Socialisation, Community, and Shopping Malls: An Empirical Study at Auckland's St Lukes Mall - Examining the Role the Mall Plays for its Patrons

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<u>Abstract</u>

With the steady growth in the number of shopping malls being constructed, and the high level of media attention they have been receiving, this exploratory study investigated the role shopping centres play for their patrons and conceptualized the findings via both modernist and postmodernist analyses. A variety of methods were used: surveys, structured interviews, extended open interviews, and photographic observation. The survey and interview information was analysed for regularities and themes. The St Lukes mall, for over half of its patrons, did serve a social role as a site for meeting people and "hanging out". However, St Lukes is a very middle class mall - therefore questions were raised as to whether the poor are able to relate the same way to 'their' malls. Cultural, social and economic factors all appeared to underlie mall patronage.

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Introduction

The principal objective of this thesis is to investigate and assess the sociality and community that have developed in and around shopping malls.

The sociality of malls has been studied before. Hanson and Clark (1995) discussed the mall as a privately owned big-business community area; others such as Shields (1992) discuss the mall as a surrogate town square supporting new forms of urban "tribalism": "Consumption, an ambivalent and multi-faceted activity, takes on more and more social functions as a form of sociality. This serves in the reconstruction and realignment of community around the tactility of the crowd practices and tribal ethos of the new urban spaces of consumption" (p. 111). But little attention has been given to the subjective aspect of the consumer's experience of the mall. I aim to correct this shortcoming.

The information was gathered from Auckland's St Lukes mall. My research was undertaken with the cooperation of the St Lukes Group. The St Lukes Group is New Zealand's largest mall company (at the time of this study), and the St Lukes mall is the largest mall in New Zealand. For this reason it was my preferred choice as a site for my research. I wanted to try to come as close as possible to capturing what has been happening in the USA with the growth of the supermalls - which will inevitably arrive here: "Greame and Richard Farr, of ProMall Shopping Centres, have announced plans for 16 out-of-town 'supermalls' all over New Zealand, offering dozens of chain stores, cafes, cinemas, and thousands upon thousands of carparks" (Wilson, 1996).

Such shifts in consumption and the public use of space do threaten the 'traditional' forms of community, leaving many town squares, once a hive of activity, resembling a Wild West ghost town. Acknowledging that, I nevertheless debate whether or not the shopping mall will cause the extinction of localized sociality: will it not simply be transformed, surviving in a new guise?

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Chapter 1 includes a broad review of the literature in the field of consumption. This task reveals how current writings in the field of consumption ignore the individual subjectivities at work in sites of consumption, and the social influences consumption has in shaping community. The use of fieldwork in this thesis serves to correct this bias. Chapter 2 details the methods used. Fieldwork was the central tool. This chapter discusses the problems and the overall process. The chapter is the story of my three weeks' fieldwork in the mall. Chapter 3 then details my findings. These are then listed in preparation for discussion and analysis, which is undertaken in Chapters 4 and 5.

The analysis begins in Chapter 4 by examining 'the role the mall plays for its patrons'. The purpose of this is to deduce whether the term 'community' still has relevance in the contemporary setting. The chapter also examines the level of enjoyment and sense of value mall users are deriving from their visits, and then sets this against some of the malls competitors for the public's time and money. This is useful as it allows for an assessment of 'what is drawing people into the malls'. Finally, in the light of my fieldwork information, I come to an assessment of the future of mall development.

Chapter 5, 'Modernity or postmodernity, alienation or liberation within the shopping mall?', debates the extent of modernity and postmodernity in the mall and how this affects the individual and shapes community. I believe that this is a topic deserving of attention, as it is disputed whether mall development is the "death knell for personalized shopping, community and the small business person" (Legat, 1988); or if "Shopping malls are the real postmodern sites of happy consciousness. Not in the old Hegalian sense of a reconciled dialectic of reason, but happy consciousness, now in the sense of the virtual self. A whole seductive moment, therefore, between a willed abandonment of life and a restless search for satisfaction in the seduction of holograms" (Kroker and Cook, 1989. Cited, Langman, 1992:64-5). This thesis will, I hope, go some way towards settling such contentions.

There are gaps which I am aware of and acknowledge. Perhaps the most obvious criticism could be directed at my basing my argument on a sample consisting exclusively of mall shoppers. However, malls with their huge anchor stores are a shopping destination now hard to avoid, and I feel it is reasonable to say that a representative sample of mall users is nowadays effectively equivalent to a representative sample of the population as a whole.

CHAPTER ONE

Literature review

Writings in the field of consumption are neither new nor scarce. I propose to explore these writings in a review spanning an eclectic group of disciplines and subdisciplines: economics, marketing, cultural studies, anthropology, and social geography. I will discuss the major theorists of the cultural aspects of consumption and how they relate to each other.

My own position in relation to cultural aspects of consumption will be presented through the course of my review. Most of the literature I shall cover has been published since 1980, though reference is made to some 'DWEMs' (Dead White European Males) of social theory, namely Marx, Williams, and Veblen. It will become apparent through the course of this review that the neglect of certain aspects by other commentators has influenced me in the direction and treatment of my topic. Broadly speaking, the current literature ignores, firstly, the individual in the consumption process and in relation to goods; and, secondly, the psychological and social influences consumption has in shaping community. This is because much of the literature in this field is preoccupied with the environmental, the geographical, and the economic.

I have categorized the literature into four broad areas: firstly, that which examines consumption as part of the larger capitalist project; secondly, those who examine consumption for its semiotic importance; thirdly, for the power it holds in forming a sense of sociality; and finally, as a lifestyle forming and reinforcing activity. These areas are not mutually exclusive and various ideas can be seen to be overlaping.

Consumption as part of capitalism

Marxism examines consumption in the context of the economic system. Crucial to Marx's observations and subsequent conclusions is the way in which he sets consumption against the capitalist mode of production. It is the means of production - capital - that, for Marx, sets capitalism aside from other modes of production. His attention is centred on the processes associated with the production of goods for consumption, rather than consumption per se. Yet what Marx has to say on commodities and consumption is still very useful. Bocock explains this in a clear and concise manner: "A commodity was defined by Marx as a product that had not been manufactured for direct use and consumption, but for sale in the market. This contrasted with the situation which had occurred in feudal agricultural forms of production, for example, where goods were produced typically for immediate consumption and use, not for sale for profits in the market place" (1993: 35-6).

It is the means of production that for Marx is problematic, as this includes not just the production of material goods, but also the relationships between producers. In the capitalist mode of production, for instance, the capitalist controls both the forces of production and the distribution of the product. The fact that neither the product nor the tools for production belong to the workers, and that the workers are left with no choice but to purchase the goods they or their co-workers produced, is for Marx, a negative aspect of capitalism that was not present in earlier modes of production. This, Marx argues, produces alienation. Consumption has been reduced to a animal level where "Under the conditions of work in industrial capitalism, workers come to invest themselves in the most basic aspects of biological consumption and think that this is where they are being most fully human, not in their work" (Bocock, 1994: 47). The point is that in Marx's time all workers could do was subsist (hence, consumption reduced to a anaimal level), they could not afford to buy their own goods or those of their co-workers.

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However, the type of post-war capitalism the West has experienced was never apprehended by Marx: the growth of the middle classes, coinciding with a huge emphasis on buy! buy! buy! A sense of personal creative social identity can now be brought about depending on how people perceive themselves or want to be perceive by others. However, this is not to say that alienation is a redundant concept. It is not. Workers continue to be alienated and exploited, hired and fired, and still remain distanced from the machinery or other equipment they work with and from the products they produce.

Writing in the Marxist tradition, Raymond Williams (1981) examines the relationship between base and superstructure. In this case he applies his analysis to the field of art. Interesting parallels, however, can be drawn in relation to the analysis of shopping malls, and Williams's ideas can be seen influencing such theorists as Jameson, Harvey, and Baudrillard whose theories of modernity and postmodernity are critical in my work. Art, we are informed, "reflects" the socio-economic structure of the society within which it is produced. Williams believes that in the capitalist era "There is a qualitative change from earlier socio-cultural relations, even within the earlier market phases... cultural production is now centrally sited within the corporate market." (Williams, 1981:53). He cites advertising as a classic example of this in the twentieth century, when advertising agencies became an institution governed by the organized market, seeming to channel the direction cultural production (ie. art) took. The relevance of this to my thesis is in the way in which Williams examines technology as altering social relations, basic perceptions of reality, and scale and form of society; in other words, the way in which new inventions coincide with new needs. For instance, developments in the construction industry led to the development of new social spaces, of which the shopping mall is an example: new retailing practices in turn created new social spaces and social practices within the mall space.

Flaws can be found in Marxist analyses of consumer capitalism. In particular, it is difficult to apply Marxism to the contemporary modern world, as society has become more internationalized and individualized than Marx ever could have imagined. His

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theories never allowed for the massive growth of the middle classes, and his thoughts on state intervention, social welfare and consensus seem relics of the past (Lee, 1993). Jameson and Harvey, while maintaining a Marxist position, go some way to correct this.

Jameson (1984) is a Marxist who is very interested in postmodernity as a historical phenomenon. He stresses the continuities between the contemporary 'postmodern' world and modernity. Jameson asserts that the new type of society we are now witnessing, namely postmodernity, no longer obeys the laws of classical capitalism. Postmodernity is characterized by the transition from class based politics to identity politics, but it is also recognized for its heightened consumption, mechanization, media technology, information technology, and computerization. However, Jameson questions whether or not such transformations are new or a continuation of capitalism.

Jameson, then, recognizes new, more invisible forms of alienation that postmodern capitalism imposes upon the individual. Postmodernism, Jameson warns, marks ".. the end for example of style, in the sense of the unique and the personal, the end of the distinctive individual brushstroke (as symbolized by the emergent primacy of mechanical reproduction)" (Jameson, 1981:61). Architecture, for Jameson, symbolizes the primacy of mechanical reproduction and he uses this to illustrate the continuation of modernist domination within the postmodern. As the ownership base of skyrises becomes smaller and smaller due to the increased growth of multinational corporations, architecture becomes increasingly homogenized. This, for Jameson, marks a serious problem, as no longer can the individual map urban space - meaning, people are unable to place themselves individually or collectively within the new decentred communication networks of capitalism and its local, national and international class realities (Best and Kellner, 1991:188). With relationships now based on difference, Jameson argues that this places us in a position where 'true consciousness' (in the Marxist sense) can no longer be achieved, as class interests have become divided. Thus, rather than postmodernism, his thesis argues that what we are in fact experiencing is the cultural logic of late capitalism. Accordingly he argues that different groups should unite against the common enemy, the

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enemy being multinational corporate capitalism. However, complications arise, as the commercial power base is dispersed throughout the whole social system and culture with its many levels and centres of power.

Harvey's (1989) work is very similar to that of Jameson. Both explain postmodernism as a result of capitalism. However, Harvey accounts for postmodernism's emergence as a development in the capitalist mode of production which he calls "Flexible Accumulation". Flexible Accumulation, or what could otherwise be called 'specialization', is a post-Fordist phenomenon. When industry moved from assembly-line mass production to batch production, a greater variety of products could be produced, modified, and changed. For the consumer, this left a greater range of consumable items to choose from. In relation to advertising, an even greater investment was needed to market and maintain the new cornucopia of products.

Thus, Harvey is inserting a spatial analysis of postmodernism into basic Marxist theory of class relations. He formulates a relationship between the social space and domination. He writes: "... command over spaces and time is a crucial element in any search for profit... conversely, command of time and space can be converted back into command over money." (Harvey, 1989:226). Meaning, the pursuit of profit can be heightened through gaining control of people's space and time: this can be seen being played out as corporations try to dominate marketing networks and control space. For Harvey, this is where inequalities emerge, and what class struggle hinges on - the ownership of space - as opposed to Jameson who bases inequalities upon the inability of the individual to map social space. Harvey suggests that we have actually been experiencing time and space 'compression' over the last two decades, which has had a disruptive and disorientating impact on political and economic practices. The struggle for time and space has inevitably flowed into the arena of consumption, and its effects have been twofold: mobilization of consumable items to the masses, and a new emphasis placed on the consumption of services, incuding not only health and education but also entertainment and commercial promotions. Such developments Harvey directly links to the growth in

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the "image-building" trade, which has become an arena for intense inter-firm competition. Investments in television production, sponsorship of arts, 'ecological responsibilty', new buildings etc., are now as important as investments in new plant and machinery. "The image serves to establish identity in the market place" (Harvey, 1989: 288).

Acceleration in turnover, increases in marketing campaigns, new buildings set around company image and identity, and increases in exchange and consumption all come as a consequence of the above developments, and we can see how these link to Jameson's view of postmodernism and its shallowness. However, Harvey, unlike Jameson, observes a response from big-business (focused towards the individual) to time and space compression. "The revival of interest in basic institutions (such as the family and community), and the search for historical roots are all signs of a search for more secure moorings and longer lasting values in a shifting world" (Harvey, 1989: 292). This has led to the active production of spaces with special qualities, cities and corporations must now try to forge distinctive images for themselves - to create an atmosphere of place and tradition with the intention of luring the `right sort' of patron. However, here also lies a central paradox of postmodernism: heightened inter-place competition should work to reverse homogeneity of international exchange. But, through the way this competition opens the gates for "systems of accumulation", companies end up producing from proven formulas and moulds, and thus we are left with almost identical places from city to city.

Despite both Jameson's and Harvey's political awareness, their attempts to blend postmodern theory with a Marxist analysis is problematic. Jameson's adoption of a implosion of the subject-object dialectic, Best and Kellner write, "... results in the demise of critical subjectivity and undermines a Marxian theory of praxis and belief in the practical efficacy of the subject" (1991:192). With respect to Harvey, his insertion of a spatial analysis into Marxist theory fails to produce as concise a theory of capitalist domination as Marxism does. As Sack comments, ".. its ['The Condition of

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Postmodernity'] reliance on Marxist interpretations of modernity and on the effects of flexible accumulation on postmodernity situates the origins of this movement (neo-Marxism) in a vulnerable and narrow context." (Sack, 1992:214).

Consumption and the symbolic

An alternative to the Marxist paradigm can be found in the work of Thorstein Veblen, writing in 1899. Veblen was a American social critic who developed an economic sociology of capitalism, arguing that, within the American capitalist system, the 'leisure class' (or dominant class) engaged in a 'life-style' of "conspicuous consumption" - which by its nature consisted of ostentatious waste and idleness. Thus we see a theory that is moving from the economic rationale involved in buying, and similarly the physiological need for products, to focus instead on the social and symbolic value they hold.

Mason (1981) draws heavily upon Veblenian theory and accordingly views consumer choices as resting upon more than the mere utility they offer to the buyer. For instance, he tells us that "The great majority of purchases are made for the direct, personal satisfaction that product consumption offers to the buyer and utility measurement is essentially a self centred process in which the personal preferences of the individual or buying group are alone responsible for the decision to buy." (p. vii). He then details the central tenets of Veblen's theory. Veblen saw 'pre-capitalist' society as being free of competition between members within the group - instead it was between the group and its enemies. As society became increasingly industrialized 'predatory warfare' decreased; therefore there was less opportunity to display status through physical aggression. Ostentatious displays of wealth and the individualized accumulation of capital were just a new form of aggression and competition, Veblen believed.

This is where Veblen's theory of capital draws a stark contrast with Marxism, "The development of affluent, mass consumption over the last twenty years has provided ample evidence that, contrary to many expectations, conspicuous economic displays have

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neither disappeared nor become irrelevant in consumer eyes but have for the most part been modified and used as an important element in demand management." (Mason, 1981:13).

However, problems can be found with Veblen's theoretical framework work, he was writing at a time when the dominant class was very wealthy. There was much inherited wealth on which the rich could live 'decadent' lifestyles from family business dividends, without having to do a days work in their entire lives. Such wealth is no longer maintained or gained as easily, plus the middle classes (the largest class) have come to live a life of similar (although by no means equalled) waste and consumption. Lee (1993) also recognizes this. He describes the modern equivalent of these pre-modern displays of wealth, but which come after the emergence of the 'massmarket' (modernism): "... the development of a mass-production economy, capitalism is actively required to endorse and foster a generally hedonistic, spendthrift and throw-away ethic in order to operationalise a greater acceleration of commodity and value turnovers that is implied in the principle of mass consumption" (Lee, 1993:106).

I will now discuss Baudrillard. He is included under the umbrella of 'consumption and the symbolic' because, like Veblen, he provides an interesting and challenging post Marxist analysis of signs, objects and codes and together they acknowledge the continuities between pre-modern and modern cultural formations. The central difference is that Baudrillard acknowledges the postmodern. Desires in the postmodern, according to Baudrillard, now pivot on the 'unreal'. As Sack comments in relation to Baudrillard, "What is desired in postmodern consumerism is not the 'real' chocolate, the 'real' car, or house and furniture, which is consumed. Rather these 'real' things are substitutes; the desires they purport to satisfy are symbolic desires, not biologically given needs unmediated by cultural symbolism" (1992:113). Baudrillard correlates these developments of desires to the creation of new forms of information, knowledge and technologies. Commodities are now valued, it is argued, by the way they confer prestige and signify social status and power

However, Baudrillard believes that mass media and consumer society have left the individual in a dubious position. Consumers have "... become bored and resentful of their constant attempts to solicit them to buy, consume, work, vote, register an opinion, or participate in social life..." (Best and Kellner, 1991:121). What this means is that the social disappears, and, linking back to industrialism where activities must be 'meaningful', "distinctions then implode between classes, political ideologies, cultural forms, and between media and semiurgy and the real itself..." (ibid: 121).

The pursuit of emotional gratification is not unique to either postmodernism or Western society, but what is unique to postmodernism is the way the appearance of gratification spectacles manage to mask a deeper powerlessness, despite the fact that the enactment of these activities give 'us' an all empowering feeling. This is perhaps best illustrated with Baudrillard's example of flicking a light switch: this may seem to the user a Godlike act - 'Let there be light' but what the user does not realise is that the light bulb going-on is reliant on a chain of dependencies. "In this way the habitus of amusement society provides experiences of dominations and control over technologies which most individuals little understand or control but which seemingly empower the user" (Langman, 1992:63-4) This for Baudrillard is the postmodern system of domination, as opposed to Marx who saw it as being based on capitalism and exploitation within the work force.

Problems can be found with Baudrillard's work on a number of fronts. For instance, his homogenizing use of 'we': the fact is that simply not all people can afford to roam the postmodern landscape constructing 'fragmented images' about themselves. It is when considering these sorts of issues that we can see Baudrillard's work as under-theorized and under-contextualized. As Kellner and Best (1991) comment: "He [Baudrillard] fails to see, however, the homeless, the poor, racism, sexism, people dying of AIDS, oppressed immigrants, and fails to relate any of the phenomena observed to the vicissitudes of capitalism..." (p.138). Similarly Baudrillard's concept of hyper-reality and

simulacra is that of an idealist in 'fantasy land'. He simply skims the surface of appearance, failing to examine environments, and never taking time to look at what lies behind the bright neon lights or in the dark alleyways. This gives his work a vulgar, and surely to some minorities, an insulting ring. (For instance, his belief that Michael Jackson can stand as a role model of fame, wealth and liberation for all blacks). His theorisation of the blurring of the real stands as a major paradox within his work. Despite his elaborate attempts to obscure reality and deny its existence, the mere fact that he interacts with the term reveales him, in my opinion, as a confused sceptic. This is perhaps best illustrated in his four stages of simulation. "First, he [Baudrillard] says, the image is a reflection of a basic 'reality'; second, 'it masks and perverts a basic reality'; third 'it masks the absence of a basic reality'; fourth, it 'bears no relation to any reality whatever'. Note that reality is assumed in each of these three stages" (Sack, 1992: 170).

Bocock (1993) following Baudrillard, also believes that the mass consumption of signs typifies postmodernism. He argues that the old hierarchical distinctions of modernism are no longer apt to contemporary society as, within the postmodern era, lifestyles and consumer choices are blurred - consumers, for instance, enter McDonalds drive-throughs in their BMWs. Similarly, people can now base how they would like to live, or do live, on consumer lifestyle choices as opposed to occupational vocations. Siding with Baudrillard, Bocock seconds the argument that Marx's analysis of desires and capitalism has been 'stone-aged' by the new changes within capitalism - changes that Baudrillard calls the 'autonomy of the sign' and what Bocock refers to as the 'symbolic'.

A theorist who recognizes the pertinence of the symbolic, yet is resilient to the void of 'post-modernism' is Bourdieu (1979). Playing on the double meaning of the word distinction, Bourdieu uses it as both a category (for instance 'working class'/'middle class'/'upper class') and as a social term (for example 'a cultured person', a 'true gentleman'etc.). His book seeks to illustrate the correlation between the use of an array of consumables and class position. With great sophistication we are shown how cultural and economic capital work together to maintain the dominant group. "Economic power

is first and foremost a power to keep economic necessity at arms length. This is why it universally asserts itself by the destruction of riches, conspicuous consumption, squandering, and every form of gratuitous luxury" (Bourdieu, 1979:57).

Where Bourdieu falls short is in the way his model fails to take into account the growth of the "cultural industries", which is causing us to see, if anything, more of a delegitimization of dominant culture than an affirmation. One can now buy cheap mass-produced copies of even the most exclusive merchandise, and "Even the most disadvantaged have demonstrated an ability to steal the opportunity for pleasure in the 'clever art' of appropriation; an invasive 'poaching' (de Certeau, 1984: 174) of luxurious and 'climatized' environments (air conditioned and heated, humidified and dehumidified until just right) through vicarious observation, gratuitous flanerie and window shopping, or cheap luxury" (Shields, 1992:12-3).

Rather than viewing consumption simply as a class based, class forming, and class maintaining activity, as the theories of semiotics do, I believe our analysis has to be able to step beyond these bounds and acknowledge that more abstract forms of class resistance and negotiation exist. The mere fact that individuals gather in department stores, malls and super-markets in order to try to fulfil their needs, wants and desires and in the process form a sense of solidarity and community, suggests to me that more than class formation is going on. Theories that acknowledge the social importance of consumption should allow us to theorise such practices.

The theories of consumption and capitalism, and consumption and the symbolic tend to be written from a 'pure' social scientific perspective. Writing on consumption, lifestyle and sociality, to which my review now turns, represent a shift to consumption in a 'applied' form.

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Consumption and the social

Another fruitful example of a critical encounter with Marx is George Simmel (1858-1918). Simmel viewed society as a web of social interaction between people. He rested his analysis on the combination of two concepts - "relation" and "function". He believed that society was a function set in relations between individuals and individual minds. Society existed wherever this interaction occurred, and through this interaction a sense of unity was formed. Simmel stressed the importance and power of interaction (this offers an interesting contrast in relation to Marx's theory of labour and alienation). A prerequisite of Marx's theory, Simmel claims, is the consent of subordinates. This relates to Simmel's views on the workplace, viewing such sites as providing the function of social exchange. "The individual can enter society only by foregoing some of his individuality and exchanging it for the generality demanded by the role. At the one extreme are individuals giving up so little of their individuality that they can hardly function in social life; at the other are individuals in whom the whole tone of the total personality has disappeared, being merged into the function to such a degree that almost all traces of individuality have disappeared." (Martindale, 1960: 239). Here rest the largest problem for Simmel - how does the individual maintain a sense of autonomy in the face of overwhelming social forces.

Shields (1992) argues that the marketplace plays a historically significant role in providing a meeting-place for social exchange. He draws on Simmel (1950) and his theory on sociations to examine consumption as social exchange that serves to channel, communicate and actualize micro-power relations. For instance, "Even when not characterized by personal relationships of patronage of a store over long periods of time by customers, shopping for goods remains a social activity built around social exchange as well as simple commodity exchange" (p. 102). Discussing the transitions that have occurred in the shopping space, Shields says that a 'mutation' has occurred veering the shopping experience away from convenience and, instead, creating a "texture" and character that draws men to come and 'check-out' the crowds and women to come and

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see what is in style' (Shields, 1992). The motivating stimuli's behind these changes, Shields believes, is the slow change-over as private property enters public space and as a consequence comes to dominate its social roles. Stressing the significance of this, Shields goes so far as to say - "So essential is social centrality to commercial success that social centrality is cultivated by shopping centres." (p. 105).

Gronmo and Lavik (1988), similarly, examine consumption set in the social. They provide an analysis in terms of consumer activities, rather than consumer choices which are the focus for commentators like Bourdieu. Gronmo and Lavik view social interaction as an important facet of human activity. To support this they detail the way we interact with neighbours, friends, family members and colleagues. There use of the term 'consumption' is far from immediate. This is evident in an example they provide by which food products are bought which later bring family and friends together when they are put on the table. To support their hypotheses, Gronmo and Lavik rely heavily on consumer statistical information. From this they deduce three consumer groups: "economic consumers", "personalizing consumers" and "apathetic consumers". It is the "personalizing consumers", we are told, who shop mostly for the social interaction it provides. Therefore, the need for social interaction is an important aspect for quarter to one-third of all consumers, they conclude. Also of interest is the way they break down their categories into age and gender groups. The 26 to 35 age bracket, for instance, mostly shop as a family unit. And "Consumers with much shopping responsibility, typically women, often combine their shopping with child care and thus interact rather extensively with children... Thus, compared to women, men seem to be less involved in instrumental interaction with children and more involved in expressive interaction with other family members" (P. 117-8).

Another theorist examining consumption set in the social is Cross (1993), but he applies a more sophisticated analysis than that of Gronmo and Lavik. In his book Cross employs a broad historical analysis that links the shifts in the working week to the rise of consumption and leisure. Capitalism, he argues, has focused on producing unlimited

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goods rather than leisure, which means a culture of work and spend: hence our spare time is spent consuming, and thus a sociality is formed around this ethos. Cross's main focus is on the social importance of sports activities and holiday camps as opposed to the marketplace, but reviews some interesting ideas. For instance, Cross believes the key to the success of consumer capitalism this century lies in the delivering of goods that satisfy and expand peoples longings: "By the 1970s, not only did Americans spend as much as four times as many hours shopping as did Europeans, but Americans devoted far more space to shopping malls and other retail commercial activity. The distinction between leisure and consumption for many Americans had disappeared as time and money had become one." (Cross, 1993:192). Thus, the distinction between leisure and consumption, for many, has dissolved ('I shop therefore I am'), and as such many leisure needs are now serviced within the mall.

Big Fresh in Mt Wellington, Perkins (1993) tells the reader, is a store that actively markets itself around the social. Through competitive prices and consumer-focused activities - such as a pizza bar, chicken bar, coffee club and shop, a children's corner that hosts a large ferris wheel that is free to all children whose parents and guardians patronise the store, Roger Rooster and Rabbit also roaming the premises, and live entertainment provided from a stage high in the roof area - this store has made shopping a social and enjoyable activity, creating loyal patrons who choose this store above others in their catchment areas.

Similarly, Irving and Duffy (1987) discuss the Edmonton Mall in Canada (the largest mall in the world). The Edmonton mall has attempted to create itself as a tourist destination by making shopping an adventure: "The West Edmonton Mall has taken the indoor mall idea one step further by providing not only what could be described as a shoppers' paradise but also an amusement park, zoo and tropical garden, while at the same time putting the city on the North American tourist map... What they come to see is a C$1 billion, mile-long, two-level marble and brass concourse containing 836 stores, 110

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eating establishments (including three Mcdonalds), 11 major department stores, 34 movie theatres and a huge indoor water park" (Irving and Duffy, 1987: 29).

Yet, while the mall appears on the outside as an all inclusive socially conducive space, Agee (1993) in his New Zealand article "Malls Reflect New Distance Between our Haves and Have-Nots" looks beyond the facades concealed in the decor of the mall. As he comments, although retailers are enjoying record highs, unemployment is also peaking on a record high. This is revealed in the different clientele various malls are coming to cater for and the varying success they are enjoying in consequnce. Agee cites 277 Broadway, a new mall catering for the middle-upper classes with in-house stores such as Country Road, Columbia Sports-wear, Timberland, Politik, Thornton and Hall, Andrea Biani and Saxs. This mall is booming as the "affluent.. are coming back to the marketplace" (p. 51). However, a contrasting example, the Royal Oaks, mall designed and orientated to cater for the middle-lower classes with Pak n' Save as its anchor, is struggling to survive, because, it is hypothesized, its target market no longer has the disposable income to support and sustain it.

However, theories of consumption and socialisation fail to ask: what are the relationships between the various consumer groups? How do they feel about the consumption process? Is it compatible with their lifestyles? What role do sites of consumption play in consumers' lives? And how do experiences differ when analysed across class, ethnicity, and gender distinctions. Although statistical analyses, provided by the likes of Gronmo and Lavik (1988), are useful, without the humanistic angle such issues as these become lost in equations and data analysis.

Consumption as lifestyle

Shields (1992) believes the mesh of lifestyle and consumption is no longer related to class, gender, regional and generational identities, but rather represents the emergence of new "identifications". These views become apparent in his essay "Spaces for the Subject

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of Consumption" in which he argues that consumption cultures are new 'identifications' not to be confused with class, regional and generation identities. Defining his use of the term 'lifestyle', Shields writes: "... 'lifestyles' will be treated less as a macro-social phenomena of marketing lore and more as the expansion of continuous social change and the development of unreified, affective groupings... which emerge through the medium of shared symbolic codes of stylized behaviour, adornment, taste and habitus" (Shields, 1992:14). Thus, consumption is a social and socially solidifying experience that can be confirmed through a number of localities: the shopping mall is such a site, in which membership of a shopping fraternity is affirmed as 'we' consume and enact 'our' lifestyle choice. As Shields comments, "Leisure forms such as browsing and sampling, and non-rational, spontaneous purchases from which retail capital benefits and increases its socio-economic importance, provide a measure of circumstantial evidence for this culture of consumption which transcends its many transient lifestyles" (1992: 17).

This is supported by Sack (1992) who asserts: "But being in a world of strangers, with the fear and even terror of not belonging, is a particularly modern facet of social relations; it pertains to any class or segment of our society and underlies practically every expression of mass consumption. Being in a world of strangers is, then, a common thread of modern social relations that commodities weave together in producing context or place" (p. 111). Sack applies a geographical analysis to the realm of the social. His book demonstrates how places are defined by the ways in which they bring together and transform social relations, meaning and nature. Sack examines the consumer world of shopping malls and department stores to show how they idealize products, disorientate consumers, and struggle for 'authenticity'. He also incorporates Baudrillard's and Harvey's ideas to discuss the tensions of modernity and postmodernity within 'landscapes of consumption' and their effects on consumption-based lifestyles. Drawing on Harvey he argues that world culture is deeply intertwined with world consumption and advertising. Consumption in the 'modern' world is unavoidable, thus we all jointly play a part in transforming the world. Refering to the work of Baudrillard, Sack debates the degree of authenticity that landscapes of consumption and their spectacles provide.

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On the one hand they are mystifying, entertaining, and enticing; and on the other, inauthentic spaces that distort nature, meaning, and social relations.

Exploring further the power of the shopping spectacle is Nixon (1992). Nixon examines how retailers interface shopping and leisure, revolving consumption around lifestyle. One can observe the strong links between such an approach and the work of Bourdieu and his writings on habitus. Nixon believes that a 'visual revolution has occurred in retailing, new importance is placed on visual pleasure and seduction'. Less emphasis is placed on class in its socio-economic definition: marketers are now, Nixon argues, involved in profiling consumers by their lifestyles and values. "The effect has been, then, to focus greater attention within, for example, ad campaigns, on getting the tone and atmosphere of the address right for the target segment or lifestyle group... Within retailing, then, design has occupied an important role within part of this process at the level of marketing out the retail address to the aimed-for consumer segment" (Nixon, 1992:157).

Hetherington (1992) examines the Stonehenge festivals as an instance of a consumption-based lifestyle. "Consumption under these conditions becomes an enactment of lifestyle... Stonehenge, providing the dramaturgical stage for these liminal practices... identity and solidarity are held together and as a means of distanciating the proponents of such a lifestyle from the routine and mundane of everyday life" (Hetherington, 1992:87). He believes that consumption-based lifestyle identity formation is dependent on two processes: deregulation through modernization, and the breakdown of traditional forms of identity - namely ethnicity, class, and gender which causes people to seek out new sociations based on political, cultural, sexual, religious and therapeutic identities (note the strong links to the theories of Harvey and Baudrillard). However, it is consumption, we are told, that plays the key role in holding these lifestyles together. Hetherington then extends his analysis of marginal lifestyles of consumption to the mainstream, writing, "Consumption in this case is more than just shopping, it is a significant feature that helps provide the stability while a new lifestyle is being created" (1992:97).

Paterson (1991), 'addressing product trends of the 90s', argues that the "age wave", increasing ethnic diversity, changing lifestyles, and work patterns are all contributing factors to the changing face of America. He states that in more than two-thirds of married households both partners work. He argues for a diversity in business that caters for consumers' changing lifestyles - "New products will have to respond to the evolving population." (p. 10). We can observe here an important connection between lifestyles and consumption.

In his report on Recreation in New Zealand to the Hon. Mike Moore, then Minister of Recreation and Sport, Laidler (1985) comes to a position that corresponds to that of Paterson's (1991). Laidler argues, with support from a number of studies, that recreation in New Zealand has an individual lifestyle focus. The reasons for this, he claims, are New Zealanders' varying age, sex, ethnicity, and available time. He then discusses future trends: "The nature of recreation is continually changing, primarily in response to changing social and economic conditions and the demand of consumers" (p. 15). One interesting growth sector he notes is commercialized recreation, which takes many forms - including safari parks, video arcades, cinema etc.. In conclusion, Laidler reports that the New Zealand leisure industry is large and is growing, and as a consequence is an important part of the New Zealand economy.

However, there are major contradictions within lifestyle-focused theories of consumption. On the one hand consumerism transcends the modernistic power dynamics of class, gender, and ethnicity, yet on the other it is a medium for "micro-power" relations. To assume that a sociality is being formed through a shared shopping fraternity is naive, I believe, as it is money that determines the psychological gratification derived from the experience, accessibility to and within the mall, and, as Agee (1987) stated: what mall you choose to patronise and to engage in lifestyle identity-formation.

Summary

This chapter has been designed to set the stage for the chapters which follow. Four positions in relation to consumption and its effect on individual and social relations have been discussed. Differences do occur in the material, whether it be through examining consumption as alienating and disorientating, as the Marxist paradigm insists; identity-maintaining as the Veblenian does; or socially solidifying as the work of Simmel argues; and finally, the view of consumption as reflecting individual's lifestyles.

For the present study, a qualitative empirical approach has been chosen as being the most appropriate method of investigation (this will be detailed in the following chapter). This is because this essay is exploratory in nature, exploring the role the shopping mall plays in people's lives, and whether they are a site of liberation and group formation or a alienating and disorientating space.

The various dimensions of consumption theory discussed above will provide a focus for interview results, survey findings, and photographic observations. I am interested in the more social aspects of the mall: why people go to the mall; their sense of community within the mall; whether or not they enjoy the mall space; and its accessibility to them. Hence, strongly influencing the direction and thoughts of my thesis are Jameson, Harvey, Baudrillard, and Shields - who retain a politically thoughtful, individually based, and socially aware focus on the work.

CHAPTER TWO

The research process

Chapter 2 is designed to clarify the methodological premises this project is built on. Three areas will be covered: firstly, a brief descriptive methodological review; secondly a discussion of the planning of the research and methodological techniques I incorporated in my research design; and thirdly, an account of the actual fieldwork process.

What does method involve for anthropology?

When thinking about anthropology and methods, the first technique that comes to mind is 'fieldwork', otherwise known as participant observation.

However, there are no clear rules or instructions as to what anthropological fieldwork actually entails. 'Quantitative' methods are fairly well detailed in the literature (Ellen, 1984), yet the more abstract processes of 'doing anthropology', such as the keeping of field-notes and the process of transforming fieldnotes into data, remain ill-defined.

At least part of the reason for the mysteriousness of anthropological research lies in its humanistic nature. When dealing with human beings at a participation level, research plans are made almost impossible. "In the real world, it is obvious that the conduct of social research is an organic process which cannot easily conform to simple positivistic models based on the experimental sciences, that is, procedures which follow the sequence: problem definitions, theory 'construction', operationalization, data collection, analysis, and publication" (Ellen and Hicks, 1984:158). Despite this, Ellen and Hicks still believe it is essential to plan as if this were the case. Choices in topics must be detailed, choices and reasons for chosen methods etc. all require explanation.

"Observing the Economy: ASA Research Methods" (1984), by Gregory and Altman, offers both a style and a set of techniques for the anthropologist interested in studying the marketplace. It is an approach that is particularly appealing for my own goals. Gregory and Altman found, as I did (in Chapter One), that current writings in the field of consumption are overly statistical and historical, relying heavily on secondary and tertiary information. In this context, secondary and tertiary information means 'second-hand' or 'armchair' information extrapolated from existing works. Gregory and Altman argue that the advantage of anthropology, and fundamental to its method, is the use of primary information through firsthand participation and observation. (Though the use of secondary information can never be entirely avoided).

What now follows is a examination of some of the various 'tools' at my disposal, and a consideration of those that are best suited to an examination of the sociality of the mall.

The planned research

The research population contains three broad groups with different degrees of involvement within the mall: The mall managers, the shop owners, and the consumers. Each group, due to their accessibility, available time, knowledge, and interests requires a different approach. Four methods will now be discussed which I chose for my research design: the survey method, structured interviews, extended interviews, and photographic methods.

The survey method is a tool that is not particularly apt to anthropology in the 'pure' sense, being instead more closely related to the fields of economics, sociology, and market research. Surveys are most suited to gathering data on existing conditions, attitudes, or behaviours (Ott and Mendenhall, 1990). The advantage of the survey method is that it makes possible the efficient collection of data on large numbers of individuals. Hence, this method is best suited to analysing consumer information.

By its very nature, the interview method is incorporated into the survey technique; there is no clear distinction between the two techniques because when one is directly employing a questionnaire one has to interview. However, the advantage of the interview method is that the interviewer can note specific contradictions that emerge and eliminate misunderstandings about the questions asked. A flexibility is also added that allows questions to be modified as the need arises. For these reasons, formal structured interviews were thought to be ideal when interviewing the retailers as this group is relatively small in size, and very busy. This approach was excellent for asking in-depth questions in a limited time frame.

Extended interviews were also used. These worked as an extension of both the surveys and the structured interviews, and renewed the anthropological spirit within the project. "Extended interviews provide richer material than is usually available from surveys..." (Giddens, 1989:680). The mall managers, I believed, called for a level of sophistication that the other strategies fail to offer. Because this group are involved in designing, creating, and maintaining the mall space, there was more than behaviour and attitude to be explored. The extended interview method proved ideal for this group.

I also used photographic research. This is a non-verbal medium which is becoming well established in anthropology. The most obvious role it plays in this project is in enabling the reader to visualize social and spatial layouts of people - bringing to life the analysis of space, consumption, and community.

Supporting the appropriateness of photographs in social research, Ellen and Hicks (1984) write: "They can serve a useful purpose by attracting attention to the work of social anthropologists and bring closer to readers the lifestyles of different people" (p. 199-200). The first stage of the photographic research was largely inspired by Victor J. Caldarola's (1985) 'Medium Application' method.

Caldarola saw the need to create a effective method of photographic investigation through the combination of appropriate processes with a photographic record. His 'medium application' method is a cumulative time-sequence process. For it to be carried out successfully, there are many stages to be fulfilled: firstly, selecting and defining the event; secondly, assigning operational significance; thirdly, photographing the event; fourthly, written annotation; fifthly, assembling the photo sets in the order in which they were taken; and sixthly, analysis and review.

Collier and Collier (1990) also stress the importance of 'systematized observation'. They stipulate that one must plan how and in what order such things as behaviour, environment and other culturally significant factors shall be recorded, because it is on our procedures, structures and categories that we base our later research analysis and summations: "We can responsibly analyze only visual evidence that is contextually complete and sequentially organized. No matter how rich our photographic material is, quantitative use of evidence is limited to that which is countable, measurable, comparable, or in some way scaleable in quantitative forms" (Collier and Collier, 1990:163). Caldarola's medium application method allows for such an analysis.

With the basic tools in mind, what now follows is an account of how the survey, interviews, and photographic observations worked in the actual fieldwork process.

The actual research

The research was carried out over a two-week period at Auckland's St Lukes mall and also Manakau City. On the whole the research went as planned. Three groups with various interests in the mall were interviewed and surveyed: two mall managers and five retailers were interviewed; 13 consumers were interviewed and 78 surveyed (20 in stage 1 and a further 58 in stage 2). Interview questions were formulated around the hypothesis that a shift in the ownership of public space has occurred, thus establishing the mall as a big business community area. What I shall now discuss is the actual research

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and interview process, and some of the interesting twists and angles that were introduced to the topic.

Before embarking on the fieldwork I contacted the St Lukes Group to tell them of my thesis and the fieldwork process I had planned. (The St Lukes group are the owner/managers of nine malls in New Zealand, two of which are the largest in the country and, as such, optimal sites for my research). I was referred to Paul Smith, Marketing Manager, who seemed interested and encouraging towards both the topic and my research plans, and a meeting was arranged for my arrival in Auckland.

The meeting with Paul Smith was invaluable and significantly shaped the direction of my research. Permission was given to use St Lukes as a research site. Paul Smith suggested and arranged for me further interviews with Donnella Parker (who works for a research company that handles St Lukes qualitative work), and Elmi Pilkington (manager of the St Lukes mall in Auckland).

However, the appointments for these interviews were not for several days, so in the meantime I commenced consumer research.

Stage 1 of fieldwork

Consumer interviews

Interviews were carried out within the two mall sites, Manakau City and St Lukes. The purpose of the interviews was explained as contributing to my MA project. Questions were developed to discover consumers' perception of the mall - whether or not consumers identified the mall as a site primarily for leisure or for consumption, and whether or not they felt any sense of attachment to the mall. Permission was asked to tape-record interviews (and it is worth noting that on no occasion did this pose a problem). There were five primary questions asked:

(1) What purpose does the mall hold for you: leisure or consumption?

(2) What attracts you to the mall?

(3) Do you prefer using the mall to other shopping areas like the traditional street front shop? Why/why not?

(4) Do you perceive a sense of community when you are in the mall?

(5) Is this your local mall? If so are you attached to it as your local community area? If not, what brings you here?

Initially I tried approaching people just strolling the mall. This strategy proved too difficult, as these random people tended to be either on their way somewhere, passing through, or going to meet somebody etc., and therefore not very approachable. Reworking my approach, I chose to target people sitting down on the benches placed around the mall. On the whole these consumers were either waiting for somebody or just

taking a break. With time on their side it made interviewing run considerably smoother, and some interviews managed to move beyond the set questions.

While some interesting responses were emerging, I soon began to feel that the questions I was asking were inappropriate and the level of analysis I was anticipating too ambitious. For example, consumers said themselves that they had come to the mall for leisure and to meet friends, yet when asked if they perceived a sense of community, they seemed to not understand the relevance of the question. I was unable to get people talking about how they used the space or how they perceived it; however this did not seem to be altogether my fault. It was more that people were unwilling to give me more than one to two minutes of their time, and the level of analysis I was seeking needed longer than this if I was to cross-question consumers and to develop a rapport that left them feeling comfortable under such questioning.

Another problem that emerged concerned my research population. My initial set of interviews were carried out at the Manakau City mall which is set within the geographical location of a lower to middle socio-economic group. The day-time patrons occupying the mall at the time of my interviewing posed a problem, not so much in their accessibility but more so in the difficulty, dare I say it, in my being able to understand their responses. Their way of expressing themselves was from a different world from that which my ears were trained to understand. Partly because of this, and also for geographical convenience in relation to where I was staying, I shifted my research site to St Lukes.

St Lukes is "the flagship mall of the St Lukes Group" (Hanson and Clark, 1995: 55), just a ten minute drive north-west of Auckland Central. This mall is targeted to the middle classes, or, as one shop owner said, 'to the middle-income housewife with three credit cards'. The interviews were noticeably different from those at Manakau City: people seemed to be more willing to discuss their experiences with me. However, the shift in my fieldwork site did have implications on my sample. The demographics changed to a much

more 'middle class' group. I remained conscious of this class shift throughout my study - analysing response against their class interests. Yet an ethnographic richness was failing to emerge, and my questions and approach were unable to elicit a sense of depth in the responses given.

Struggling as I was with the consumer interview process, my meeting with Donnella Parker, director of Radford Group, could not have come at a better time. It was decided that my original hypothesis - that a shift in the use and ownership of public space has occurred, establishing the mall as a big business community area - was too broad and generic. The interviews I had designed and had been conducting were not designed in such a way as to penetrate such concepts.

Accordingly, a more focused and specific hypothesis was designed which also kept in mind the needs and interests of St Lukes. The new hypothesis was: 'The mall is in a relatively high position of importance in providing a social space within the community'. Such a shift in focus could be queried as moving away from an anthropological study towards a consumer-orientated study. I would, however, defend the anthropological aims and intention of my investigation: the outcomes on which I focus primarily concern the mall and its sociality, and my methodology remained holistic.

The goals of my consumer research were also set: to demonstrate the relative importance of the mall taken against other leisure/consumption activities; to establish some of a mall's competitors for the public's time and space; to examine the role the mall plays in people's lives; and finally, to discover what draws people into the mall. Designing the consumer research around these objectives, the following questions were set:

(1) From the following leisure activities, what have you done in the last week?

Activities	Hours Spent		
A. Read a book	less than 1	1 to 5	5 or more
B. Played sport	less than 1	1 to 5	5 or more
C. Watched TV	less than 1	1 to 5	5 or more
D. Gone to the mall	less than 1	1 to 5	5 or more
E. Gone to the park	less than 1	1 to 5	5 or more
F. Gone to the movies	less than 1	1 to 5	5 or more

(2) From the above chosen activities, approximately how many hours have you spent on them? Less than an hour? One to five hours? More than five hours?

(3) Ranking those activities - which gave you the best to the least value?

(4) Ranking those activities - which gave you the best to the least satisfaction?

(5) Why have you come to the mall today?

The shift from structured interviews to an interview questionnaire breaks a traditional anthropological taboo. Be that as it may, this transgression did prove rewarding. The scope the questionnaire holds is considerably more than the initial structured interviews. And, as discussed in section one, the distinction between surveys and structured interviews is ambiguous.

The survey allowed me to demonstrate the value and satisfaction consumers gain from the mall against other leisure/consumption activities available to them. By asking consumers to rank the activities, the questionnaire allows the information to be mapped by placing satisfaction on one axis and value on the other. Time and frequency of use are also incorporated.

Twenty questionnaire-based interviews were carried out in this way and, on the whole, they were very successful. This can be attributed to their more structured nature, which tended to suit those who had, as previously pointed out, limited time to talk.

With regard to the questions, the most apparent problem area concerns 'mall use'. In each instance when people were asked what they had done in the last week they could not exclude the mall-as that was where they were the time of the interview. (This dilemma was assessed during the construction of the interview questionnaire: Would it be better to ask *'In a typical week what of the following would you do?'*. As people's perceived typical week is often quite different from their actual week, I decided against this question.) This contradiction was made apparent to me in the first set of consumer interviews: several people I spoke to said that they never go to the mall - yet they were there when I spoke to them! Finally, St Lukes mall, with two supermarkets, K Mart, Farmers and McDonalds as its anchor stores, is a typical weekly visit for most people. This is supported by the fact that they have 10 million people passing through the mall per year in foot traffic - three times the population of New Zealand.

Problems can also be found in the demographics of the research population. My surveys included broad information as to ethnicity, age and sex, which I allocated myself. Class was not included as I thought this was inappropriate for me to ask or judge. Age was categorized simply as 'Youth', 'Middle age' or 'Senior Citizen'; ethnicity was also very broad, the categories being European, Maori or Asian. In some cases these may not have been accurately allocated; however, I believe that the crudity of these categories and their allocation can be allowed for, as demographic data are incidental to the purposes of this thesis. They are merely an added bonus both in assessing patterns and trends in the interview questionnaires, and also for St Lukes' interests, a concession to their curiosity as to the outcomes of my work.

Examining the interview questionnaire population, there are substantially more middle-aged white males than any other group. The reason for this is approachability, I believe. As I was using a roaming technique in the initial stages of my research, approaching consumers sitting down was easiest. Middle aged males frequently seemed to be sitting down passing time while they 'waited for their wives to do the shopping', they said. Thus, as they had nothing else to do, they were keen to talk. A gender and maturity dynamic within the different groups was also at work, which stood to skew the demographics further. Ellen (1984) discusses approachability and its correlation to gender in the field, writing: "At a recent discussion on the advantages and penalties of an ethnographer's gender in the field, the women present concluded that the lone female fieldworker is usually (but of course not always) better placed than the single male worker." (p. 124). My experiences go some way to support this.

Retailer interviews

The 'shop owner' series of interviews were the most successful. Retailers, having direct contact with the consumers, are in a good position to monitor and interpret the mall space. Also a large number of them have been involved in their business for many years and were able to detail shifts that have occurred in retailing over a long period.

I wanted to interview the retailers to explore whether or not they perceived the same amount of sociability in strip front retailing, or if it was specific to the mall; what they thought were the advantages of mall; and finally, who has control in the mall? With these sorts of issues in mind, the following questions were devised:

(1) What was it that made you take on a shop in the mall as opposed to the more traditional street front shop?

(2) How long have you been working in this field?

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(3) What changes have you seen in the retail industry? Or what changes do you think have occurred?

(4) Do you prefer being in the mall as opposed to the street front? Why/Why not?

(5) Is there any difference between a shop in the mall and a shop in the high street? If so what makes them differ?

(6) From a consumer's point of view, do you think that the mall is more effective? Why/Why not?

(7) Are there/were there any controls placed on your space by mall management? E.g. does the shop have to follow any particular aesthetic style?

Five extended semi-formal interviews were carried out under this format. Interviews were arranged by simply asking for the store owner, then, after introducing myself, my project aims and design, I asked if they had a spare five minutes to answer a few questions to try and establish their views on the mall space. Interviews were recorded: and, once again, there were no objections to this.

The retailers were extremely helpful and eager to communicate their knowledge on retailing and their views on the mall space. The retailer population consisted of three males and two females. Each was middle-aged and had been involved in retailing for many years. Each interview was approximately five minutes in duration, and the retailers gave in-depth answers that went beyond the bounds of the interview questions. I purposely kept the questions non-personal and non-political as I did not want these interviews to come a discussion on how good or bad they perceived the mall to be. However, unintentionally, this was not necessarily the case: many retailers took time to discuss the disadvantages of being a lessee in the mall.

Question 3: *"What changes have you seen in the retail industry? Or what changes do you think have occurred?"* The responses to this were very political, most were very unhappy with increases in retail working hours. These changes, it was said, are dictated by the larger anchor stores who management are eager to please: therefore talking to me was another chance to voice their concerns - as they are the ones left working long hours - in the hope that counterbalancing changes might come about. Such responses created another concern - confidentiality.

One consideration that I had not anticipated when interviewing the retailers was confidentiality and anonymity. With leases renewed every two years within the mall, one retailer was concerned that what she said might have repercussions within management. When designing the questions I did not expect responses to be problematic in this way. But 'names to quotes' is not of importance to this thesis, and "...anthropologists paramount responsibility is to those they study" (Berreman, 1991: 65). So I could guarantee to this retailer that her worries were needless.

The central problem with the retailers questions was that they were directed very specifically at shop owners. What I failed to appreciate when designing this category is that most shops within the mall are large chain stores, while with the more medium sized privately owned chain stores the proprietor might personally be there only one or two days of the week: so my interviews were mostly with the owners of smaller boutique-style shops. There were two exceptions to this: I had the opportunity to talk with the owners of a jewellery chain and a men's fashion chain who owned additional shops (trading under the same name) on the street front as well. These were two valuable interviews, as they were very specifically able to talk about how their stores in different locations differed in presentation, working hours, foot-traffic, and turnover.

Mall manager interviews

The mall manager interviews were the most challenging, as this group are the designers, creators and maintainers of the mall space. As such, the questions I asked would be more sharply answered and critically evaluated.

Appreciating the vested interests this group has in the mall, and their public relations role, composing the questions proved very difficult. For instance, I was also interested in such issues as the 'policing' of the malls and how this is supervised; and what sort of controls are placed on leased retail space. I evaluated these questions and decided they were not appropriate question to ask as the managers were unlikely to release any information that could soil their image, even though this could be a matter of interpretation.

The questions I asked were therefore very broad, generated by an interest in the long-term success of the mall, what visions they had for the future, and whether or not they perceived the space as being accessible to all social groups. These are the questions I went to the interviews with:

(1) How long have you been a mall manager?

(2) What changes have you seen? Or what changes do you think have occurred?

(3) What about the aesthetic dimensions - architecture and change, what do you see for the future?

(4) What are some of the factors that make people come to the mall?

(5) What are the responsibilities of a mall manager? For instance, is there a creative aspect, or is it simply the control of the space?

(6) Who do you see as being in competition or a threat to the malls? I am here thinking about TV, sport, recreation centres etc.

(7) What do you think are the unique benefits that a mall offers for both the retailer and the consumer?

(8) How do you interpret the massive growth in the mall industry we are presently witnessing?

(9) Have you/do you market your mall to any particular group - for example, middle class, upper class, lower class? Or have you tried to establish it as all encompassing?

(10) What about geographical positioning? How is this directed at your chosen market?

(11) What controls do you have over the space by controlling the property leases? For instance, are outlets transformed as they are incorporated into the mall? is a book shop on the high street the same as a book shop in the mall?

By telephone I prearranged a interview with Elmi Pilkington, manager of the St Lukes Mall. With her, and an assistant manager, I met and talked for about three quarters of an hour.

Assessing the meeting, I felt it went very well. All of the questions were covered, but due to the informality of the interview and its extended nature, some questions were covered in a very roundabout way. However, I did find problems with it - I found myself receiving what felt like a rehearsed speech on all the pluses of the Mall and the positive future lying ahead, very much like a president's speech for his or her country, with no

time given to any negative aspects. But this interview still remains very important within my work, and the time they gave me considering their busy schedule was much appreciated.

By mere chance a additional sub-category was created. Joining a friend for dinner one night I was discussing how my work was going. Also there was a woman whose brother in-law, John Long (from Retail Consultancy), specializes in designing malls. She asked if I wanted her to speak to him and possibly arrange an interview: I jumped at the chance and the interview was organized.

Through this interview I wanted to explore what makes the mall a social space, what attracts so many people to the mall, and whether designers planning malls are thinking about sociality or consumerism. With such issues in mind, the following questions were generated:

(1) How long have you been involved in designing malls?

(2) What led you into this field?

(3) What changes have you seen or think have occurred in shopping and shopping mall design?

(4) When designing a mall what are some of the key things you are keeping in mind?

(5) The Centre Court - what are you thinking when designing this space?

(6) From a design point of view, does the shop in the shopping mall differ much from the more traditional street front shop?

(7) Is there anything strategic in mall design that contributes to their success?

(8) Do you/have you any experience of malls outside New Zealand?

(9) Do you think New Zealand has been able to establish a uniqueness about itself, or is it simply mirroring the American models?

(10) What do you think lies ahead for the future of mall shopping and design?

This was another three-quarters-of-an-hour interview and proved to be one of the more significant meetings in my research process. Not only did John provide me with some useful references, but he also had experience with mall design and management right around the world. He was able to give useful comparisons and differences. I bracketed this interview with the management category, as he works very closely with this group as far as design and objectives are concerned, and is critical in providing solutions fo them.

The photographic research

145 black-and-white photographs were taken in accordance with Caldarola's method. Six sites were selected on the two floors of Auckland's St Lukes Mall (see appendix A for map and location). These were selected to show variations in mall traffic, mall use, and mall occupancy. Every hour, in the same order, a circuit was done of the various sites. The first site is an open walkway connecting to mall entries and exits, the second is the centre court, the third the Foodhall, the fourth a seating area outside Foodtown looking accross to the Foodhall, the fifth another seating area upstairs outside Farmers overlooking the centre court, and the last a position above the Pavilion Cafe.

In each instance two shots were taken, one with a 25mm lens and another with a 50mm. This was effective in providing a spatial shot of the area and density of people (the 25mm lens) and a more detailed focused shot of what the consumers were actually doing (the

50mm lens). Photographs were compiled over a Monday-to-Friday time period from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm and additionally 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm for the Friday late night shopping.

Assessing the photographs taken, Caldarola's method did prove successful in meeting the objective I had in mind, which was to illustrate mall use and if and how it changes depending on time of day. But there were problems. The film quality was disappointing, due to the challenging light conditions within the mall space for photographic work. There is such a variety of lighting sources, natural and artificial, that it was not until I started using flash that an evenness in the film quality was obtained. Another problem was that I was unable to get the film developed while at the research site (due to both economic and time constraint), and so was unable to assess its quality till I was back from the field. Another problem was with the layout of the mall. With the space fully economized, the boundaries of significance were very constrained, and apart from the food court there were no areas to get any landscape format shots to measure occupancy demographics.

Stage 2 of fieldwork

Upon completion of the research, I put a proposal to St Lukes for an exploration of the reasons for people coming to the mall (see appendix). This was designed to be a prescriptive (as opposed to descriptive) study that would explore 'what is drawing people in?' St Lukes could then capitalize upon the information by adjusting their marketing strategies to attract more people.

Consumer research

My hypothesis was that there are three broad reasons for the mall's popularity: stimulation (the mall as a new meeting place for people); cultural (shopping now as a 'leisure' activity); and economic (the mall as a 'rational' choice because it provides a one-stop-shop). The consumer survey remained appropriate to discover these issues, although one extra question was added:

(6) In a typical week how many times would you come to the mall?

Apart from this question's value for revealing the frequency of mall use, it was also designed to resolve the dilemma in the phrasing of Question 1 - *From the following leisure activities, what have you done in the last week?*. With the mall being one of the activities questioned, its frequency was of course a given. What I did not know was whether a similar frequency would exist in the consumers *typical week*. Therefore, Question 6 was designed to work as a control.

The survey incorporates both quantitative and qualitative information. As envisaged in Stage 1 of the research, the quantitatively measurable questions in which leisure/consumption activities are rated for both the value and satisfaction they bring to the individual would be set against each other. And as such, the mall could be set against

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other leisure/consumption activities from both an economic and a enjoyment (stimulation) point of view.

A further 58 people were surveyed in this way, taking the sample size to 87 consumers. Initially the roaming technique, discussed in Stage 1 of consumer research, was used. However, once again, a bias towards middle-aged men appeared, and this strategy proved extremely slow in compiling survey population numbers.

Another meeting with Donnella Parker proved strategic in turning this around, suggesting that the best place to be positioned is at the door. This, I believe, not only made me look more official, but also less predatory (no longer strolling the mall looking for somebody sitting by themselves). As a consequence of adopting this technique, my samples became more balanced and the number of consumer surveys I was able to undertake also increased. An additional factor that made Stage 2 of my fieldwork easier was being able to introduce my consumer questionnaire as being for St Lukes. St Lukes provided a familiar name that the consumers could recognize, thus giving more of a front of professionalism.

As commercial interests were introduced into my study, greater attention was given to consumer information and quantitative findings. This meant that the anthropological aims of my study were in danger of being compromised. Chapter 4, although substantially revised for the purposes of this thesis, is based on what I wrote for the St Lukes Group, and strong commercial undertones will be apparent.

Nevertheless, I believe this part of the work still comes in the category of anthropology, as its primary interests are based firmly in the cultural and social. Although quantitative information plays a major role in Chapter 4, I still rely heavily on qualitative information to substantiate my findings, and Chapter 5 goes even further to correct this bias.

Data analysis process

As the fieldwork information contained both qualitative and quantitative data, two strategies were employed to aid in its analysis.

The 87 consumer surveys were categorized and then tabulated according to the central theme of each question in the survey. The data was then read for analysis - which commences in Chapters 4 and 5. These categories made the survey information more manageable, facilitating the extraction of meaning and enabling me to involve myself in interpreting the data.

The interview information was first transcribed and then arranged according to themes. What I was interested in was noting regularities in data and recurring concepts and ideas. This process was carried out for one interview group at a time. Common themes within the groups and themes unique to one particular group became apparent.

Summary

This chapter has described and discussed the methodological techniques and approaches on which my project relies. Two quite different processes can be seen at work: quantitative strategies and qualitative strategies. Relying on two quite different data-gathering techniques serves, I believe, to strengthen my findings - particularly where the consumer information is concerned. The following chapter details these findings, preparing the information for analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

Results

In the last chapter the methodological techniques the project relies upon were discussed. In this chapter the information gathered from the fieldwork will be detailed and reviewed.

The intentions of this section are three-fold: firstly the quantitative information gathered in both Stage one and Stage two of the consumer interviews will be categorized and discussed; then a discussion of the qualitative information shall be given - this will include the consumer interview information, and the retail owner interviews, (the mall managers and architects interview information will not be discussed as the information as very broad, thus rendering it impossible to categorise); and finally, my photographic observations will be analysed.

Composition of consumer sample

The 87 consumer participants are by no means a 'true' cross section of all mall shoppers. Neither were the participants chosen at random - there was considerable subjectivity involved when assessing who looked approachable and who didn't, although this was corrected to some extent in Stage two of my research, which represents well over half of the total consumer interviews carried out. Similarly, the fact that certain groups - in particular, middle-aged men - made themselves more approachable than others, as they were frequently just waiting for their wives or partners to do the shopping, explains this group's over-representation in the demographic breakdown:

Table 1

Consumer demographic breakdown.

Sex:	Male	53
	Female	34
Ethnicity:	Asian	8
	Pakeha	60
	Maori	21
Age:	15 to 30	36
	30 to 55	35
	55 and older	15
Age and ethnicity unknown		5

Table 1 shows the composition of the consumer questionnaire participants. The figures represent the total number of participants, including the initial set of structured interviews, the interview questionnaire and the third follow-up set of interview questionnaires. The demographic categories are putative as they were subjectively categorized by myself, and in some instances consumers' ethnicity or age could have been misjudged.

Quantitative information

Tables 2-5 provides a numerical breakdown of each question category.

Table 2

Consumer activity breakdown.

Read a Book	53
Played Sport	31
Watched TV	67
Gone to the Mall	78
Gone to the Park	35
Gone to the Movies	20

Table 3

Approximate time spent on activities.

Hours spent on activities.	Less than 1	1 to 5	more than 5
Book	3	26	24
Sport	2	24	6
TV	2	30	35
Mall	8	52	8
Park	8	24	3
Movies		20	

Table 4

Consumer 'Value' evaluation.

Activity	High	Medium	Low
Book	4	3	2
Sport	10	1	
TV	1	6	11
Mall	1	12	6
Park	2	3	
Movies	1	2	

Table 5

Consumer 'Satisfaction' evaluation.

Activity	High	Medium	Low
Book	3	5	1
Sport	9	1	
TV	4	5	10
Mall	2	10	6
Park	2	2	
Movies		1	

Tables 2 and 3 are self-explanatory, the numbers representing the number of people responding according to the respective activities and time spent on them.

Tables 4 and 5 are more problematic. In each instance the question was asked: *"Of the activities you carried out in the last week, what do you think gave you the best 'value' for money, and the least 'value' for money?"* and similarly for *"satisfaction"*.

Difficulties occurred on a number of levels. Firstly, when the participants had chosen four or more activities it was impractical, given the circumstances, for them to be able to rank them exactly from 'high' to 'low'. Therefore I generally just accepted the most 'highly' valued and enjoyed activity, and the least; hence the 'medium' category has simply been made up of those activities that were not rated at either extreme, and has obvious short falls in that with further questioning these activities may not have been rated equally as represented here. The second problem concerns the meaning of 'value'? For most this proved a challenging question. Phrasing value in monetary terms simplified the question for the consumers, yet there still are many hidden cost that perhaps they did not take into consideration - the park, for example, is free but there are still costs involved in getting there. The third problem in relation to both these categories is the way in which value and enjoyment vary depending on the week the question is asked. For instance, one week somebody might have seen a great film, poor television, and read a good book - but this would vary depending on what book, what film, what television programmes. So these numerical breakdowns have to be interpreted with caution.

Table 6 represents the responses given to Question Six - *"In a typical week, how many times would you have come to the mall?"*

Table 6   *weekly averages*

Once a fortnight	7
Once a week	20
Once or twice a week	3
Twice a week	7
Two or three times a week	1
Three times a week	5
Five times a week	1
Six times a week	1
Seven times a week	3
Seven or eight times a week	1
Extremes: twenty times a week	1
twice a year	3
never	2
Total	55

These responses were compiled during Stage two of the consumer research. There was a risk that, as the surveys were undertaken at the mall, when the consumers were asked which of the following leisure activities they had done in the last week they obviously had to include the mall as this was where they were while participating in the survey, so this question was added as a contol. However, the question is clearly essential in illustrating mall frequency of visits to the mall.

Qualitative information

What follows is a review of the qualitative information. Firstly, the consumer information will be examined, which includes the first set of consumer interviews and Question 5

(*"Why have you come to the mall today"*) from the consumer interview questionnaires; and secondly, the retailers, the mall managers, and the architect's interview information will be discussed.

Consumer information

The responses to the structured consumer interviews suggests that the mall holds for its patrons a site predominantly for leisure. Ten out of 13 people interviewed said this. They are attracted to the mall because of the convenience it offers in geographical access and as a one-stop-shop The consumers prefered the mall to the traditional street front shop, but friendliness and intimacy of the 'traditional' style shop was mentioned as lacking in the mall. A *'sense of community'* was perceived in only three instances, consumers tended instead to view the mall as a site where people had there own missions (or set tasks). Finally, in most cases, both the St Lukes mall and the Manakau City mall were not the consumers local mall. They were treating the mall as a destination frequenting the mall specifically because of the shops they offered, the size, and cleanness.

However, we should not take these responses at face value, 'reading-between-the-lines' drew out contradiction between what people said they thought they were doing and what they were actually doing. As the following transcription illustrates:

Me: *What purpose does the mall hold for you - leisure or consumption?*

Consumer: Nothing.

Me: *Okay, so what attracts you to the mall?*

Consumer: The family.

Me: *You come here with your family?*

Consumer: Yes.

Me: *Do you prefer the shopping mall to the more traditional street front style shops?*

Consumer: Yes as its more accessible.

Me: *Is there anything you dislike about the mall?*

Consumer: Not big enough?

Me: *When you are here do you perceive a sense of community?*

Consumer: Yeah, I come here for a family outing so yeah I do.

Apart from illustrating the inappropriateness of the interview questions, the transcription also shows the advantage of a more open interview situation. In this case the consumer said that he saw the mall as neither leisure nor consumption, however further questioning reveals that he comes to the mall with his family for a 'family outing', so, I would argue, that for this man the mall does predominantly serve a leisure function.

Question 5, as already stated, was the only open-ended question where consumers could specifically describe why they were at the mall. Table 7 listing the answers given (approximate and condensed) in relation to gender, age, and ethnicity:

Table 7

Reasons for being at the mall in relation to gender, age and ethnicity

To shop

Male	Female	Youth	Mid.Age	Sen. Citizen	Maori	Pakeha	Asian	?
14	16	11	12	7	7	19	4	

Sub-total   30

To 'look around and shop'

Male	Female	Youth	Mid. Age	Sen. Citizen	Maori	Pakeha	Asian	?
10	5	7	7	1	3	10	2	

Sub-total   15

To lunch, meet friends and shop

Male	Female	Youth	Mid. Age	Sen. Citizen	Maori	Pakeha	Asian	?
3	3	3	2	1	2	4		

Sub-total   6

To 'hang out', 'look around', and 'meet with a friend'

Male	Female	Youth	Mid. Age	Sen. Citizen	Maori	Pakeha	Asian	?
12	7	12	5	2	6	11	2	

Sub-toatl   19

Other non-related reasons   sub-total   7

Total   77

Table 7 shows the responses given to the question *"Why have you come to the mall today?"*. Only 30 of the mall patrons, from a sampled 73 participants, were at the mall specifically to shop. Admittedly, a further 20 consumers from my sample were

integrating shopping into the sociability of the mall That is to say - they had come to the mall to both 'look around and shop'. However, I would argue, that such a response still represents a leisure form of consumerism as friends are often involved and time is not typically a pressing factor. The same arguments can be applied to meeting somebody for lunch, here the mall functions as a social meeting place rather than a site purely for shopping.

Retailer interviews

Six store owners were interviewed. The retailer interviews, I felt, were the most successful. Clear unified patterns emerged in the interview information. This section will organize the interview information around the central themes that emerged. The identities of the the retailers will not be revealed.

The foot traffic the mall attracts was the central reason for these store holders taking on a lease with St Lukes. As I was told by one retailer:

> "The mall offers excellent foot traffic and it has an overall marketing scheme
> which brings people to the whole unit.".

And indeed, foot traffic and being in the mall scene now seems central to retailers survival:

> "To be successful in retailing in Auckland, you really do need to be part of
> the mall situation to survive. Auckland has become very much like many
> parts of America, very spread out and regional. The heart of the regions are
> the shopping malls.".

All of the shop owners interviewed said that, despite the fact they were the owners of their stores, they felt that they had very little control over that space. They were signed

into lease agreements with St Lukes that dictated their opening hours, their shop lay-outs, and their marketing. Also, lease renewal is every two years - they have to refit their shops for this or face the risk of not being signed on for another two years:

> "We have to stay within our lease boundaries a lot more, so what we can do and when we can do it and all those sorts of things are more restricted.".

Most of the store owners, regardless of the obvious disadvantages, wanted and preferred the mall to the strip front, as one retailer stated:

> "We are committed to refitting our store every two years before our lease is renewed - which is good in a way because it keeps the standards up. You have to be reasonably strong to survive under the rental regime in the mall situation so you end up with a very strong retail centre because any weak-link usually doesn't survive.".

These opinions would not represent the overall view of retail owners. Being smaller, they, personally, are left having to work the hours themselves. Larger stores, such as 'K Mart', with a larger number of staff to draw on, are less affected by the hours. In fact they dictate the hours. Being larger and more powerful, mall management listens to their needs before the smaller independent retailers concerns. As one rtailer I interviewed told me:

> "The hours are very long now. T long. Being in a mall, management make the hours, but management are not availabel when we have to be, so they do not know what it is like.".

Photographic observation method

Caldarola's 'Medium Application' method allowed me to see just exactly how consumers were using the mall space. The most interesting findings concerned how the 'senior citizen' age bracket were using the space. Only two out-of-the 11 surveyed in this group said they were using the mall purely as a social space. However, my time-sequence set of photographs revealed this was not entirely the case, as I was able to observe many senior citizens located on the seats provided and catching up with old-friends.

However, due to the sheer bulk of the 145 photographs, and because they were only taken over one day, I was unable to observe any concrete patterns in the time sequence-information. Therefore I could not really justify a place in my thesis for this work.

The colour photographs have been used extensively in Chapters 4 and 5 where the mall is discussed as a social space. These were useful in illustrating concepts that were hard to articulate. As Goldschmidt and Edgerton (1961:44) state (they discuss the power of drawing, but their analysis can equally be applied to photographs): "they present all elements simultaneously, without differential emphasis, while a statement is, by the nature of language, lineal. [Also] the symbolic meanings of artifacts are themselves significant, and... their significance is once removed when substituted for verbal presentation" (cited Collier and Collier, 1986:118). Some interesting findings came through the observations: for instance, the way photographs explain by example the complexity of the mall space: its blur of the 'real' and the 'unreal', and the 'inside' and the 'outside'; also the way the mall holds aspects of power and domination, but also community and social bonding.

Summary

This chapter has described and detailed my findings from three weeks' field work in the mall. I believe that it is a successful synthesis of quantitative and qualitative information -

particularly with regard to the consumers' responses. However, the retailers and managers information is disadvantaged in trying to present it in a complete way - so, as stated, the reader will have to wait and see information incorporation into the arguments made in the texts in the following chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

What role does the shopping mall play for its patrons?

There is no doubt that shopping malls have won a major role in the urban distribution of goods and services, and that they are growing in significance. At the end of 1995 there was an increase of 111,500 square metres in new retail space added to Auckland's market alone (Williams, 1995:13), and this figure does not include supermarkets nor Warehouse stores, which would raise the figures considerably.

Shopping malls stand as the major movers-and-shakers in the evolution of retail outlets as they adjust to consumers' growing sophistication in shopping patterns - to be more specific, the way shopping has become, for consumers, a major leisure pursuit. Despite this, there is still anxiety among planners that Auckland is becoming 'over-malled': "Auckland is experiencing a surge of new shopping centres of all sizes and according to Paul Keane, a director of Retail Consulting Group, the city's population is not growing fast enough to support them" (Williams, 1995:13).

What this chapter will examine is the perceptions consumers have about shopping malls. After briefly discussing the words 'consumption' and 'community', I shall be arguing that the mall is just as, if not more, important as a site for leisure and community than simply a site for consumption. This will lead to an evaluation of its relative importance within the community when set against other public leisure/consumption activities. A secondary gain from this is that we will be able to come to an assessment of whether or not Auckland is in fact, as a consequence of shopping malls, becoming over-provided with shops, or whether malls will continue to hold their own due to their secondary leisure role. I will then explore the level of satisfaction and value that shoppers are deriving from the mall, exploring the contention that 'entertainment' is the key variable. This will lead into my third section, which aims to advance the, so-far, descriptive

account to a prescriptive analysis, developing what has been learned into suggestions for the future of shopping mall development.

Consumption and community - a definition

The word 'community' is very abstract and vague. Indeed, for the social scientist, it has more use than it does meaning. In the dictionary the word refers to a collection of people in a geographical area. However, there are three other definitions commonly recognized that can work together or separately: firstly, a collection of people with a particular social structure; secondly, the sense of spirit held and identified by a group of themselves as a group; and thirdly, the daily living activities, such as work and leisure located in a given geographical area.

Pearson (1982) is a theorist who also recognizes these three spheres, and he names them as 'boundary', 'interdependence', and 'ideology'. He offers us a historical examination of community within New Zealand, drawing on his studies of Johnsonville and others done on small New Zealand towns. Crediting Hammer (1979), Pearson tells us that, in nineteenth-century settlements, strong bonds existed in small pockets of space, the strength of which could be calculated by correlating it with the distance that could be covered in a day. In these 'pockets' small enterprise was supported through the need for basic services and amenities for the traveller. However, Pearson argues, as a consequence of national and regional centralization of retail distribution, the 'backbone' of traditional localism - the shopkeeper, the local craftsman etc. - has been destroyed by the drive of 'big business'. He writes: "In the past three decades Johnsonville has seen a swift erosion of communality in its traditional guises. State welfare policies and more secular lifestyles have brought the demise of the lodges and a decline in church participation. The advent of mass car ownership widened leisure pursuits to beyond the locality, although, paradoxically, television keeps many families within but not of the community" (p. 86).

Pearson concludes that community segmentalisation is destroying both boundary and interdependence. Despite this, he believes that "... community as ideology is very much alive in the contemporary setting" (1982: 92), yet he questions why this is so. For Pearson, the ideology of community is simply a 'smoke-screen' covering inequalities, class and ethnic power differentials and normative forces. He points to developers and politicians as the promoters of this ideology, believing that the forces which claim to promote community are those which, at the end of the day, come to destroy it.

Community, in the traditional sense of the term, may be under threat. However, one of the central points of this thesis is that 'consumption' is perhaps another force that serves to keep community alive - transformed under new pressures of contemporary society. These pressures will be explained in the final chapter. The word consumption will now be defined.

Like community, consumption is a term that at its root level is very simple ["Consumption: purchase and use of goods etc." (Oxford Dictionary)]. But, when examined from a social-scientific perspective, it is very abstract and vague. Rather than looking for a catch-all statement of its meaning it would be more productive to examine the significance of its in its use.

Sack (1992:1) sets the stage for this by writing: "Consumption is basic to living in the modern world. Even though we differ from one another in many respects, it is a fact of modern life that most of us are consumers and that we share the experience of being in places of consumption". This an irony of consumption, in that no matter how 'anti' one may be in what one believes consumption 'represents', 'upholds' and 'symbolizes', it is impossible to avoid in any absolute sense of the term. When we are not working we are, nine times out of ten, consuming, in places created for and designed to encourage consumption - whether the place be a shopping mall, supermarket, theme-park or resort.

The theorizing of 'consumption' in this thesis is influenced by Shields's (1992) essay. Shields views consumption as a form of 'social exchange': "Consumption both solidifies the sense of personal self, and confirms it as social through common membership in a shopping fraternity" (Shields,1992:15). It is from this sort of analysis that we can begin to build towards an interesting critique of the community theories of nostalgia, such as Pearson's (1982), which argue that 'post-industrialism' and increased geographical mobility have caused 'big business' to breakdown the traditional bonds of community, leaving a state of individualism and inequality.

"[T]he mall forms the centre of an urban constellation and a social community is born which appropriates the mall as a surrogate town square" (Shields, 1992: 45). It is from here that I wish to construct my argument: consumption can be community-forming.

Hypotheses dealing with the sociability of the shopping mall.

Hypothesis 1. Malls provide an important role in the community.

Support for the mall as a social space can be found in Table 3 - 'Approximate Time Spent on Activities'. Eighteen of the 78 consumers surveyed were in the mall for an hour or less; 52 of the 78 consumers were in the mall for 1 to 5 hours; and 8 of the 78 were in the mall for more than 5 hours. These three time categories represent, I believe, the two primary roles the mall plays for its patrons: leisure on the one hand, consumption on the other. This was confirmed when the qualitative responses, shown in Table 6, were correlated against the time categories. All 18 of the respondets in the hour or less category were in the mall strictly to shop. For them the mall is not social, it is functional. This was supported by a typical response I received from consumers who were in the mall to buy: "I am in and out of here as quickly as possible".

When examining the frequency of visits to the mall in relation to the approximate time spent there, we see that for most consumers the mall is a significant destination. The

median, calculated from Table 6, is **one** from a survey population of 55. Thus, in a typical week, my findings show the average weekly mall visitation by my respondents to be approximately once per week, and for the majority of these consumers the visits are between one and five hours in duration.

There is nothing particularly new nor extreme about theses findings, and, indeed, it seems that the 20 times a week that one youth said his 'mall frequency' was may not be so extreme either, "In Amusement Society, especially the suburban enclaves, many adolescent subcultures are found in malldom - free of scrutiny by parents and teachers. Many youths spend almost as much time in malls as in school or at home. As the mall has become one of the major hangouts where many youths try to locate their communities of peers, it is also the space where the production of mass-mediated heros and goods can be utilized in the establishment of provisional identities..." (Shields, 1992:58). This is in line with Kowinski's (1985) study that also showed that teenagers spend more time in malls than any other place except home, work, and school (cited in Sack, 1992:146).

Similarly, in the photographic observations, the mall can be seen being utilized in a equally sociable manner. Many of the older, timeless functions of city centres, public streets and paths, town squares and village fairs are reworked within the mall space (see photo's 1-5), sponsoring and hosting arts, orchestras, bands and meeting places - except that this time it is all privately owned.

The demographics provided illustrate the relative diversity of mall patronage. However, it is consumption that plays a large part in holding this sociability together. A sociality is being formed based on the sociability of everyday life, I believe. Shields (1992) also recognizes community within the mall, but for Shields its form is "tribal". His arguments for this group relationship hinge on the group being favoured above the individual, thus making the mall deindividualizing. Nonetheless we still cannot conclude that malls will see an end to reciprocity, friendship or community, as now, more so than ever before, shopping affords more than a rational and functional space for commodity exchange.

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Photograph 3

Photograph 4

Photographs 1 - 5 illustrate how many of the older timeless functions of public streets, paths, city centres and town squares, are reworked in the mall.

Photograph 1 shows how the mall successfully operates as both an in-and-out individualized shopping destination and public meeting place. Wide walkways and strategic floor layout allows those consumers with time against them to be in and out as quickly as possible, while providing a social space for those who enjoy taking their time or happen to bump into an old friend and want to sit down and talk.

Photograph 2 demonstrates how the mall can distort consumers' sense of place and time. The combination of tables set along the aisle, with umbrellas indoors under artificial light, leaves the consumer wondering if it is night time or day time or if we are inside or outside?

Performing arts, such as the Aotea Cellos shown in photograph 3, are one way the mall provides entertainment without charge for its shoppers, plus free exposure and money for artists - thus increasing the sense of sociality, satisfaction and value within the mall space.

Photograph 4, again, shows how the mall operates as a site for leisure providing a meeting space packed with visual imagery to keep the shoppers entertained.

The Mini Cars, shown in photograph five, are one way the mall derives money and provides entertainment in the centre court for its patrons; however this time the entertainment is at the parents' expense.

Instead, it is a community-enhancing space: "Consumption, an ambivalent and multi-faceted activity, takes on more and more social functions as a form of sociality. This serves in the reconstruction and realignment of community around the tactility of the crowd practice and 'tribal' ethos of the new urban spaces of consumption" (Shields, 1992:111).

Hypothesis 2. That "satisfaction" and the sense of "value" derived from the shopping-mall experience depends on the level of entertainment it provides.

> "Yet theorizing shoppers' subjectivity presents many of the same difficulties as theorizing cinematic spectatorship. The fact of purchase (number of items sold) does not adequately measure the psychic pleasure or anxieties of consumption, any more than box office statistics and television ratings tell us about the spectator subjectivity. Sales statistics can only reveal a limited amount about a commodity's subjective effect" (Friedberg, 1993:121).

The mall will be discussed as a commodity in its own right, moulded by the tensions of the commodities it sells (Sack, 1992). The mall's success, Sack argues, is only incidentally about property development: it is just as much a matter of maintaining continually changing attractions to 'draw people in' and keep them entertained.

Graph 1 maps 'Satisfaction' against 'Value' (read from Tables 4 and 5). The effectiveness and use value of the graph is in its ability to enable the reader to visualize the pervasiveness of the mall against other public and private consumption/leisure choices available to the consumer. One can see how the mall fails in providing a sense of value and similarly is placed poorly when compared against other activities in providing a sense of satisfaction - unlike the movies, the park, sport and television. Yet, ironically, both the frequency and average time spent at the mall is high. Additionally, when the mall is set against these sorts of activities, that arguably compete for the public's time, space

GRAPH 1

CONSUMER ACTIVITY EVALUATION
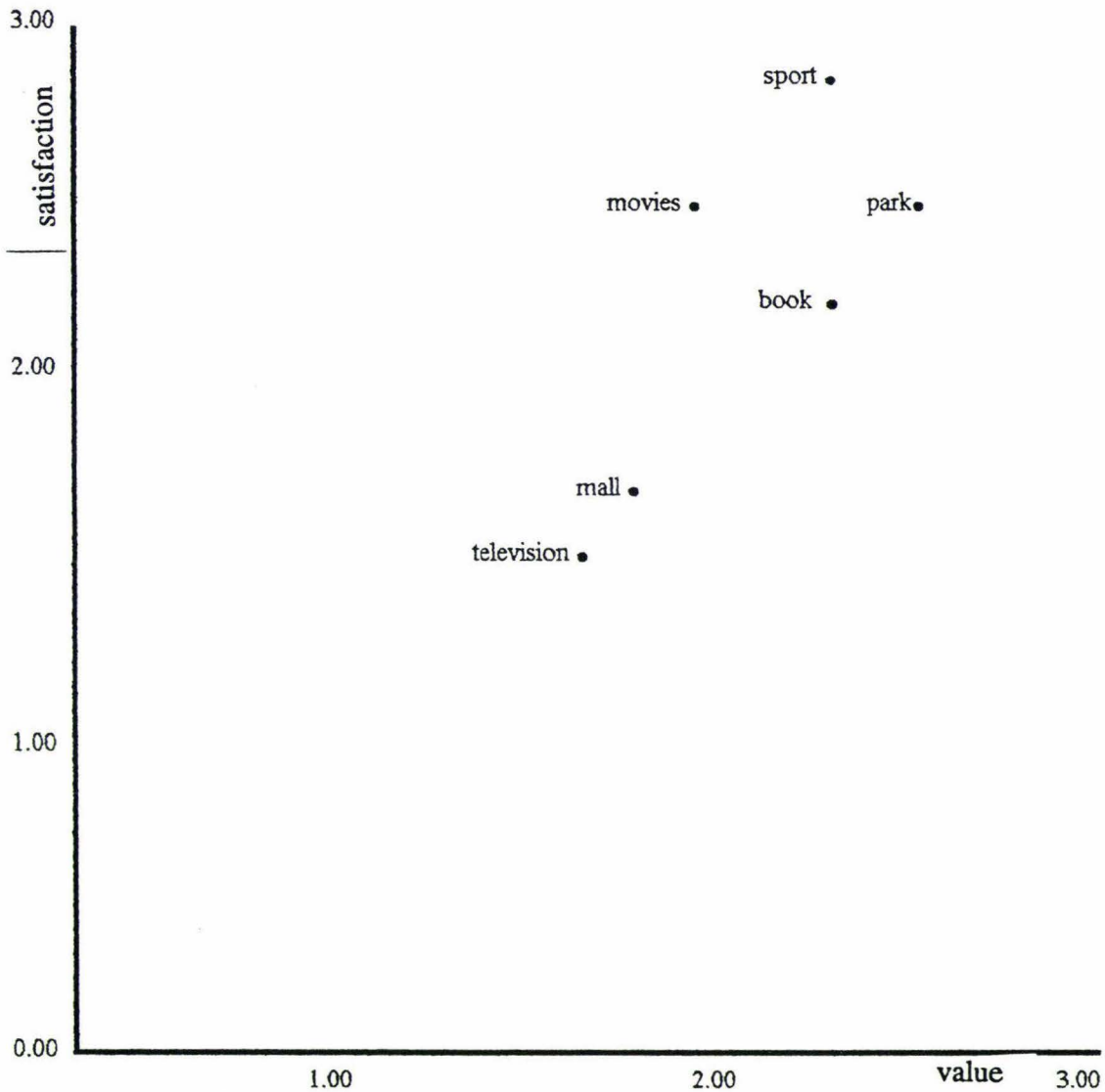
Graph 1 maps consumers ranking of value and satisfaction they attributed to the respective activities partaken. The figures are averages calculated from Tables 4 and 5. Three represents a high sense of satisfaction and value, and 0.00 a low sense of value and satisfaction.

and money, one can start to comment on what factors are critical in making one activity more valuable or enjoyable than another.

The dictionary definition for 'entertain' is to amuse or to occupy agreeably. The level of value and satisfaction derived from the various activities, I believe, varies according to the level of entertainment provided to the user. All of the activities listed are "leisure" activities. Leisure can be defined as "A quality of experience involving personal enjoyment and satisfaction in which the individual has the freedom of choice and a sense of being in control" (Laidler, 1985:10). Thus, I argue, entertainment affects both the quality and the level of 'satisfaction' gained from the respective 'leisure' activities. This is supported by the repeated off-hand remarks made to me by consumers when they were asked to rank which of the various activities they had undertaken in the last week gave them the most to the least 'satisfaction' and 'value'. They consistently stated television lowest because there was 'nothing worthwhile on', despite the fact that over half of the respondents were watching more than five hours per week. This indicates that the feeling of having less control and freedom of choice takes away a large amount of pleasure from the experience. Those who rated television more highly perhaps had better management of the TV experience, watching only what they wanted and knew they would gain enjoyment from; but for the purposes of this study it was not practical to explore this further.

Neither can we assume that sport's relatively high ratings for both satisfaction and value can be attributed to New Zealanders' 'sport-mindedness'. This is not substantiated by a number of studies. The most comprehensive study rejecting the idea of New Zealand as a nation of 'joiners' was carried out by the New Zealand Council for Recreation and Sport, in 1975. It identified the most popular forms of recreation as reading, gardening, listening to music, sewing, and cooking and baking - all informal activities, usually undertaken individually at home - suggesting a dominance of individualised and informal activities.

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However, one should not confuse popularity with 'satisfaction' and 'value'. The axes of the graph represent the numerical frequencies: both television and the mall are the most 'popular' as far as numerical frequency is concerned, yet both the satisfaction and value gained from these activities is poor. The most significant factor influencing people into not doing what they enjoy most is time, I believe. "Time is an important factor influencing recreational activity. As recreation generally takes place in uncommitted time, varying commitments such as sleep, child-minding duties and a host of other personal activities affect the time available for recreational involvement. As indicated earlier, women have more restrictions than men in the amount of available and uncommitted time" (Laidler, 1985:13). And, as argued, the most significant factor influencing 'enjoyment' in one's spare time is 'entertainment'. This is borne out by Kelly's (1987) book, "Recreation Trends: Towards the Year 2000". Kelly also recognizes the lack and continual decline in support for 'traditional community sports', writing: "The major counter-current is limited time, especially for two-income families and single parents" (Kelly, 1987:151). Obviously the mall's and television's 'popularity' ratings relate to the way consumers can rationally organize either of these activities into a variety of other spheres of their life. For instance, in a two hour visit to the shopping mall, a mother can leave her child at the free creche, meet a friend for lunch, and then do some shopping. For the same women to partake in a sports activity or to go to the movies requires organization that takes a large amount of their worth away. To play sport, for example, requires organizing a baby sitter, paying the baby-sitter, paying for the sports activity, plus getting to the location.

There is nothing new nor particularly innovative about these observations; indeed, the initial logic of the shopping mall, with everything under the one roof, was based on the idea of convenience. But what they do innovatively suggest is the massive potential the shopping mall holds when the subjective mall experience is placed against other activities - if only the shoppers sense of value and satisfaction could be increased.

Laidler (1985) states that: "The leisure industry is large and is growing in relation to other spheres of economic activity." (p. 17). To support this, he cites a 1983 report published by the Depart of Internal Affairs which estimated the economic impact of leisure-related goods and services in New Zealand to be 21.6% of a households expenditure. However, due to the changing demands of consumers in response to changing social and economic conditions, the nature of recreation also changes. Laidler recognizes an increasing involvement from commercial and private providers, reflecting the flexibility with which they adjust and maximize for change. He lists a variety of commercial and recreational provisions which are expanding in the current economic climate: 'safari parks; video arcades; cinemas; indoor cricket; skiing; canoeing and saunas'. What these activities are reflecting is an increasing trend towards individualized recreational participation and a willingness (or perhaps a new acceptance due to 'user-pays') to pay for the experience. Also, unfortunately, these activities suggest that the amount of money you have correlates to the amount and 'quality' of leisure the consumer can enjoy. Just what the commercialization of leisure signals in terms of social justice for the individual will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

Summarizing this section's arguments, it has been concluded that the frequency of an activity is dependent on its accessibility and adaptability to ones lifestyle; thus, the mall opens itself to a variety of lifestyles as it provides a rational economic one-stop-shop for unadulterated consumerism. And culturally it provides a useful meeting place for those just wanting to 'hang out' or enjoy shopping as a leisure activity. The mall also provides various forms of stimulation and entertainment, which in turn affect the level of value and enjoyment the shoppers derive from the experience. However, as illustrated, the level of satisfaction and value the mall produces is relatively low when compared against other leisure/consumption activities available to the consumers. This suggests that the mall has unfulfilled potential, and is also in a vulnerable position as new forms of consumerism emerge.

Where this study will now turn is to an examination of provisions for the future of shopping-mall development. As I show, the mall already has a significantly large chunk of the consumers time and money - so the challenge lies not so much in increasing this sphere (this is not denying, of course, the desirability of such a outcome), as in increasing the consumer's sense of 'satisfaction' and 'value' gained when entering the shopping mall: after all, time and money, for most, are unequalled pleasures. This could lead to more fulfilled shoppers and strengthen the mall's position as new forms of retailing emerge.

The future?

"Unlike commodities, leisure has one wonderful quality - it is entirely consumed" (Cross, 1993:86). Leisure, Cross (ibid) states, 'cannot be over-produced'; therefore, leisure needs to be marketed in a usefully consumable way, or in other words, a way that creates time for spending. Cross believes that we must "... learn to make money and have a better time in life by turning out packaged goods - as a principle of business operation" (Cross, 1993:86).

The present decade stands on the cusp of some potentially deep structural shifts in the domain of popular consumption and leisure. What underlies these shifts is open to debate - the logic of late capitalism, postmodernism, post-Fordism or simply new technologies and techniques in advertising, marketing and retail strategy.

Nixon (1992) also recognizes a new emphasis in retailing, which focuses on presentation and appearance. In the last decade the demand has become such, he notes, that retail design services specializing in shop design and layouts - a domain once relegated to architects and shop-fitting firms - have mushroomed. "The effect has been, during a period of booming retail sales, to produce a quicker turnover in the life-span of shop interiors and, more importantly, a greater stress on visual pleasure and style" (Nixon, 1992:156). From a psychoanalytic point of view, the pleasure derived from looking is

significant. Freud states that from our earliest moments we derive a 'pleasure in looking' and 'a fascination to see'. This pleasure in gazing has the capability to be channelled along a variety of routes.

James Woudhuyssen and Rodney Fitch of Fitch-RS, a large British design consultancy group, consciously cultivate the pleasure derived from the gaze. For this company, retail design is about emphasizing the "emotional importance of design", "capturing the consumers imagination", or in other words, playing upon peoples needs and desires. "They [Fitch-RS] also stress the conception of a good designer as one who 'conducts a continuous enquiry into the consumer's visual, tactile and spatial consciousness" (cited Nixon, 1992:156). This is similar to the response I received when interviewing mall architect John Long, from Retail Consultancy Group. I asked him if he thought there was much difference between the 'strip' front shops and shops within the mall? His reply was: "Yes, the rents will be quite different, there is more personality in them, mall shops are much more individualistic, they have been choreographed, highly polished. There is a sameness, but there are differences. Its like Disney: you are creating a totally new environment and its totally organized, so this guy expresses a genuine personality [in his shop] and so does the guy next to him".

I believe this is where the future and the success of the malls lies: in creating a uniqueness in the shopping experience that is also entertaining. Entertainment within the malls has always posed a dilemma to both mall management and design. Obviously the public want to be entertained, and, as argued, both satisfaction and sense of value increase in relation to this. But within the mall, square-footage is tightly economized as this is where the majority of the revenue is created, so consumer entertainment is a catch-22. Diversions like live music, story readers for children, clowns etc., while crowd drawers, are not necessarily money-spinners, and may leave many retailers unhappy, as it is through their leases that these entertainers are paid. Food-courts, fun-rides, and multiplex cinemas incorporated into malls are the most pervasive contemporary examples of mall design and management attempting to create both revenue for themselves and

entertainment for their patrons; however, as my research has shown, these activities may be divorced from shopping itself, leaving many consumers unfulfilled.

I have two suggestions, based on my fieldwork within the mall, which could, I believe, create a win-win situation for shoppers, retailers, and management. The first involves the retail space; the second, the centre court.

The mall has created itself as a miniature version of the "real" world where many aspects of the outside world can be found inside. The St Lukes mall is a classic example of this. Its atrium style allows patrons to enjoy the benefits of natural light while also being sheltered from uncomfortable conditions such as rain, heat or cold. Steel railings, tile floors and 'real' indoor plants conveys an outside promenade sensation. With the mall set up as a microcosm of the outside world, the logical extension of this would be to make each retail outlet a micro-microcosm of the lifestyles and consumer worlds the traders are trying to sell.

Already some shops are attempting and successfully carrying out this format. One example of such a store is 'Natures Window' (see photographs 6-8). This store has created its own visual reality - a miniature world of the products and lifestyles it is hoping to sell. Almost every sense is catered for: visually, a huge lizard lies over the entrance way and a waterfall flows down the back wall; audibly, hi-fi ambient nature sounds fill the room; and tactually, products are stocked that the consumer can sample before they choose to buy - with such an environment, how can anyone resist the temptation? It is stores such as this that leave the consumer feeling as though she or he has walked inside a giant TV set. If outlets such as 'Natures Window' were incorporated throughout the mall, walking from store to store would provide the consumer with the sensation of being in a giant multi-channel network, going from one store to the next would be just like surfing between television channels, only this time the consumers are the actors. It does not take very much to imagine other potentials: for instance, a sporting store would provide a caged area to test out with the products they sell, such as

Photograph 6

Photograph 7

'Natures Window' (photographs 6 - 8), and to a lesser extent 'Zeorax' (Photograph 9) are two examples of stores that create micro-worlds of the products they sell - making entering these stores a visual, aural, and tactile experience. This puts the entertainment element into shopping which in turn serves to increase shoppers' sense of value and satisfaction.

golf clubs, cricket bats and tennis rackets, a big-screen Sky sports channel, and guest sport gurus for consumers to talk with, creating a total pleasure and entertainment zone for those with a sports lifestyle.

These gaols are not far-fetched. Friedberg (1993) views the shopping mall in its present state as a 'giant selling machine' in which time is suspended. The subjectivity that the mall propagates, Friedberg believes, is not that different from the subjectivity produced by cinema spectatorship: "The shopping mall has not replaced the movie theatre: it has become its logical extension" (Friedberg, 1993:120). Through the commodity experience, Friedberg theorizes, the mall is both individually and collectively beneficial. The individual is offered a safe transit into other spaces, other times, other imaginaries (ibid. p. 121); for the group, the sensation of being in a special world provides a unity of experience, unity of time, place and action, which the traditional theatres once offered (ibid. p. 121).

Big Fresh in Mt Wellington is a store that is proving the success of the concept of combining a theatrical spectacle into the shopping experience, creating a unique feeling of being in a giant Aladdin's cave of food. This has paid off handsomely, drawing shoppers from far and wide, enticing them to by-pass their local stores. "Free samplings galore, live entertainment from a stage high in the roof area, aisles wide enough to make pushing a trolley around [other] shoppers a breeze (they're the widest aisles possible in New Zealand, measuring 3 metres wide,) all add up to making shopping in this store [Big Fresh] a pleasurable experience" (Perkins, 1995:42). Nor, according to Hodge (1991), should we assume that an economic down-turn would leave such stores struggling. Market research reveals that in times of trouble, consumers maintain a high priority for their stomachs and for indulging in elements of escapism (Hodge, 1991: 42).

Obviously there are extra costs involved in creating such an environment, which ultimately the consumer would have to swallow. With this in mind, could a total entertainment environment be sustained within the mall? The answer to this, I believe, is

'yes'. Kelly (1987) states that the market with the highest potential within the recreational industry can be found among the Discretionaries: "Many are 'New Class' in the sense that they are the first generation in their families with college degrees and special skills that are at a premium in the labour market... But those in the earlier phases of their careers, however, cannot afford the same recreational costs as the wealthy. They will spend time and money on leisure, but will remain price conscious" (Kelly, 1987: 153). As it presently stands, the mall offers itself as a micro-world. If this world is packed with possibilities for personal fulfilment, leaving consumers satisfied - then yes - as argued, consumers have no reservation about footing the bill and supporting such a place.

New forms of marketing, however, also need to be created, this time based on "psychographics" (Nixon, 1992): a profiling of consumers' values and lifestyles that appeals to a variety of psychological and motivational needs. This would inevitably further erode the distinction between leisure and consumption.

My second idea focuses on the centre court area, where it proposes to increase both the sociality and sense of unity in space. I asked architect John Long what he is thinking about when designing this area for a mall. "Well, the centre court is really the promotions court, that's what it is designed for, that is where they have their promotions, the idea is that the mall is a speculoid for advertising. What do Farmers do? They get Elle Macpherson, and dopey guys, they don't spend money there, it is not designed for that. But that is what the centre court is about, really it is the idea of creating a space for different activities, public spaces basically".

My thoughts for this space have been taken from the EPCOT [Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow] Centre in Disney Land, in which technological exhibits, sponsored by major corporations, are displayed. Disney is in a similar position to the mall in that, like St Lukes, it is primarily a business, and as such must subtly commodify knowledge, work and fun. If the mall allowed the centre court space to be an area for

industry-sponsored exhibitions, a focus could be created, I believe, that would be entertaining, educational, and free.

The final question to be asked is: are such visual and interactive developments necessary? The malls are currently booming and continual growth is expected. But New Zealand's frequenting rates are well below other countries such as Australia and the USA. 24% of New Zealanders do their shopping in malls as opposed to 36% for Australia and 50% for the USA (figures cited TV 1, source unknown). The Mega-malls outside of New Zealand take public and private fantasies to the extreme, and, as a consequence, flourish. The West Edmonton Mall, for instance, has created the ultimate shopping adventure: "Some 150,000 people, 65% from Western Canada, the Northwestern United States and around the world, arrive daily to surf the waterpark, cruise the ocean floor in a submarine, watch the dolphins in marine land or party the night away in fantasyland amusement park." (Irving and Duffy, 1987: 29-30). New Zealand, almost certainly, could not sustain such developments. But the proposals put forward in this exposition go some way, I believe, towards creating a cheaper alternative to take consumers away into another world, which, eventually, would see satisfaction and value increase. The percentage of New Zealanders who do their shopping at the malls would also from the present 24%.

The other argument for such spatial and visual enhancement hinges on the growing threat the computer 'super-highway' imposes to both retail trades and community. New Zealand developments are much more modest than those being made in the States, where multi-billion dollar deals aim to have millions of consumers connected by the year 2000. The highway has the potential to go to millions of homes which do not even own computers, as "intelligent" devices are becoming available that can be attached to your TV or phone-line, and even wireless gadgets that fit into the palm of your hand. "Unlike standard cable boxes... set-tops will come with built-in chips for receiving 500 or more digitally compressed channels of pay-per-view movies, home shopping shows and interactive games..." (Tynan, 1994:76). Such technology allows shopping, banking and other transactions to take place within the 'virtual mall', all as easy as pressing a button

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on your remote or key board and entering an ID number, Tynan tells us. What this means - and it is already happening in some households - is that travelling to work, the supermarket, the library etc., will no longer be necessary. People will actually work at home through the net, going to work once a week for briefings. The large supermarkets that stand as the anchor stores for most malls could become obsolete. With their food so heavily branded, shopping could just as easily be done through the net with a courier service delivering orders to your door the next day.

Such innovations at the moment cost money, and as such remain beyond the average household's budget. But, as I have illustrated, the consumer's sense of value and satisfaction within the mall is fragile, leaving the mall in a possibly vulnerable position with regard to such developments which are inexorably on the way. Nevertheless, the sociality of the mall still remains a major draw-card for many of its patrons, therefore, providing this is at least equal to that provided by Net services, consumers should continue to frequent it for its leisure and social importance.

Summary

Chapter four has argued and demonstrated that the mall does have a socially significant role within the community. However, as with all landscapes of consumption, these spaces are exciting, entertaining, and mystifying. But they are also scorned as shallow, inauthentic spectacles, which distort the real conditions of nature, meaning and social relations (Shields, 1992). The following chapter will explore these themes further: examining whether malls are a product of modernity or postmodernity, and as such, do they hold for the consumer possibilities of alienation or liberation?

Modernity or postmodernity, alienation or liberation within the shopping mall?

This chapter, via an examination of the degree of modernity extant in the mall, will investigate whether it is a site of alienation or of liberation for the consumer.

Structurally the chapter proceeds as follows: firstly, brief definitions of modernism and postmodernism; then Baudrillard's, Jameson's, and Harvey's theories (reviewed in Chapter 1) will be applied to the shopping mall; and finally, the 'armchair' approaches of these three theorists will be reassessed against my own practical fieldwork findings. This final section offers an interesting contrast between two opposing arguments on just how open or closed the mall is in relation to age, gender, ethnicity, and class, and the level of autonomy the individual has within this space.

Modernism and postmodernism - what do they mean in the mall context?

Modernism, which is most obvious in the era of capitalism and industrialism, is perhaps best explained by illustrating the various processes it recognizes. Modernism is most blatant in the era of capitalism and industrialism. Various transformations can be linked to that period: in politics, the development of a spectrum of political parties, parliament, and democracy; in culture, the emergence of nationalism; in economics, the specialization of labour, improved technology, and management strategies; and in the social, increased literacy, urbanization, and the decline of traditional authority.

Postmodernism is typically associated with late 20th century Western society. Where modernism, as Marx noted, was hallmarked by inequality through the very nature of capital accumulation, postmodernism (or post-industrialism) is typified by its claim to go beyond the traditional boundaries of gender, ethnicity, and class. In postmodernity,

diversity is instead (supposedly) welcomed. This is because productivity in the postmodern era is reliant on knowledge, stimulation, and creativity to create new ideas to meet the demands of batch production rather than mass production. Mass production, relying on labour tied to production-line industry, was 'modernistic'.

However contentious the distinction between modernism and postmodernism may be, there is no doubt that a new era has come about. The postmodernists claim that we have entered a 'novel' stage in sociocultural 'development', which, to be effectively understood, requires new concepts and theories such as the celebration rather than condemnation of difference. Exactly how modernism is distinguished from its "post" stage is debatable. The generally agreed-upon distinction hinges on postmodernism's rejection of the 'meta-narratives' or universals that marked the work of the enlightenment theorists like Freud and Marx (Best and Kellner, 1991, and Antonio and Kellner, 1991). Their theories are dismissed on the grounds that they have an ulterior conspiratorial function (Harvey, 1989) in creating an illusion of "universal" human history. Modernism, then, is typically judged against certain dominant standards; postmodernism commodifies everything and is judged in terms of what is pleasurable and makes money.

The exact nature of the transformations postmodernism sees in relation to other cultural products - such as aesthetics, architecture, and economics - are, once again, debatable. But transformations they are. It is in theorising about the incorporation of the individual into postmodern culture that the various positions of postmodernism become apparent. "Some theorists were celebrating the new diversity and affluence, while others were criticizing the decay of traditional values or increased powers of social control. In a sense, then, the discourses of the postmodern are responses to socioeconomic developments which they sometimes name and sometimes obscure" (Best and Kellner, 1991:15). These differences in theoretical positioning are perhaps best exemplified in the work of Baudrillard, Harvey, and Jameson. I shall discuss their work and relate it to a framework for theorising the shopping mall.

Analysis

The mall will be examined both for its architectural qualities and for its uniqueness as a social space for the individual. I will examine the complexities of post-modernism in relation to the mall. For instance, such issues as the power of the sign, interdependencies, hyper-reality, to what level the individual is recognized, security, and control, will all be discussed. I look at these phenomena under two lights: firstly the way Baudrillard, Jameson or Harvey would; then a critical discussion of the mall that draws on my fieldwork. The fieldwork information provides an interesting empirical critique to the 'armchair' theories discussed.

Baudrillard, Jameson, and Harvey all comment on the sign and how its emergence has led to an increase in the fragmentation of the self. The pervasiveness of the sign is apparent in the mall, and it is indeed a tool consciously worked and cultivated by the retail lessees in the St Lukes mall. For example, clothing stores with names such as 'Identity', 'Preview', and 'Politiks' (see photograph 10) exploit the concept that 'you are what you wear'. Similarly, the Foodhall, in a different but interesting manner, also relies heavily on the play of sign. A hat or a flag can stand for an entire culture. With ethnic' uniforms to boot, eating in the mall is designed to take you to different locations around the world (see photographs 11 and 12). This is exactly what Baudrillard saw occurring in contemporary society. Baudrillard believes postmodernism is signified by 'commodity associations': now the commodity is valued because it confers prestige and power, whereas under modernity these were bonuses of class position.

Clark and Hanson (1985), in their pop-culture article on malldom in New Zealand, also note the way signs provide the sensation of a 'global excursion' in the food halls. But they view this space as providing a world of illusion and hidden hustle: "In the food-halls a meal takes shape in less time than it takes you to decide on your order. And once you've eaten, a uniformed cleaning brigade silently and swiftly descends on each vacated table to remove all traces of the casualties from this culinary clash of the codes" (1995: 55). In my
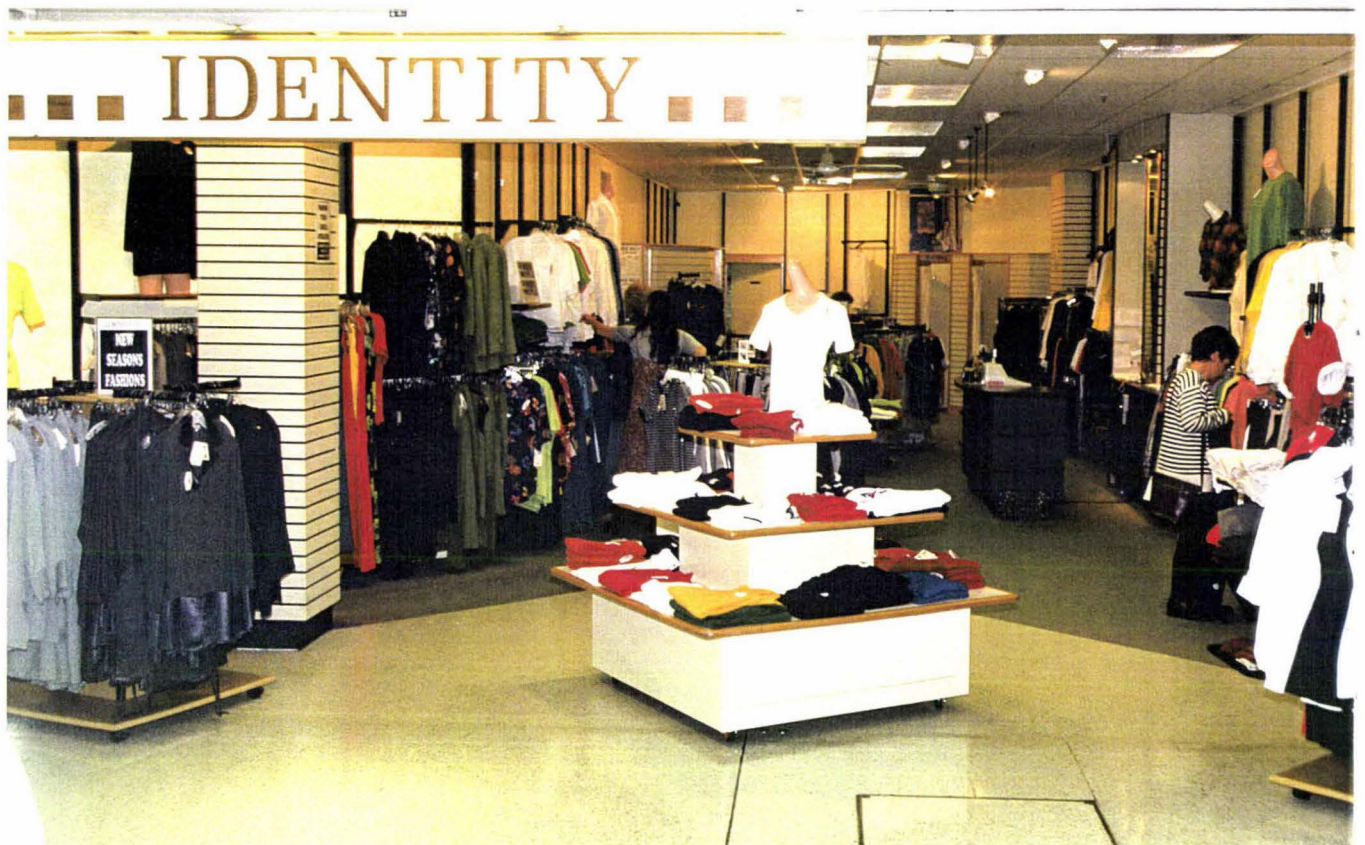
Stores such as 'Identity' exploit the concept that 'you are what you wear'.

Photographs 11 and 12 illustrate the pervasiveness of the sign in the food halls. The huge variety in foods gives the consumer a culinary sensation around the globe.

initial formal interviews with consumers, "cleanness" and "convenience" were repeatedly mentioned as positive features of the mall.

Indeed, it is pleasurable to be in a clean space, yet the idea of workers discreetly cleaning up behind the consumer starts to make strong links back to the work of Baudrillard, Harvey, and Jameson. They point out how postmodernism can serve to disguise traditional power-relations and relations of production.

Baudrillard would argue that the convenience provided in the mall simply brings the consumer one step closer to being tied into an inescapable chain of interdependencies, which, in the end, simply serves to mask a form of powerlessness. Harvey, likewise, sees services and convenience as reinforcing his view of the mall as a middle class space. Services are a luxury (although a very modest one within the mall); as such, a definite class and power dynamic is taking shape - master/servant - that maybe not everyone can afford. Ogonowska-Coates (1995), in her study on supermarkets, notes a similar relationship: "... the supermarket promises the customer a 'fantasy of choice', but the reality is that the customer is always constrained by budget restrictions" (1995: 1).

At one level, Ogonowska-Coates's arguments in regard to the supermarket can equally be applied to the shopping mall. The mall on the surface is open to anybody - of any race, class or gender. No purchase is required. But this is only, one could argue, on the surface. An interview I had with one smaller boutique owner supports this. This retailer told me how she keeps out unwanted clientele. In the interview we got talking about 'foot-traffic' and how it correlates to turnover and rents in St Lukes. I said, "There are 10 million people who pass through this mall per year, isn't that good?": her reply was, "But not through my shop. These are quantity not quality measures. A lot of people within that figure are coming to St Lukes to go to Big Fresh and K Mart. We are aiming at a different socio-economic level and we don't want that sort of person, they are bewildered when they come in here". So here is a store owner who deliberately displays a set of signs in her

St Lukes is a classic atrium mall. A glass ceiling, iron railings, tiled floors, and 'real' indoor plants, Baudrillard would argue, creates a sensation of confusion as we try to decide whether we are inside or outside.

Artificial palms at the St Lukes Groups Manakau city mall blur the real and the unreal.

store that are designed to alienate and disorientate those socio-economic groups who are unable to understand or afford them.

Baudrillard, Jameson, and Harvey would all argue that television culture, the other media and advertising can be held partly responsible for enabling the consumer to read the signs that lead him or her to the store that matches their cultural habitus. Yet not only is this a style issue, but also an economic one to reduce the psychological and emotional anguish that occurs when we are shopping above our means. With a simple glance at a shop's front window display, most consumers can instantly read the suitability of a store to their lifestyle without even having to enter. As the following quote demonstrates: "Simon, a 14-year-old from Glenfield, Auckland, had Shore City Galleria's Action Downunder summed up. 'That's for the rich dads', he told us without hesitation" (Hanson and Clark, 1995:55).

Nevertheless, the mall does contain a variety of stores to provide for variations in cultural habitus. It is because of this, I believe, that malls are so successful - they can appeal to different strata of experience.

Baudrillard provides an excellent analysis of the blurring of experiences. He argues that postmodernism creates a pleasure zone (real or imagined) by taking the most appealing aspects of different worlds and bringing them together under the one roof - he calls this hyper-reality and simulation. In the mall, his theories on hyper-reality and simulation can be seen at work. Inner and outer are confused - atrium style malls, such as St Lukes, with vaulted clerestory roof, indoor plants, iron railings and tile floors, blur the distinction between inside and out (see photograph 13); and the blurring of the real and the unreal (as photograph 14 shows) is likewise at work. The mature 'artificial' palms give an illusion of age, and an open-air atmosphere to this mall.

'Natures Window' (Photos 6-8 - in Cht. 4) is an excellent example of a store that blurs the real and the unreal, the inside and outside, and provides a fantasy ambiance. This shop presents a miniature pastiche of the real world - offering itself as a combination of

entertainment and consumption all under the one roof. This shop, at least in the present stage of retail development, is relatively unique, going against Harvey and Jameson's theories on the homogenization of space (see chapter 1). Hanson and Clark (1995) also comment on hyper-reality, writing: "Often, whole shops create their own visual reality, so that the experience of gliding from store to store is like zapping from one TV channel to another" (p. 55).

I would argue, however, that the mall goes one step further than the television. Television is stimulating just two senses, eyes and ears, but the mall, with stores such as 'Natures Window', is a saturating interactive experience giving the consumer the feeling of sensory overload. In 'Natures Window' a giant reptile lies over the entranceway of the store, stones are set in the concrete to convey the feeling of walking up a river-bed, hanging from the ceiling are large wooden birds swooping above the consumer, with an artificial 'real' water fall to top it all off at the far end of the store. This is exactly in line with Baudrillard's observations: "We have reached a point where 'consumption' has grasped the whole of life" (cited Friedberg, 1993:115). What this means is that the selling of experience is now part of the selling of goods.

I say that at the moment stores like 'Natures Window' remain relatively, if temporarily, unique, because, as Harvey theorizes, a consequence of flexible accumulation is that if the hyper-real shopping experience proves successful it will be used as a stereotype for all other shops of its kind. Thus homogenized, will they then become boring to the consumer (as Baudrillard argues), leaving marketers no choice but to think of something even more new and exciting in order to sell their products? The inevitable conclusion to such marketing strategies would be, I believe, a consumer world made up of homogenized artificial 'micro-worlds'.

Such a nihilist prediction on the manipulation of reality and the homogenization of space may lead to a better understanding of Jameson's discussion on the breakdown of temporal order, giving his writings on schizophrenia more significance. As Harvey comments

(1989:8): "The other side to the loss of temporality and the search for instant impact is a parallel loss of depth. Jameson (1984a;1984b) has been particularly emphatic as to the 'depthlessness' of much of contemporary cultural production, its fixation with appearance, surfaces, and instant impacts that have no sustaining power over time".

Swingewood (1977) discusses, from a position comparable to Harvey's, the way in which postmodern culture "weakens" our emotional experience, while advertising, radio and film "impoverish" our spirit. "Mass society is thus characterised as a relatively comfortable, half-welfare and half-garrison society in which the population grows passive, indifferent and atomised; in which traditional loyalties, ties and associations become lax or dissolve completely; in which coherent publics based on definite interests and opinions gradually fall apart; and in which man [sic.] becomes a consumer, himself mass produced like the products, diversions and values which he [sic] absorbs" (Swingewood, 1977:11). Shopping for personalization and imagination, then, has become lost in consumer society. This is - apparently - because mass produced goods must now appeal to such a vast homogenized consuming public, since distinctions between classes have, in Baudrillard's words, "imploded".

Legat (1988), writing for 'Metro' magazine, is equally concerned with the sustainability of recent shopping mall developments in Auckland. Apart from the threat the 'mall-boom' poses to local businesses and neighborhoods, Legat also comments on the effects such retail developments have on the individual. She views New Zealand as following overseas trends in trying to create giant "hypermarkets" - but "The giant, everything-under-one-roof approach... can be seen as marvelously convenient or the death knell for personalized shopping..." (p. 72).

Nevertheless, is there anything wrong with giving people what they want? After all, "In the seven Auckland local authority areas there's just over one million sqm of operating retail stock, 280,000 sqm of that is mall/shopping centre area" (Sheridan, 1995:42). So

there must be an attraction and desirability to the mall shopping experience, despite what some postmodern theorists would have us believe.

In the interviews I carried out at St Lukes, consumer enjoyment was also apparent. When asked *"What attracts you to the mall?"*, the typical responses can be categorized as: "convenience"; "the freeness of the place"; "ease of access"; and "value"; and in every instance the consumers responded "yes' to the question *"Do you prefer the mall to the traditional strip-front shop?"*. Similarly, when asked *"Is there any thing you dislike about the Mall?"*, the only consumer who could think of any negative aspect responded: "It's not big enough" - and this was in St Lukes, the largest mall in the country!

A commonly recognized negative aspect of the mall is its supposed impersonality. When I interviewed the architect he acknowledged this. I asked him Whether or not he thought the strip front shops differed much from the shops in the shopping mall. His answer was: "Yeah, the rents will be quite different. There is more personality in them, mall shops are much more individualistic, they have been choreographed, highly polished. There is a sameness, but there are differences. It is like Disney: you are creating a totally new environment and it is totally organized, so this guy expresses a genuine personality and so does the guy next to him".

The 'flexible accumulation' that Harvey makes reference to has led to an increase in competition between the malls. Thus, free market competition between malls has left 'quality' and service no longer an exclusive luxury for the consumer: "When it comes to products and services, today's consumers have more choices than ever before. As a result, their standards have risen dramatically" (Paterson, 1991: 10). So, while some of the 'little things' have been lost in the mall - for example, the first-name informalities you could once expect from the corner dairy and individual store personalities - it is wrong, I believe, to say that character, personality, and individual service are absent altogether. They have, however, evolved into new froms. There is the free crèche facility available for parents who shop at St Lukes, a 'mother's room' for those who want to breast-feed or change

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nappies in private, a help desk for the lost, plus other amusement and recreational activities for children. My second fieldwork trip to St Lukes was during the school holidays, and Minicar rides were provided - admittedly at the parents' expense - for the children (see photo 5 - in Cht.4). Such consumer services characterise the mall, Harvey believes, as a family destination. But they are services driven, he argues, by a corporate struggle for the public's time and space. Impersonal it may be, and driven by capitalist interests, but service remains critical to the malls popularity.

Another development within postmodern space that serves to heighten the feeling of impersonalization, Jameson believes, is escalators and elevators. "Here the narrative stroll has been underscored, symbolized, reified and replaced by a transportation machine which becomes the allegorical signifier of that older promenade we are no longer allowed to conduct on our own: and this is a dialectical intensification of the autoreferentiality of all modern culture, which tends to turn upon itself and designate its own cultural production as its content" (Jameson, 1984:82). Photograph 15 shows how correct this interpretation is as we see consumers force-fed through the consumption machine. Technology, as Jameson asserts, has surpassed the individual. No longer is there a need for legs inside the mall, as the escalator transports and incorporates us into the overall machine. "Dawn of the Dead", a 1976 movie by George Romero (see Plate 1), also plays on the horror of impersonalization within postmodern society. "In 'Dawn of the Dead' zombie shoppers ride the escalators in a lobotomized exaggeration of consumer robotics" (Friedberg, 1993:116). In this film the mall is portrayed as a runaway machine, everything has become mechanized: the escalators, fountains, video games, and automated voice-announcements all loop in continuous repetition.

However, Freidberg is sophisticated enough to also recognize the flip-side of Romero's portrayal. Drawing this time on Ira Zepp's movie/documentary "The New Religious Image of Urban America: The Shopping Mall as a Ceremonial Centre", she writes: "Ira Zepp describes the mall as a sacred ceremonial centre where 'people are meeting their needs for renewal and reconnection'. Whereas the mall serves as a locus of alienation in Romero's

For Jameson, the escalator heightens the feeling of impersonalization and alienation as technology has surpassed the individual

Plate 1

In "Dawn of the Dead" (Georege Romero, 1985), zombie-shoppers ride escalators in a labotomized exaggeration of consumer robotics. (cited Friedberg, 1993:117).

film, Zepp claims, 'the need we have for solidarity with one another is a religious expression.' In this argument, the shopping mall becomes a ritual, a rejoinder to spiritual impoverishment. The commercial basis of the mall 'community' provides a tangential secondary gain" (Friedberg, 1993:118).

The mall as a site for 'community' was strongly reinforced in my interviews and observations. Thirty-three out of 78 people in my survey went to the mall strictly to buy; 38 from 78 went to the mall for various social reasons; and the remaining 7 went for miscellaneous other reasons. What these figures show is that just short of half the consumers surveyed were coming to the mall for social reasons (as concluded in Chapter 4). For them the mall is a meeting place (see photographs 16 and 17), similar to the town square - only the mall provides easy access, easy parking, and a constant temperature. As one elderly man participating in my consumer questionnaire replied when asked *"Why have you come to the mall today?":* "To look around and shop". Then I asked, *"In a typical week how many times would you come to the mall?"* - "Nearly everyday, mostly in the evenings to do shopping. I have got to know some of the people here. I like the company and it's good for me to get the exercise".

Another complex and debated issue in the mall is security. Security can be seen to alienate the individual, as extensive security systems make the mall a giant "seeing machine". Foucault argued that surveillance was a basic facet of modernity. Power and control was exercised, he argued, through our knowing that we are being watched. The mall reproduces this relationship.

Jameson (1984) also discusses the way discreet security systems in the mall manage to mask power relations, which serves to reinforce his hypothesis that the traditional power structures of modernity are still in place. But now, Jameson argues, they are just more sophisticated and deceptive - on the one hand we are the observer (powerful); on the other, we are also being observed (powerless). For Jameson, all we are in fact experiencing is simply the third phase of capitalist development.

My observations and interviews in the mall showed that the space is not totally individualized. It provides a site for people to meet, catch up with old friends, and a destination for a days outing.

In the mall we are both the observer and the observed.

Photograph 19 is wide-angle shot of the mall. It reveals the glass ceiling the large elevator running up the centre of the mall, 'the eye in the sky' (video camera in the top left-hand corner), and the lay-out of the stores.

Security in the mall soon became apparent during my fieldwork. On several occasions I was approached by both plain-clothes store detectives and uniformed security guards and asked if I had permission to be carrying out surveys and interviews. Applying the conventional wisdom that 'if you are doing nothing wrong you have nothing to worry about', I did not find this objectionable. As John Long, the architect, stated in his interview, "... that is why shopping malls have come about - to give control". Later he added, "I think one reason why people like malls is, if you walk down Queen street, you see a gang of kids roaring down the street on skateboards, this is not very secure, the security guards would have them kicked out if they tried that in the mall. I have seen terrific places in the States where they have watch towers in the car-parks, with armed guards. This is on the outskirts of LA and what they have done is built these new subdivisions, because the people living there were concerned their kids were getting sucked into gangs, and they moved into these - these are like public places that have been privatised, they are what they call planned communities, they are owned by the developers". Ilmi Pilkington, St Lukes Centre Manager, was quite open about security within her mall, calling it a form of 'in loco parentis'. She said that "Mall owners must ensure the mall is a safe place, as if word gets out that cars, for example, are getting broken into at a particular mall - it's bad for business".

Shields (1992) also recognizes these controls in the mall. As private property adopts the guise of public space, he tells us, it must also take over its social roles - that being protecting citizens 'negative rights'. From my observations, not only do these security workers protect the consumers, but also the retailers, and unfortunately they seem to be a necessity. John Long told me: "We manage a couple of malls, and the most amazing thing happened in this shop, in Pakaranga - it is not exactly a tough kind of bogan area, and there were girls involved as well, and then even the mother came over and started attacking the shop owner as well. This is just unbelievable...".

There is nothing new nor postmodern about security. It is 'trans-modern' - existing before, during and after modernity. What is new and what is postmodern is the form security takes in the mall. The controlling base for security has passed into private hands leaing it now commercialized and profit-orientated; when it was government controlled, it was funded by and for the community It still is, of course, through rents and prices: the difference is in the profit component and to whom it is answerable. Harvey interprets such shifts as the result of the corporate multinational free-market ethos which serves to 'limit the state's capacity to control business and provide a welfare function'.

When a government is under pressure (either fiscally or from libertarian philosophy) various 'luxuries' - which for many people are necessities - fail to be provided. 'Slash-backs' have been occurring for many years in New Zealand. 'ACT' gained 6.2 per cent of New Zealanders' votes in the 1996 election - so it seems the Roundtable's ethos will be taken further: "The Roundtable's dream state is so minimal it all but disappears... That's only part of the formula for getting lean and mean and staying that way" (Evans, 1996:8). Governments, then, are taking the path of least resistance, creating a 'mini state - maxi society'. Privately operated security in the mall, then, is just another instance of 'community' in its traditional form being transformed by postmodern (or multinational corporate capital) influences.

This brings me to the final concern of my analysis: the amount of control the consumer has while in the mall. Friedberg (1993:111) states: "In the game of shopping mall consumerism, the ball is the consumer and the shop window the stick". While shopping is about choice, we must ask ourselves, how much choice do we actually have? There are the obvious financial restrictions that limit what we buy, but what about the ways in which our decisions to buy are (in most cases) influenced by displays, advertising and what we see in films and on TV. Ogonowska-Coates (1995) says: "'I think it is important for people to realise they are being set up. It is called a market, but it is not really a market. What choice do people really have? It is easy to be lulled into feeling that shopping fulfills and satisfies and provides a life enriching experience in return for the products that are purchased... but

out there in shopperland it's all so different" (p. 1). Yet for shoppers, it is not entirely a matter of false consciousness. Many consumers are aware of the inequalities of exchange, yet appreciate that most pleasures in life have a price. This attitude came through in my consumer interview questionnaire. When I asked the *"value"* they were receiving from the shopping mall in relation to other activities, the consumers frequently rated the shopping mall poorly. They knew that whenever they came to the mall it was inevitable they were going to spend money, but accepted this: hence *"satisfaction"* remained relatively high.

By the same token, if the bat is the shop window, and the consumer the ball, then the mall itself must be the hands on the bat. This view became evident in the retailer interviews I carried out. The retailers were conscious of the little control they had over their retail space, and this remained a matter of concern for them. They do not own their space - which, in terms of Marxist analysis, is the basis for a relationship of inequality and exploitation. One retailer clearly articulated the control management places over 'their' space: "Management insist upon high standards - particularly at St Lukes, so that there is no way a sub-standard shop is allowed to survive here, and that's part of the lease conditions". I commented: *"so your space is actually controlled by St Lukes?"* Her reply was: "Yeah, they control me." This was not an uncommon response either. Another retailer responded a similar way when I asked him *"how he thought his shop in the mall differed from a similar style shop on the strip?"*. He said: "We have to stay within our lease boundaries a lot more. We are a lot more restricted in what we can do and when we can do things". I then asked *"what he saw as the down-side of having a shop in the mall"*. He replied: "High rent and no control over the hours.".

One small retail chain owner, who has been in the retail industry for 18 years, told me that, in order to survive in retail in Auckland, you really do need to be part of the mall scene. He also owns a shop on the strip in New Market, so it was interesting to ask him what differences he saw in the two spaces, and again it hinged on foot-traffic and leases. He too admitted to being 'controlled' by St Lukes, saying: "We are committed to refitting the store every two years before our lease is renewed, which is good in a way because it keeps

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the standards up. You have to be reasonably strong to survive under the rental regime in the mall situation, so you end up with a very strong retail centre because any weak link usually doesn't survive... Rentals are high, but it's relative... But I know where I would rather be, and that's in the mall".

What the interview responses from the retailers suggests to me is that within the malls we are seeing almost a return to a feudal lord and serf relationship. This lends support to Harvey's and Jameson's interpretation that postmodernity has held on to some of the fundamental strands of capitalism. With respect to the St Lukes Group, Harvey's analysis of flexible accumulation is particularly astute. Companies such as St Lukes can now shift with ease between the realm of 'production', the 'built environment' and 'finance'. As such, they are now the controllers of retail and leisure time and space, particularly as malls become increasing dominant in New Zealand - just as they are in America and around the developed world, leaving those that choose not to become part of the mall trend a hard road to survive. This is the central criticism of malls, the punishing effect they have on the 'small' retailer.

Sheridan (1995) believes that the mall-boom New Zealand is experiencing has come about as a result of the 1991 Resource Management Act (RMA). This act allowed a free-market ethos to be introduced into town planning (again lending support to Jameson's arguments on postmodernism as an extension of capitalist hegemony), which has seen power go to the developers and not to the retailers. Sheridan quotes Mark Tansley (Director of 'Marketplace New Zealand Ltd.'): "Retailers don't have a lot of clout. They're not organized as an industry in a centralized way" (1995:42).

It does seem as though Mall development is being promoted rather than controlled in the free-market economy (self regulating as it supposedly is). Many small retailers and town planners are now pleading for development in an organized and planned form that takes into account the repercussions on the corner dairy, the local business strip, and even the cannibalisation of the malls themselves.

The St Lukes Group, with a tenth mall planned in Albany, are gaining control of people's lives as they gain more and more control of both time and space - and hence money. Rent rises in the last year have given the St Lukes Group a 9.6 per cent boost in profit to 28.6 million - "Despite the relatively flat shopping sales, it was 'likely' St Lukes would this year repeat the level of rental growth of the year just ended, St Lukes managing director Paul Preston said. There was keen demand for space, and not just from Australian retail chains" (Dominion, 17/8/96:18). From this quote, the mall is revealed as being in a dominant position. Despite the retailers' lack of growth, malls have created a demand for space so that the retailers must now dance to their tune, and those who cannot keep up are mercilessly left behind.

Agee (1993) writes with regret of a growing 'underclass' within New Zealand. He believes that malls have come to reflect the 'new' distance between our 'haves' and 'have-nots': "On the one hand, as a consumer I see a steady growth of up-market shops and merchandise. Evidently retailers enjoyed a boomer of a holiday season. On the other hand, unemployment is at a record high. More and more people are jobless. While many New Zealanders spent freely at Christmas, others had empty pantries and had to rely on volunteer agencies for their meals" (Agee, 1993: 50). To illustrate his argument that malls exemplify class variances, Agee takes an interesting angle. He contrasts the 277 Mall in New Market on Broadway, a very 'upmarket' mall which has shops aimed directly at the middle to upper classes, with the Royal Oak mall set on the edge of middle-to-upper Epsom and lower-to-middle Onehunga. While the 277 mall boomed, the Royal Oak's development was struggling, with many stores moving out to higher-foot traffic areas. The reason for this, he believes, is a growing divide between the rich and the poor. The upper classes have more money in their pockets - hence retail industry aimed at this group is booming, while where it serves the less affluent it is struggling.

What emerges is evidence of a growing segregation between the classes. As stated, St Lukes is aimed at 'house-wives with three credit cards'. This serves to corroborate

Jameson's and Harvey's arguments that we are becoming increasingly shielded from the plight of the poor. As Harvey writes: "The voices of the homeless sadly went unheard in a world 'cluttered with illusion, fantasy and pretense'" (Harvey, 1989:335).

Where, then, does the retailer rank within the mall? This is an issue Baudrillard, Harvey and Jameson all fail to consider, integrating retailers simplistically into the overall mall structure, when, in fact, as argued, they are anything but this: rather they are obliged to kneel to the dictates of management.

My prediction is that the small independent retailer will be forced out of the larger malls and sidelined to the malls like the Royal Oak, for example, where rents are less but so too is the foot traffic and the average wealth of its patrons, factors critical to a mall's survival, as Agee (1993) argued. This will leave malls such as St Lukes catering as a space for the larger national and international chain and franchise stores, and as such becoming totally homogenized pleasure zones providing for the middle-to-upper classes. Photograph 20 starts to reinforce these arguments as we try to differentiate one London Bookshop from the next; stores of this type rely on proven formulas to sell their product, and the supermalls will take this even further.

Summary

I have systematically discussed the mall in relation to the work of Baudrillard, Jameson and Harvey. My analysis could perhaps be viewed as a 'running with the hare and hunting with the hounds' style argument - which is exactly the way I feel about the mall. From one angle the mall is a space to be celebrated, sponsoring community arts, child care facilities, hanging-out areas for youths, families and the elderly, and - as Baudrillard views it - a postmodern pleasure zone of fantasy and aesthetic enjoyment. Yet the mall can also be seen as another step towards multinational corporate capitalism and its individualistic values, as Jameson and Harvey argue, continuing many of the power dynamics that are associated with modernity. This gives the mall an anomalous placing in the community.

One can see that while there are differences - there is also a sameness in the shops within the mall. Chain stores, such as 'London Bookshop', rely on proven formulas rendering it almost impossible to distinguish one store from the next - almost anywhere in the world.

For the middle classes, my research showed that it does indeed foster community, meets people's needs for renewal, reconnection and identity reinforcement, and provides a safe secure place free from the blight of crime. But for the poor who are unable to decipher the codes, or cannot afford to meet their desires, it is a space of alienation and psychological and emotional strain.

Conclusion

The interviews and observations carried out in this study indicate that a sociality and community does exist in the St Lukes mall for its patrons, even if these functions have been transformed in keeping with the era of postmodernity.

The data gathered from the surveys indicates that for over half its patrons the mall plays some social role and for the rest it is simply functional. There appeared to be three reasons for the mall's success: culturally, it provides a meeting space for those who want to "hangout" or enjoy shopping as a leisure activity; economically, it proffers itself as a rational 'one-stop-shop'; and socially, it serves as a space for reaffirmation in a shopping fraternity. However, the information I gathered on the consumers' sense of 'satisfaction' and 'value' rated relatively poorly, placing the mall in a vulnerable position as new forms of entertainment and consumerism come to the fore.

Chapter 5 argued that there is a relationship between seeing the mall space as a place of sociability and one's social class. As malls are privately owned, many of the pleasures they offer to the consumer come at a cost. For a long time malls have marketed themselves to the catchment areas they are set in. The St Lukes mall, a very middle-class mall, provides for its target population a site for renewal and reconnection. But it is also important to remember that the negative effect malls are having on shop owners in strip front situations, also happens inside the malls themselves. Through my interviews and discussions it was concluded that the boutique lessees within the mall are still in a position of powerlessness, which is not generally recognized. Their voice is not listened to: the malls instead pay attention to the demands of the big fish in their pond.

The implications for those who cannot afford the pleasures laid on for the majority are serious. As I argue, it seems as though Government will continue to take the path of least resistance, expecting private business to take over the role of providing leisure and community services. Private business is willing to do this - as long as they think they can

make money out of it - and leisure services should consequently become more sophisticated; but they now come at a cost to the consumer. Thus, for those who cannot afford to satisfy their own hankerings, the malls will represent a space in which they are on the outside looking in, and, as such, alienated.

My suggestions in Chapter 4 for the future of mall development go some way towards adjusting these inequalities. As I argued, malls need to incorporate business-sponsored shows in the centre court area, and otherwise develop their shops around habitus, so that enjoyment can be derived not only from buying - but from just entering the store. But as Chapter 5 suggests, such stratgies need to be developed in a controlled way

Possibilities for further research in this area are vast. I have three suggestions that would build on the groundwork of this thesis: firstly a comparison between malls aimed at different socio-economic groups and the varying levels of satisfaction and value they provide; this would undoubtedly substantiate my claim that shopping malls are fulfilling for the middle classes and alienating for the poor. Secondly I would like to see a major photographic study on when, where, and how consumers are using the mall. This would rely on Caldarola's (1985) 'medium application method' (which I attempted to use). A co-operative venture with a mall could see the incorporation of their video surveillance information into the project. Such a study would aid not only the malls, but also the social scientist, in showing just when and how people are using 'public' space. Finally, I believe more attention needs to be paid to the small retailers. They were incidental to my study, but I believe their voice deserves to be heard so that we can ensure they do not become a endangered species before the advabces of multi-national consumer capitalism.

Whilst the conclusions are tentative, the implications of this research are of significance when we look at the future of mall development and the repercussions it has on community, sociality, and the small retailer. This exploratory study has not only conceptualized the mall under a new light, but has also revealed many fruitful ideas in relation to community and big-business in today's setting. It has, in the authors opinion,

contributed towards a better understanding of malls and the social roles they play - which can be extrapolated further to other areas of social life that are becoming increasingly privatized.

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Appendix 1

Research proposal forwarded, and accepted, to the St Lukes Group for Stage Two of consumer research.

What's drawing people in?

Introduction

I am a Massey University Social Science graduate majoring in anthropology. I am currently writing my thesis on "The shopping mall as the integration of consumption and leisure". The primary outcome of the project is to develop a model of the shopping mall inside its cultural, economic and historical context. This model will hopefully not only accurately describe the mall ecology, but also be efficacious in **prescibing** mall behaviour and trends.

Proposal

Although my original research plan wasn't directed specifically towards providing market research information to mall owners & managers, it has become apparent that with a relatively small adjustment to my methodology, my model can provide useful predictive capacity in anticipating on trends in mall use. The opportunity I see for St Lukes is to provide financial assistance to me in reconfiguring my original thesis structure to provide information that would assist you in capitalising on these trends and thereby increase the effectiveness of your marketing dollar.

What this means to you

I propose that together we agree on the specific questions that would help you in your corporate objectives, and that I incorporate these into my underlying model and research plan. The outcome of my work would be a bound report to St Lukes Shopping Centre with the results of my research and an outline on how my triadic model might enable you to more effectively anticipate the future.

Summary

Models are simple abstractions of the world that attempt to map the underlying territory. A simple "content" model provides an ability to **describe** the modelled domain - as such it is only useful in illustrating what we already "know". The model I am working on moves beyond *description* into ***prescription*** - that is, it attempts to understand underlying process and trends of the mall "world" so that the future might be estimated at odds better than those without it. It is in this sense a metaphorical crystal ball. Would you like to help me build this ball?

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The shopping mall as the integration of consumption and leisure

stimulation

cultural

economic

shopping as
a leisure
activity

increasing demand
for stimulation

time

leisuring

new meeting
place for people

shot in the arm

retail therapy

time

more materialistic
culture

MALL

public
space

consuming

the one stop shop

demand for
more convenience

time

more big
business