

The Social Affects of Using Private Space as Public Space



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Abstract

Public space is a topic of great interest these days as it is extremely limited. The concept of space that is open to all and allows for the proliferation of social interaction is an ideal. Shopping malls have tried very hard to be the new town marketplace or public square and have often promoted themselves as such.

However, their private nature does not allow for the full spectrum of social interaction that true public space offers. This understanding is important as it has a serious affect on those who hang out at the mall for extended periods of time, particularly young people.

By defining public space it can be shown that shopping malls, while they may present themselves as public spaces, are not true public spaces. An examination of how malls as private spaces limit access to certain individuals emphasises how shopping malls are not the new town square, as all are not welcome. Finally, how shopping malls control the usage of their space shows that these spaces are only available for what the private owner's deem to be appropriate social behaviour and ideas. Any activities that are contrary to their list of appropriate uses are not allowed.

By limiting who uses the space and what uses are made of the space shopping malls affect individuals by stunting their social interactions and activities within these spaces.

Research Question

Are those who use shopping malls as a substitute public space affected in their social development?

Research Approach

Research of scholarly journals was primary. Several approaches to this research were taken, looking at public spaces, as well as private spaces, and how social interaction occurs in each type of space.

Behaviour is monitored



Retrieved from: http://ecx.images-amazon.com/images/I/41YUfKDW1L_SL500_AA300_.jpg

Sign Restricting Specific Attire



Retrieved from: <http://www.sciencebuzz.org/sites/default/files/images/heelysign.jpg>

Research Results

- Public space is a place where anyone can gather freely and communicate ideas or information, with the space being able to be used for many purposes or functions.
- Shopping malls are designed for consumption and movement
- Access is limited by class (those who can afford to shop), race (colored teens), and even by age (parental escort policies)
- Malls limit what ideas can be presented within their walls
- Corporate ideas of appropriate behaviour are encouraged through signs and security.

Conclusion

While shopping malls appear to be public spaces, they are private and as such limit access to people and ideas that do not further the image of consumption.

Due to these restrictions on population and ideas, shopping malls can affect social behaviour by stunting it. Individuals who hang out at malls frequently will miss out on important interactions with individuals and ideas that can further their social experience.

True public spaces do not offer these restrictions and can allow for the full social development of individuals.

Pioneer Courthouse Square, Portland, OR



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Bibliography: Please refer to available handout

Further Research

- Are public spaces truly public spaces, as they are typically owned by governments
- Are public spaces the best way to encourage a complete social experience
- Is there opportunity in communities to encourage public spaces and the social experiences they engender

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Shopping Mall Security



Retrieved from: <http://lansdownplace.com/security>

Teens At Mall



Retrieved from: <http://raisingable.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/mall-teens.jpg>

Security Guards



Retrieved from: <http://jessebofgrundy.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/security-guard-2.jpg>