the shops/bars/restaurants/and other small businesses (with owners of the Turkish or Kurdish background), which make up a large proportion of the street's fabric. She writes:

The kahve are Turkish and Kurdish social clubs or small cafés that operate as members-only spaces where usually men gather to drink tea, play cards and chat. They are said to mimic the geography of Turkey, each place being affiliated to a certain area or regional football team. (Awan 2017, 38)

Is it possible the pizzeria on the Hakunila square acts as this (or a similar) kind of “social club” for the (mainly) men who claim it? Is there then a possible conflict of two feminist concerns - understanding and respecting cultural heritage of an ethnic minority, and liberating different (mainly female) identities and bodies from the “male gaze?”

Feminist Futures

From the conclusions of the ethnographic observation, I created a map of the spaces of possibilities and constraints of feminist agency in the context of and in the Hakunila square itself.

I would like once again to refer to Awan's (2017) notion of mapping otherwise. Firstly, she recognizes the ability of maps to





Figure 25. Mapping of the feminist agency enablers and disablers in Hakunila Shopping Centre square.

“depict different realities” and “privilege some information over others” which means, as she puts it, “maps are always political and should be read as such.” In that sense, with the “other” mapping (Figure 25) of the Hakunila square and its surrounding, a feminist perspective on the power relations has been privileged.

Awan (2017) looks at mapping as an activity, a process rather than an artefact. As such, it is easy to imagine this map being re-worked. It would also be interesting, if not crucial, to add multiple other perspectives, that is to see how different local groups would map the square. However, basing on the ethnographic observation and mapping through a feminist gaze already gives tools for a critique of the existing power relations and imagining a feminist shift.

Mapping the possible feminist agency is a tool for formulating feminist claims for the future planning and development of the area and of the shopping center itself. However, who should really make those claims? As Judith Butler (1990) points out - feminism is not separate from power relations, but acts within them. And it is precisely the acts, as feminism is also not something that is, but rather something that is performed. Perhaps this understanding makes it easier to imagine performing those claims as a process, or otherwise as a process that provides various platforms for performing.

While in the previously described Doina Petrescu's practice it was the architects “stretching” their agency to provide such platforms, there are multiple examples from Sweden where the feminist claims have been adopted by the city's officials and planners. For example, the City of Malmö used an “inclusion through exclusion strategy” in a “separatistic” process of developing a public space project in the suburban neighborhood Rosengård. They found that among youngsters, outdoor public spaces were mainly used by boys, while girls spent time at home and/or in the city center. The project “Rosens röda matta” (Björnsson 2013) invited young girls from the neighborhood to participate in the planning process - they were hired for the summer by the municipality to co-design a space for play, art, social ac-

tivities, and so on.

In the recent actions taken in the development of Husby - suburban neighborhood of Stockholm identified as “problematic” by the media and “vulnerable” by the city officials - the city planners adopted what they openly called a, “feminist urban planning redesign strategy” (Roden, 2017). A political position was taken and the actors in both cases claimed their actions as feminist. Of course, a critical eye can look for other political agendas such as using feminism as a buzz-word for public relations reasons. Nevertheless, a platform for agency has been provided, and while the later example is still in an early stage process, the Rosens röda matta project resulted in creating permanence of feminist agency in the area.

Now, when we look at the proposed plans for the Hakunila Shopping Center (Hakunilan keskustan... 2017), perhaps a different kind of permanence is envisioned. Despite the plans only suggesting a direction that cannot be read as definite, even at the rough vision level it is possible to read the imagined plan for the development, and therefore what it can enable.

The vision then assumes demolition of the shopping center and replacing it with housing blocks with ground floor commercial localities. The space of the square is thus erased, and with it possibly the social structures which occupy it. What kind of power relation is reflected? From a space which accommodates a concentration of various public services (e.g. health centers, Kela, youth center, elderly center), as well as economically accessible commercial spaces (e.g. the two second-hand stores, and the diverse gastronomic localities), the Hakunila Shopping center is envisioned to shift to a (differently organized) space of separate housing blocks that might, and looking at the usual practice probably will, emerge in different times following the individual developer's business plans. Additionally, the new housing blocks will inevitably have higher rents and a safe guess is that the bottom-floor localities will also correspond to higher-income residents. Even if the new plan projects a physically “nice” urban environment, what should be subject-



ed to a feminist critique is the process of development, resolving, or addressing the ownership situation, how the public is included in the process, and most importantly who is included in the quite abstract notion of the public.

This chapter aimed to map out different (feminist) perspectives on power relations within the public of the Hakunila Shopping Center square and sought the potential of feminist practices. The power that was mainly discussed here was the one which comes with public presence and the ability of acting in the public sphere. Revealing the complexity of those relations and what enables them opened up the question of responsibility - who should make the feminist claims? This question concerns yet another layer of power relations - the relations of the citizens to the property owners, the city decision makers, and planners. If a claim for bold political planning is made, it has to produce a platform or agency to act from within constraining structures. Otherwise, can any participation or agency be even considered democratic?

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Conclusions

The pressure for the development of the Hakunila Shopping Center comes from many angles, but also difficulties with property rights, for example. However, the challenging situation of differing opinions can be helped with proper market research. We found that the future demand of the shopping center site is somewhere in the middle of no change and the growth exaggeration of the new plan frame. The shopping center site will be a central and key location for the future of Hakunila, but only if the actors take the future demand into account and make rational decisions based on proper research.

The Shopping Center, in its current form, is also a socially thriving urban square that is actively claimed by its users. In its own terms, it can be seen as a good quality public space, while at the same time having a worn appearance. The Hakunila Shopping Center is a site that reveals a lot of further study potential related to Finnish planning ideologies, shopping center typologies, politics of space, and spatial “user experiences.”

Doing an ethnographic study of a site that is not related to spatial aspects of the place, does provide a much deeper understanding of the space. Analyzing Hakunila from an identity point of view revealed a strong community of lower-class groups, who took the space for themselves, and there seemed to be a sense of non-judgement since the social classes in the space were similar. Re-developing the area could possibly change the way in which the square is used by its current users.

Simply looking at presence in the public space of the square reveals a lot of the power structures, and the idea of whom claims the space, and how. While we strive for recognition of the present social structures and identities, as spatial theorists and practitioners, we also have the responsibility to enable identities who are constrained by those existing structures. Those constraints can be only fully understood

from an intersectional perspective.

Shopping centers like The Hakunila Shopping Center were produced under certain planning conditions - where top-down radical decisions were made and master narratives were imposed by visionaries. Those questionable visions contributed to many urban problems - car-centric cities, inhumane environments, and sprawl, among others. And yes, we have been globally criticizing those for decades now. However, with the neo-liberalization of the condition, and criticism of the “master” planning, also comes the shift away from positive planning of “this is what should be” to negative planning of regulations. This weakens planning in general and perhaps even distances the planning agents from the responsibility for the city. One should not make a desperate, nostalgic call for some kind of return to what was before, but rather, as we aimed to do in this chapter, constantly reveal the complexity of environments and social structures which inhabit them, with the aim of making a well-informed decision and position on “what should be.”

What condition would on one hand be sensitive towards the fragility or vulnerability of the place, its social structures and identity, the fact that it can be used by different groups; and at the same time take care of the space, develop and not abandon it to its own decay or the neoliberal market power? This, of course, means also taking care of the complex power relations and addressing the agency opportunities for vulnerable groups.

While it is a complex and challenging task, there is no doubt that the planning office should take action to enable this condition. Otherwise, there is a risk that the confused division of responsibilities will result in either a gentrifying project that will not recognize the existing social structures, or nothing will happen at all and the space will just decay.

In light of the research conducted and the conclusions drawn in this paper, it becomes evident that the framing of the title “confused suburban identities” appears rather problematic. During our observations



and social exchanges in the field, we did not come across any indications of confusion within the users of the space, i.e., the suburban residents, in terms of their activities in urban spaces or representations of their local identities. The urban space was actively used and positively claimed by its users. Contrarily, the most disorienting aspect seemed to be the open questions related to the decaying building structures that are owned by multiple private parties and remain undeveloped amidst evolving plans and proposals shaped by municipal and regional planning dynamics. The further we dived into the context of the Hakunila Shopping Center, the more it became apparent that the most confusion lies among the planners, owners, and officials attempting to manage the space, not the users or the citizens.



Commentary

Developing suburban shopping centers in tune with local needs and city branding efforts

by Salla Jokela & Johanna Lilius

The students' observations of the Hakunila shopping center contribute to an understanding of how this site has been reimagined and transformed into a meaningful place by its current users. We find two threads of particular importance here, which could be outlined as more general questions concerning other parts of the metropolitan area. The first perspective emphasizes the role of the suburban shopping center as a functional place in a neighborhood, and the ways in which it could be updated to better serve the needs of the current residents in the neighborhood. Secondly, we want to discuss placemaking in and through the shopping center as a part of the branding strategies of Vantaa and the whole Helsinki Capital Region.

While the Hakunila shopping center manifests some of the ideals of rational and comprehensive planning that originally guided the building of the Hakunila neighborhood, it has been transformed into a relatively poorly managed "liminal space" (see Hajer & Reijndorp 2001). This transformation is connected to several societal changes, such as diversifying household forms, an increase in car ownership, changes in retail logistics and consumption patterns, and the construction of larger shopping malls since the 1960s (Hankonen 1994: 258-272).

Typically in the research literature, the narrow supply of services in the neighborhood shopping center has been identified to

explain why shopping centers have failed to develop in accordance with present needs. This is why during the 2000s, it has been emphasized that these old kinds of shopping center should include both private and public services, such as libraries and spaces for residents and cultural services. However, according to Pasi Mäenpää (2013), simply mixing different functions at the shopping center is not enough; agency should be mixed too. That would mean that all actors, such as owners, developers, city officials, shopkeepers and residents, are devoted to increasing the attractiveness of the shopping center as a whole, and to work together and apply new forms of action with the other actors. Jalmari Sarla's concrete suggestions on how to develop the Hakunila shopping center are a good commentary as to where this development could start. However, as Mäenpää (2013) argues, the development of shopping centers has to start from the needs of the surrounding environment and its people, and not only from the shopping center itself. This is underlined in Eero Kuja's paper, which he ends by calling for better market research.

When possible paths of urban development are explored, placemaking is often discussed in relation to "creativity", which supports image building and fosters economic growth in cities (Landry 2000; Florida 2002). Liminal or "interim" spaces are increasingly noted in city marketing discourses for their potential to embody notions of dynamic and bustling city life and to attract people, who are eager to participate in the making of urban space and culture (Colomb 2012). This way of thinking is connected to a larger shift in the conceptualizations of government and citizenship in complex and networked city regions. The competition between cities in the global economy has led many cities in western societies to relax their regulations in order to make way for self-directing and responsible human subjects, whose actions and identity projects can be harnessed for the purpose of enhancing (inter)national competitiveness (Miller & Rose 2008). This development is also evident in the Helsinki Capital Region, where the City of Helsinki has recently launched a



new brand concept, which emphasizes “people, encounters and actions that make an impact” (Brand New Helsinki 2018). It is based on a participatory branding process that emphasize individuals’ experiences of urban space instead of imposing a brand on them from above.

In this context, the case of the Hakunila shopping center poses an interesting challenge. As the students’ work shows, when increasing flows of consumers are directed to the new shopping malls, old shopping centers like the one in Hakunila are left to develop more organically. Thereby, these shopping centers have become ideal sites for “place-making” for local residents, who are seeking to express and reproduce their identities and sense of community (Cresswell 2015; Toivola in this publication). While the Hakunila shopping center has been condemned due to its outdated design and infrastructure, the student papers show in versatile ways how it continues to serve as a node of economic activities and social interaction for a diverse group of people. Katja Toivola, for instance, notes that many of the people who use and appropriate the public spaces within and around the shopping center belong to low socioeconomic groups, who generally have fewer resources to participate in the consumerist lifestyle and trendy activities of the more well-off and educated people. The Hakunila shopping center offers these people a relaxed and easily accessible environment in which they can “make an impact”. It is often emphasized that shopping centers offer affordable spaces for a different kind of small entrepreneurship. In many places in the Helsinki metropolitan area, these spaces can be a key to community engagement for immigrants, for example, who can afford to try out their business ideas, such as specialized shops and restaurants, in small shopping centers (eg. Pelkonen & Ovaskainen 2013; Mäenpää 2014; Nelskylä 2016).

It is worthwhile to ask whether the site of the Hakunila shopping center could be developed in a way that would serve its current

users while contributing to the image of Vantaa in a positive way. In the light of the “creative cities” discourse, one could ask what counts as “creativity”, “authenticity” and “diversity”? What is the desired outcome of the encounters of urban dwellers in a liminal space like the Hakunila shopping center and how are human subjects guided towards making responsible choices in such a space? These questions are tied to issues of power discussed by the students and, most specifically, by Aleksandra Borzęcka. The creativity thesis is in many ways tied to the concepts of tolerance and diversity, but in practice some groups of people may be excluded from the discussions and definitions surrounding creativity. Borzęcka shows how mapping different ways of using, experiencing and perceiving the urban space serve as a good starting point for gaining a better understanding of the realities and creative potential of disadvantaged or non-hegemonic groups.

Drawing on similar cases elsewhere, it is also interesting to ask whether and how the Hakunila shopping center could be used to brand the City of Vantaa as a whole. Michael Klein and Andreas Rumpfhuber (2013: 75, 83), for instance, examine the social housing of Vienna as a tool of branding in “a multi-directional process of developing and branding that includes many” and does not limit itself to “the established forms of brand-production”. In the same way, the Hakunila shopping center may have potential to brand and enhance the attractiveness of Vantaa as a whole by emphasizing the versatility and authenticity of its neighborhoods. Shifting the focus from the neighborhood level to the city level makes it possible to consider the current activities in the shopping center as an asset that represents and reinforces the image of Vantaa as a multicultural, tolerant, and inclusive city in accordance with a grand narrative of Finland as a livable and welcoming welfare state that scores high in various international rankings.



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