

How building typology influences the natural movement economic process: Micro spatial conditions on the dispersal of shops and cafés in Amsterdam and Berlin

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Abstract

It is generally known that traditional shopping streets contribute to urban diversity in terms of street life, location possibilities for smaller entrepreneurs, high diversity of shops, and social control and coherence in streets (Jacobs, 2000). A genuine understanding of the micro spatial conditions of the traditional linear shopping street is essential in order to protect or develop these areas successfully.

This research aims for an understanding on the micro spatial conditions under which traditional shops, cafés and restaurants flourish. A registration of these enterprises in Berlin and Amsterdam has been carried out and been compared with configurative analyses of the street net, population density, block size and building typologies. The inquiry has the following hypotheses:

- Shops will always search for an optimal location such that they can reach as many potential customers as possible. If this optimal location is affected through changes in the city then shops will relocate themselves to a new optimal location. However, planning restrictions can interrupt the natural movement economic process.
- Building typology and the way buildings are inter-connected with the street influence the location pattern of shops.

Earlier research on the spatial conditions of shopping areas shows that high spatial integration and high inter-connectivity of the street net tend to be successful shopping areas (Hillier et. al. 1993, 1998, van Nes 2004). However, research on how building typologies and density influence shopping areas are not taken sufficiently into account yet. Therefore this research focuses also on building typologies, population densities and its effect on the dispersal of shops and catering enterprises.

The results show that filled in blocks facilitate most enterprises, hollow blocks facilitate enterprises less well and non block typologies serve enterprises very poorly. High population densities, the number of high rise buildings and block size correlate less well with the presence of enterprises. A street with high connections to its vicinity, or with high local and global integration is not always a condition for lively shopping streets. The building typology plays a crucial role in terms of a combination of a high floor space index, the facades following the street line and a direct adjacency and inter-visibility between inside space and outside space on ground floor level.

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