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A.S. Borysenko

O.M. Beketov National University of Urban Economy in Kharkiv, Ukraine

NON-COMMERCIAL QUALITIES OF ATTRACTIVENESS OF MODERN PUBLIC SHOPPING CENTERS

The article examines non-commercial qualities of the attractiveness of shopping centers in the perception of their visitors. In light of modern change in views on shopping center as a place of public activity, the article proposes a system of qualities associated with the concept of "place" in urban planning studies.

Keywords: shopping mall, architectural environment, placemaking, architecture.

Statement of the problem

Public shopping center is a commercial complex with a significant part of social function in its program, and, accordingly, an expanded public interpretation of its spaces. The structural element that defines and embodies its specifics – the recreational communication space (RCS), also known as "mall" – is fundamental for this type of buildings. It combines separate functions of a center into a single system with pedestrian traffic, plays an important role in the relationship between shopping center and the urban environment and serves as the main carrier of its public functions.

Nowadays, there is a visible shift in views on shopping centers by visitors and designers. The development of e-commerce and rise of specialized trading formats (power centers, hyper-local stores) has presented favorable alternatives to the more traditional architectural solutions in terms of accessibility and convenience of purchase for customers. In light of this competition, architects and developers are pressed for search of new qualities for built shopping centers that would allow them to stay relevant. As it appears, the very feature that defines these complexes, their recreational communication space may be considered as a competitive advantage, providing something that others formats cannot – an articulated atmosphere and experience of visit.

As commercial formats specialize, the designers of built shopping centers increasingly draw on public and social functions, cultural influences and connections to regional context, as well as the mixed-use and integration of commercial complex to urban situations. Therefore, the focus shifts to its environment as a location of public life, and RCS as a guiding shell for the diverse forms of activity inside, accentuating non-commercial qualities of the attractiveness of shopping centers to complement their commercial function. Increased role of non-commercial qualities calls for a corresponding classification of these qualities in order to study their relative importance in the perception of visitors and their impact on

architectural solutions, which the existing studies do not provide.

Analysis of recent research and publications

A number of theoretical works on shopping centers describe important aspects that form the basis of present study:

- modern crisis phenomena in the field of construction of public shopping centers and the search for new qualities and uses of these buildings were described by M. Beyard [1], F. Rao [2], P. van den Berg [3], F. Moccia, P. Guimaraes and others;
- the role of experience that accompanies commercial activity for the attractiveness of commercial spaces for their visitors was studied by S. Bagdare and R. Jain, P. Ballantine, L. Davis and N. Hodges, M. Jones, L. Lucia-Palacios [4] and others;
- classifications of different qualitative characteristics of shopping centers, pertaining to their attractiveness for visitors, were proposed by P. Bloch, K. Wakefield and J. Baker, C. Teller and T. Reutterer, J. Chebat, J. Kunc, O. Berezko [5] and others;
- practices of placemaking has also received ample attention of the researchers of architecture and urban life; among the predecessors of the approach J. Jacobs, R. Gratz and K. Lynch can be named, while active proponents include "Project for Public Places" [6], J. Gehl [7], J. Speck and others;
- methodologic meaning of the concept of "place" was developed, among others, by D. Canter [8], E. Relph [9], Yi-Fu Tuan and S. Smolenska [10];
- previous works by the author that this study continues, include articles on spatial typology [11], shift in views on shopping centers in 2000-2010s [12], study of recreational communication spaces of urban shopping centers, as well as the preceding study of 5 shopping centers of Kharkiv in visitor's perception [13].

Latest studies confirm the trend towards experiential aspects of visitors' interaction with shopping centers in light of search for new qualities of these buildings in

architectural design. However, there appears to be a gap between studies focused on environmental aspects of placemaking in relation to shopping centers and those describing their architectural typology and spatial organization. Therefore, the studies focused on the methodologic base capable of bridging this gap may be of relevance.

Formulation of the goal of the article

The main goal of the research presented in this article is to identify the system of non-commercial qualities of attractiveness of public commercial centers, which would be relevant in light of modern changes in approach to these buildings. In particular, such a system of qualities can be useful for describing and differentiating the environment of public commercial centers of various spatial types in the perception of their visitors.

The following research tasks were set for this goal:

- 1. Formulate a set of attractive qualities of shopping centers in the perception of visitors, related to the concept of "place".
- 2. Test whether the proposed set of criteria provides useful distinction for different spatial types of shopping centers via the content analysis of open source data (reviews on shopping centers).

Presentation of the main material

At the beginning of the 21st century, the research on shopping centers shifts focus to the psychological aspects of a person's stay in the space of public, recreational and social activity [12]. Such studies are aimed at moving away from universal solutions, which meets both the needs of sustainable development of cities and the latest trends in the interpretation of public commercial spaces as an integral part of urban life.

In world practice, the term of "placemaking" is actively used. This concept describes the qualities and principles of activity for the analysis and formation of a "place" as a full-fledged fragment of urban environment via the means of direct and feedback communication with the urban population. To this end, the "Project for Public Places" provides such categories of "place" qualities as "sociability", "access and linkages", "comfort and image" and "uses and activities" [6]. Other models are used with the same general goals and methodology [7] - the creation of a public "place" as part of the urban environment, with the involvement of urban population in solving this problem

This approach is consistent with the latest trends in the search for new forms and concepts of public shopping centers. The most important in this context are the direct and reciprocal influence of visitors and the built environment of a shopping center on each other, the perception of it as a "place" and a part of urban life.

However, the terminological content of the concept of "place" requires further clarification and a clear

theoretical basis for use in research. The basic principles of "place", described by D. Kanter in "Psychology of place" [8] are considered useful for this task. He singled out three main aspects of the perception of environmental characteristics by a person, as those related to the levels of the physical environment, the actions of people and the meanings they provide to it.

This idea was further refined and adapted by S. Smolenska [10] in the context of using the concept of "place" as a unit of description of the environment in people's perception, together with the concept of "situation". "Situation" is an important, basic unit of description for the scenario modeling of the environment, which facilitates the formation of premeditated sequences of events. The category of "place", accordingly, describes the spatial aspect of the environment where they occur.

The categories of "place" and "situation" are both analyzed as having physical, activity and semantic components, which characterize the predominant nature of reflection of their various qualities in human perception. The "place" category appears more suitable for describing the inhabited environment of the shopping center as a phenomenon with significant spatial component.

Determining the qualities of attractive environment of a shopping center is impossible without taking into account people's preferences and needs. Conducting sociological research on the peculiarities of the perception of various qualities of the environment requires a tool appropriate to the task - the classification of qualitative subjective characteristics of the environment in the perception of visitors, which would serve as a grid for comparing reviews.

For this purpose, the existing classifications of characteristics related to the attractiveness of shopping centers for visitors were considered. A number of studies of the 1990s-2010s note the role of subjective, qualitative factors, which until now have not been given enough attention. Grouped around the categories like "atmosphere", "experience", "sense of discovery", etc., such factors describe the results of a person's perception of the environment with phenomenological qualities, and highlight their impact on the overall feeling of the visit. A general trend supported by these findings is an increased share of the entertainment component in the functional program of shopping centers.

The syncretic quality of existing classifications in terms of the selection of parameters, as well as insufficient orientation on architectural spatial properties in the perception of commercial and public spaces as "places", make them inconsistent with the purpose of this study. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate to formulate a system for evaluating the qualities of public commercial spaces, which would take into account the methodological tools for describing "place"

as part of urban life in the perception of people, as well as providing a connection with the spatial organizational typology of shopping centers.

A number of qualities accompanied the development of public commercial spaces, primarily centered on physiological comfort and convenience of their spatial organization, integration and mutual energization of diverse activities, as well as aesthetic appeal of environment. Non-commercial attractiveness may be secondary to the commercial function in the context of the emergence of commercial spaces throughout history, but it is no less important for their development, especially in the situation of combining public and commercial functions in mixed-use spaces of modern multifunctional complexes. In this case, it enriches the social and psychological context of such spaces and makes visiting them something more than a simple commercial necessity for people. The systemic effect of synergy in the work of commercial and non-commercial functions of complex public commercial entities is well known and noted by researchers.

In accordance to the purpose of study, a new classification of attractive qualities of shopping centers was proposed to be grounded in the theoretic concept of place and peculiarities of its perception, as outlined by D. Canter [8], who related them to three levels of physical attributes, activities and associated meanings. Correspondingly, the following categories of attractive non-commercial qualities of shopping centers were distinguished, as "comfortability", "energization of activity" and "aesthetic articulation of the place" (Fig. 1).

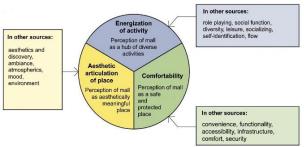


Fig. 1. Proposed classification of non-commercial attractive qualities of shopping centers under three categories with analogues from other classifications

This system of qualities can be mapped to the one proposed by "Project for Public Places" for shopping centers [6], while utilizing a clearer methodologic basis for distinction, as well as to the indicators considered in the study by P. van den Berg [3] as components of the overall "sense of place". Specifically, "place identity" describing semantic component can be related to "aesthetic articulation of the place", "place dependency" that deals with functional use and socializing – to the "energization of activity", and "place attachment" that factors in comfort and accessibility – to the "comfortability".

Based on this classification, a content analysis was conducted. It was based on the material of reviews on 15 successful shopping centers (200 for each) from English-speaking countries (USA, Great Britain, Canada, Australia), among them characteristic examples of their types, as well as centers positioned by researchers and press as promising in light of the latest trends in the development of these objects.

Following shopping centers were selected for analysis (Fig. 2):

- "Mall of America", Bloomington, USA the largest introverted shopping mall in North America;
- "King of Prussia Mall", King of Prussia, USA one of the largest introverted shopping malls in North America, which began its existence during the first wave of construction of indoor shopping centers;
- "West Edmonton Mall", Edmonton, Canada one of the largest introverted malls in North America;
- "intu Metrocentre", Gateshead, UK one of the largest suburban introverted malls in Europe;
- "Eastland Shopping Centre", Melbourne, Australia – one of Australia's largest suburban introverted malls with a developed public function;
- "Toronto Eaton Centre", Toronto, Canada an integrated urban shopping center, which is indicative of its type and noted by critics;
- "Cabot Circus", Bristol, UK an integrated urban shopping center typical of the British regional approach;
- "Trinity Leeds", Leeds, UK an integrated urban shopping center typical of the British regional approach;
- "Victoria Leeds Arcade", Leeds, UK a reconstructed Victorian arcade;
- "Liverpool One", Liverpool, UK integrated urban shopping center with open recreational communication spaces based on the reconstruction of the city block;
- "Coal Drops Yard", London, UK urban shopping center with open recreational communication spaces based on the reconstruction of coal warehouses;
- "The Shops and Restaurants at Hudson Yards", New York, USA – urban shopping center with increased attention to design and active connections with its surroundings;
- "Americana at Brand", Glendale, USA "lifestyle center", which largely plays the role of a community center for the city in which it is located;
- "Faneuil Hall Marketplace", Boston, USA "festival center", indicative of its type, noted by critics;
- "Ghirardelli Square", San Francisco, USA one of the first "festival centers", based on the reconstruction of the chocolate factory of the same name.

In addition, 5 Kharkiv shopping malls with developed recreational communication space were previously analyzed under the same methodology [13]. In order to study the general patterns of perception of visitors to shopping complexes,

the obtained results are analyzed together with new ones.

The methodology of the conducted analysis is similar to that used in the previous study [13]. The reviews are analyzed by the number of mentions of relevant "themes" that relate to one of the three qualities of non-commercial attractiveness, or purely commercial attractiveness, which is introduced by the fourth indicator for comparison.



Fig. 2. Color-coding of analyzed shopping centers

The statistical reliability of the content analysis results was checked using the split-half reliability method. The calculated Pearson correlation coefficient for the results of the analysis is 0.9494 on average for all samples, and has the smallest value of 0.9176, which is acceptable (value above 0.7) and indicates sufficient reliability of the results.

The choice of the content analysis classifier was determined by the hypothesis which it was designed to test - that the selected categories of qualities, grouped according to the concept of the perception of "place", would significant spatial describe characteristics for typology organizational of shopping centers. Accordingly, the main issue to be considered in the context of the received results of the content analysis is the connection between the characteristic forms of the distribution of qualities in the perception of visitors and the spatial types of shopping centers.

Comparison of the results by categories for all centers shows that mentions of the "basic commercial attractiveness" category takes 34.54 to 46.67% of the total number of mentions in the reviews. Exceptions are present in two particular cases. "Americana et Brand" has mentions of "basic commercial attractiveness" only at 30.82%, which is caused by the lack of other developed public spaces in the town where the shopping center is situated. Meanwhile, "Ghirardelli Square" has 48.7% mentions, which is related to the unique commercial offer around which the brand of this shopping center is formed, as evidenced by semantic analysis of reviews. Accordingly, 53 to 65% of feedback on qualities of shopping centers belong to the categories that complement trade with other, non-commercial qualities. This regularity can be traced in the reviews on 18 cases out of 20. The distribution of feedback to three categories of ("comfortability", non-commercial qualities "energization of activity" and "aesthetic articulation of the place") is much more varied and has more differences different objects than "basic commercial attractiveness" (Fig. 3). For the "comfortability"

category, the values range from 8.04 to 32.99%, if the two extreme values are discarded. In the "energization of activities" category, the difference in values lies in range from 12.63 to 33.86% without two extreme values. The "aesthetic articulation of the place" category shows a difference between 8.23 and 31.09% discarding two extreme values.

Thus, the range of the difference of responses in the "basic commercial attractiveness" category for 18 analyzed shopping centers is 12.13%. At the same time, the range of the difference in feedback for the categories of "comfortability", "energization of activity" and "aesthetic articulation of the place" is 24.95, 21.23 and 22.86%, respectively, which indicates a significantly greater differentiation of objects in people's perception according to these qualities. More or less similar picture of the distribution of responses by categories of non-commercial attractive qualities is maintained between shopping centers with similar spatial organization, while leaving room for individual differences of particular solutions. Thus, the specific pattern of the distribution of 53-65% of reviews to these three categories can be considered as highlighting specifics of the positioning, program and spatial logic of a shopping center, demostrating the qualities in which these differences are most noticeable to visitors. This points to the qualities of non-commercial attractiveness of a shopping center as an indicator of its spatial typological solution, with the corresponding architectural and spatial features as an important resource for the embodiment and clarification of typological features of a shopping center.

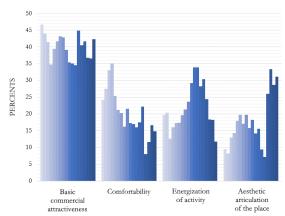


Fig. 3. Range of mentions of different categories of shopping center attractiveness in reviews

Observed regularities of the distribution of preferences by category were considered in greater detail in relation to different types of shopping centers according to their spatial organization, as outlined by previous studies [11]. For this purpose, leaf diagrams of the distribution of qualities were made for each of the studied objects (Fig. 4-6). Their comparison indicates the existence of common patterns between shopping centers of specific types, which confirms the hypothesis

about the significance of different categories of noncommercial attractiveness for the perception of the three main types of shopping centers by spatial organization. First of all, it is worth noting the high level of attention to the "comfortability" category for integrated shopping centers (Fig. 4). This general trend for the type can be attributed to the operation of a well-designed integrated shopping complex as a part of a larger system of urban fabric. Within this system it stands as an integrally designed element with more developed landscaping and equipment, therefore the visitors' expectations are centered on its support of the existing infrastructure of the city and addition of amenities to the public spaces of the urban environment.

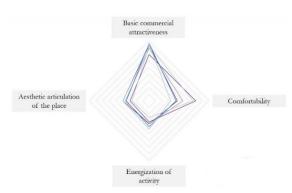


Fig. 4. Characteristic pattern of feedback distribution by category for shopping centers of integrated type

Notable is the attention to the "energization of activity" category in the responses to introverted shopping centers (Fig. 5). This phenomenon is associated with the increased need to draw attention and provide additional diversification of the offer (in addition to the commercial one) in the conditions of competition and less accessibility of a complex of this type, which is designed, first of all, for targeted visits. In addition, this leads to an increase in the time per visit, which is important in the context of the positioning of introverted shopping centers. The steady, visible role in the lifestyle of its visitors, which they strive to occupy, stems from the planned role of early suburban shopping malls in the USA as public centers for their suburbs.

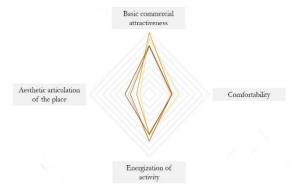


Fig. 5. Characteristic pattern of feedback distribution by category for shopping centers of introverted type

The third significant type of shopping centers is characterised by a visibly higher role of the "aesthetic articulation of the place" category in the reviews, comparable to the indicators by the "energization of activity" category (Fig. 6). At the same time, the "comfortability" category has less weight in the pattern of visitors' preferences. A certain amount of comfortable qualities of introverted schemes in this case are being exchanged for the extroversion of structure, open-air spaces and connection with the context of a specific place. This spatial type was specified by previous research as a "thematic shopping center" according to the main factor affecting its structural and organizational properties.

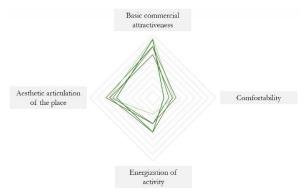


Fig. 6. Characteristic pattern of feedback distribution by category for shopping centers of thematic type

It is worth noting that for the "comfortability" category, the lack of quality leads to negative reviews and results in greater attention to the category. In other categories, the lack of quality only leads to a lack of positive reviews, which translates into a lower total number of reviews per category. Based on this information, "comfortability" appears to be a category with a certain level of quality that needs to be met, while other categories present additional opportunities to refine the way the center is used and add positive attributes that people may not feel are missing but register their presence.

This fact can be interpreted in favor of the existence of a certain hierarchy of properties of the shopping center environment, by analogy with the hierarchy of human needs, which is partially consistent with other studies in this field [5]. In such a case, the satisfaction of basic commercial needs and requirements for the equipment of trade spaces may be the basis for further clarification of the properties of shopping centers.

However, "energization of activity" and "aesthetic articulation of the place" categories do not have an obvious direct interdependence that would allow to put one above the other in most cases. In addition, there are cases with a significant number of negative reviews in the "comfortability" category, which are still positively characterized in general (up to 90% positive reviews).

The presence of such cases warns against using a universal analogy with the pyramid of needs. Based on the obtained results, it is logical to assume that the hierarchical dependence of qualities, if it exists, is different for particular types of shopping centers.

Problems in the "comfortability" category receive a lot of attention because they are easily identified as shortcomings. At the same time, problems in other categories are perceived only as the absence of additional quality, while its presence leads to a more positive feedback. It is fair to assume that the expectations from the way of using shopping centers (for example, perceiving a protected environment as a matter of course) determine the influence of certain qualities on the overall assessment. Therefore, it is possible to anticipate the importance of one or another category of qualities for different types of shopping centers in accordance with the observed patterns of visitor feedback, characteristic of each type.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were formulated as a result of the research:

- 1. Non-commercial qualities of shopping center attractiveness receive particular attention in light of modern shift of views on shopping centers. They can be considered an important part of specialization of built environment of physical complexes, as opposed to other forms of commerce. The study of non-commercial qualities of attractiveness as a factor for architectural solutions of shopping centers requires the selection of an appropriate methodologic basis, as the existing classifications of attractive qualities are insufficiently focused on the architectural spatial properties of place in the perception of visitors.
- 2. The study proposed a new classification of qualities of the attractive environment of a shopping center based on three main aspects of human perception of the characteristics of environment, as put forward by D. Kanter and S. Smolenska (physical environment, people's actions, and the meanings they assign to the environment). According to it, the qualities are grouped under three categories of non-commercial attractiveness of a shopping center: "comfortability" (physical environment), "energization of activity" (people's actions) and "aesthetic articulation of the place" (semantic content).
- 3. A content analysis of the feedback of visitors to 15 shopping centers from English-speaking countries (USA, Great Britain, Canada, Australia) was conducted to test the selected classification of qualities. The shopping centers selected for analysis are characteristic examples of their spatial types. In addition, 5 shopping centers situated in Kharkiv, Ukraine were previously analyzed according to similar methodology. The results

on 20 shopping centers were correlated with their correspondence to 3 main types of commercial complexes by their spatial organization. Comparison between diagrams of the distribution of qualities for each of the studied objects indicates the existence of distinct patterns that confirm the hypothesis about importance of different categories of non-commercial attractiveness for the perception of three main spatial types of shopping centers. In particular, the observed patterns show the increased importance of the "comfortability" category for the urban integrated shopping center, "energization of activity" category for the introverted shopping center, as well as the comparable importance of "energization of activity" and "aesthetic articulation of the place" with a smaller role of "comfortability" in the case of thematic shopping centers.

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Рецензент: д-р архіт, доц. М. Ю. Блінова, Харківський національний університет міського господарства імені О. М. Бекетова, Україна.

Автор: БОРИСЕНКО Артем Сергійович доктор філософії, старший викладач кафедри Харківський національний університет міського господарства імені О. М. Бекетова E-mail — <u>Artem.Borysenko2@kname.edu.ua</u> ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5629-2768

ПОЗАКОМЕРЦІЙНІ ЯКОСТІ АТТРАКТИВНОСТІ СУЧАСНИХ ТОРГІВЕЛЬНО-ГРОМАДСЬКИХ ЦЕНТРІВ

А.С. Борисенко

Харківський національний університет міського господарства ім. О.М. Бекетова, Україна

Статтю присвячено дослідженню позакомерційних якостей аттрактивності сучасних торгівельногромадських центрів у сприйнятті відвідувачів. Позакомерційні якості отримують особливу увагу в світлі сучасної зміни в поглядах на ці споруди, та можуть бути усвідомлені, як важливий аспект спеціалізації побудованого середовища фізичних комплексів на відміну від електронної або гіперлокальної торгівлі. Дослідження позакомерційних якостей привабливості як фактора для архітектурних рішень торгівельногромадських центрів вимагає вибору відповідної методологічної бази, оскільки існуючі класифікації привабливих якостей недостатньо орієнтовані на архітектурно-просторові властивості місця у сприйнятті відвідувачів.

Дослідження пропонує нову класифікацію привабливих якостей середовища торгівельно-громадських центрів на базі концепції «місця» та трьох основних аспектів сприйняття характеристик середовища людьми, висунутих Д. Кантером та розвинених С. Смоленською (фізичне оточення, дії людей та змісти, що вони надають середовищу). Відповідно до неї, привабливі якості було впорядковано за трьома категоріями позакомерційної аттрактивності торгівельно-громадських центрів: «комфортність» (фізичне оточення), «пожвавлення та різноманітність діяльності» (дії людей) та «естетична виразність місця» (зміст). Гіпотеза про важливість обраних категорій для просторових рішень торгівельно-громадських центрів полягає в тому, що вони об'єднують характерні якості, важливі для різних типів просторової організації цих будівель.

На базі розробленої класифікації було проведено контент-аналіз відгуків відвідувачів 15 торгівельногромадських центрів з англомовних країн (США, Великобританії, Канади, Австралії), що ϵ характерними зразками своїх типів або об'єктами, що позиціонуються дослідниками та пресою, як перспективні в світлі останніх тенденцій розвитку торгівельно-громадських центрів. Додатково за даною методологією раніше було проаналізовано 5 харківських торгівельно-громадських центрів. Результати були співвіднесені з основними типами торгівельних комплексів за структурно-організаційною ознакою. Порівняння діаграм розподілу якостей по кожному з досліджуваних об'єктів вказує на існування паттернів, що підтверджують гіпотезу про значущість різних категорій позакомерційної привабливості для сприйняття трьох основних торгівельно-громадських центрів. Зокрема, відмічено підвищену важливість «комфортність» для міського інтегрованого торгівельно-громадського центру, категорії «пожвавлення та різноманітність діяльності» для інтровертованого торгівельно-громадського центру, а також порівняну важливість категорій «пожвавлення та різноманітність діяльності» та «естетична виразність місця» за меншої ролі «комфортності» у випадку тематичних центрів.

Ключові слова: торгівельний центр, архітектурне середовище, творення місця, архітектура.