

Planning healthy cities - the role of markets in urban life

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1 ABSTRACT

Liveability of urban areas depends on the quality of common urban places, on the places where people unintentionally meet with their neighbours. Thus it is the quality of life in the neighbourhoods and within it the routines of our everyday life, which defines the quality of our urban lives. Food shopping is a necessary activity of our urban lives and we spend more and more time on the urban places for shopping. The places of shopping, the food malls and markets are taking an important position in our everyday life in the city. The importance of markets is visible from the many markets which have been redeveloped and being under reconstruction in the past years in Budapest. But how can we foster good quality urban places from markets? What are the architectural considerations for creating a welcoming community public space and what other urban development arguments lead the work of our urban planners, these are the questions, my paper tries to unfold. Therefore the question of my research is not about the architectural quality of the buildings but rather the quality of life created in these market places. The research is based on the qualitative interviews with urban planners and architects active in Budapest in the last 5-6 years in reconstructing urban public spaces in and around market halls.

2 INTRODUCTION

„Our final conclusion is that going to market gives you pleasure, even for people like us, busy intellectuals, if not other time than on a Saturday morning.” (Piackalauz romantikusoknak, 2004)

“More than just public spaces for buying and selling food, public markets are civic spaces – the common ground where citizens and government struggle to define the shared values of the community. The public market is society’s conscience – the place where we can see, hear, taste and smell whether or not government is doing its job.” (Tangires, 2005)

Markets as urban institutions are praised from all aspect. They are taken for pleasure while at the same time they are praised to be the backbone, the conscience of society arguing that markets are truly democratic places. But what it is in markets which make them so unique and important in the quality of urban life? What is the secret of markets? How can the urban space transform the duty of shopping into a pleasure-seeking experience? In this paper I aim to unfold the physical and architectural characteristics of markets which enable them with that commonly hold idea of democratic quality.

Reflections on market places are even more important for two reasons; people get more conscious about the food they eat and local authorities get more conscious about the markets they run, and evidently there must be some causality between them. Firstly food shopping is becoming an important activity within our public life. We spend more time buying our food, and care more about the quality of our alimentation. “While stores have gotten larger, more pervasive, and less personal, we have sought refute in the old forms of farmers’ markets. ... All over America, shoppers are showing greater awareness about where and how their food is produced, and demanding closer relations with their suppliers.”(Zukin, 2004) Food-consciousness gets into people to search for high quality food, to choose ecologically friendly food, or food from bio agriculture and if possible preferring first hand contacts with farmers. Shopping places are one of the most important public spaces of our time. A good deal of our time we spend in private spheres, in our homes and in our workplaces, offices. Most of the time left in-between the private tasks we spend more time for shopping. Therefore it is important how well they are designed and how much they enable contacts between people or rather they are isolating people.

The second reason why we give more importance to understanding the mechanisms of markets is because there is a strong public interest in market renewal in Budapest in the last few years. There have been several market halls and market areas renewed in Budapest in the last 6-8 years. Bigger market renewals include some of the XIX century market halls, such as the Central Market hall, Battyhány and Rákóczi market halls, and also renewals with more intense alterations such as Fehérvári úti market hall which encapsulates the market place from the 70s, the market cum housing estate of Garay square, the market attached to Mamut shopping mall, the Fény street market, the Lehel market which today has an average daily 25 000 visitors.

Besides these renovations and renewals there is an even greater upsurge of renewal on the way. Mostly it is in the outer districts of Budapest, where local authorities are restoring the markets. Such is the case in Sashalom, Újpest, Rákosmente, XII district, Zugló and Budafok. We should use the experience of past urban developments and market renewals for the benefit of the new ones. We have to use what is there to be learnt from past experiences in creating good quality urban places through market renewal.

The importance of shopping places in our society and the importance attributed to market renewal by local authorities in Budapest are underlined by the third factor for market renewal. If markets are well designed they are able to transform the necessary activities of shopping into the social activities of meeting, seeing and hearing other people, and thus markets can be an infinite source for social interactions. This observation is underlined by the research performed by PPS: “In a society so often marked by divisions rather than commonalities, an incredible thing happens at markets: people talk to one another. Perhaps it’s the informal environment, the shared interest in uncommon and beautiful varieties of fruits and vegetables, or the joyful mood created in bustling markets” (Spitzer et al., 1995)

Activities to be performed in public spaces require different attention for their urban design quality according to Jan Gehl. Gehl has developed a very simple three-fold typology for outdoor activities, by dividing our daily movements in cities into necessary, optional and social activities. He argues that people perform necessary tasks such as shopping regardless of the quality of urban environment. According to him optional activities will take place only if time and space allow it, and social activities are the results of other people in public spaces. “Social activities are all activities that depend on the presence of others in public spaces. They develop in connection with the other activities because people are in the same place, meet, pass by one another, or are merely within view.” (Gehl, 1971) If shopping is only treated as a necessary activity, than there is no need to be concerned about its quality and physical characteristics. However if it is to become a thriving urban place: its urban quality is at stake. Social activities are dependent on physical conditions of the urban public space.

“Although the physical framework does not have a direct influence on the quality, content, and intensity of social contacts, architects and planners can affect the possibilities for meeting, seeing, and hearing people – possibilities that both take on a quality of their own and become important as background and starting point for other forms of contacts.”(Gehl, 1971)

In this paper I aim to unfold the architectural and design characteristics which make markets so bursting urban places. It has a high importance for future urban development and market revitalisation projects: not only to create places for shopping activities but at the same time to help encourage civic life and social activities around the urban space of markets. The research is based on seven qualitative interviews with architects responsible for the renewal of urban markets in and around Budapest. The interviews were conducted in the summer of 2009 and they lasted about 50-120 minutes. My aim has been to distil the essence of market halls so that future urban renewals will be more aware of the functioning of urban markets as places for social activities, social interactions and thus they will be more readily available in creating quality of life around them.

3 HOW IS A MARKET DIFFERENT FROM A SHOPPING MALL?

3.1 Layout

“The market hall at Battyány square was transformed into a kind of department store, losing its spontaneous, free atmosphere typical of the market; instead of a market, it became a commercial institution. ... The overly regulated nature of the building at Fehérvári Road destroyed the entire atmosphere. And now that it has been transformed into a market hall, its character has become even more hybrid. The whole form is fettered hand and foot: it is a market and not a market, a market hall and not a market hall. There is no particular expression in it architecturally, beyond its own practical solutions.(Siegel & Uhl, 2005)

What changed the building so radically at Battyány square market that it forbade us to call it a market? What changes puzzled Szalai at Fehérvári market? Is there a real difference in the organisation of space between open markets and market halls, except that one is covered? In this chapter I will try to find the basic characteristics of markets which distinguish them from other shopping places. From the most spontaneous weekly open markets organised on removable stalls to the traditional architectural design of market halls of Budapest from the turn of the century markets have some common threads, common characteristics, which

enables us to differentiate them from shopping malls or hypermarkets. And if we are able to find the major characteristics of a market, then we might also be able to find out why its atmosphere is so much praised, from where comes that openness which makes them such attractive public spaces.

Markets are invading us through all our senses. “So what is it that makes the market hall and its architecture so special? The market hall affects all our senses, accomplishing something that commercial architecture nowadays rarely does.” (Gran, 2005) They have something to offer to all of our ears, eyes, tastes and fingers: smells, forms, tastes and colours all ready to affect our senses. “It is good to enter into a market because of the smells; one feels the smell of fruits, of vegetables. This compound effect of smells and colours of markets, the condensed presence of fresh goods into my senses which makes it feel good. The market is where 100 different vendors sell the same good, and you get simply crazy not knowing which one to choose, since they all look gorgeous. (Kertész)

A market is a rustic shopping space. The market attracts all our senses. And thus they create a very naturalistic atmosphere. There is something familiar and closeness in markets. The smells, colours, sounds lead us into the world of the market, which is therefore more rustic than other types of shopping places. The smell of tomato together with rotten fruits and the odours of the sour cabbage give a mixture of smell with a touch of human respiration in it too. But interestingly it does not end up being revolting, when there is such penetrating stink in it. This is all very naturalistic. In a shopping mall I cannot feel the smells, since everything is refrigerated, neither the colours since the lighting deceives our eyes.” (Kertész) However it is just as much the design of markets which allows and enhances this sensuality, the fusion of the different smells and sounds and also this makes them distinct. The space within markets treats shops and shoppers differently from the big department stores or hypermarkets.

Market is a shopping space where the shops face outwards into the common open public area. “It is not like I go into the shop, but I just stop in front of it at the counter and shop like that. The shop belongs only to the vendor, at the rear there is the sink and service area, and receives the goods, and have vegetables and empty boxes. I am separated by the counter.” (Rajk) And in this respect there is no different between stalls and shops, between open markets and market halls: the goods divide the zones for vendors and for shoppers in both types. On the contrary in a shopping mall the shops are all inwards-looking, in order to get into contact with the vendors I have to step inside the shop, and thus I disappear from the public area of the mall and from the public eye as well. And thus a shopping mall which would seal off the different vendors into separated shops would allow neither the free flow of smells nor the extent of social activities and the fusion of experiences. Thus there is a very strong and distinguishable element which clearly divides market-type urban spaces from non-market type spaces.

Rows of individual shops where one have to enter would not help comparison shopping and thus would reduce the time of strolling. Once you enter into a shop you made up your mind to buy there something. If you come out empty handed, that means you rejected the shop and would not venture back into it again. Whereas market stalls encourage comparison shopping. And it also has psychological consequences too in relation to my behaviour towards fellow shoppers. While in the private areas of a shop I step into a more delicate and more personal area. In a market the life is going on out in the common space of the market, on the aisles which do not belong to any particular shop owner or vendor.

The aisles within the shops or stalls are neutral grounds, they are not the private spaces of private shops, but they belong to the common area of the market, which allows us to behave more freely “Throughout history, markets have been neutral ground, encouraging people to gather, make connections, discover their similarities, and appreciate their differences” (Spitzer et al., 1995) People will not disappear into the secrecy of small shops only to return with something hidden in their shopping cart, but are out and open about their choices, also about their budgets, about their tastes for other people to look at. The life in the aisles gives a higher level of opportunity for watching people and for this reason markets become places for social activities. In a market I would not offend other people by watching them doing their shopping. Markets are the greatest places for people-watching, and thus for social activities. And the shops merely provide a veil for the life going on among them. It is therefore the general layout of markets which generate this common ground for social activities.

“Best of all, even if you’re by yourself at the farmers’ market, you’re never shopping alone. Unlike in stores, strangers often talk to each other.”(Zukin, 2004) This is what transforms the shopping activity into social

activity: markets through their use of space allow much more encounter between fellow shoppers and does it with a high level of openness: we can see other people to choose, to talk to the vendor which will in turn inspire us to talk to other people too.

Returning to the original question, now it seems easy to respond. It became easy to decide whether a shopping area is a market hall or a shopping mall by studying the stalls: do they face outwards? Thus the market hall at Batthyány square has become a shopping mall, by turning the shops inward, by closing off activities into different small entities. However Fehérvári road market hall maintains its market like atmosphere by the imminent contact of shoppers and goods, by the open layout of shops and stalls, and thus by the social activities it is able to create.

3.2 Density

Besides the layout of the shops there is another factor which attracts even more people on the aisles of markets: the density of shops. "With great distances in the urban plan, there is nothing much to experience outdoors." (Gehl, 1971) The density of shops is although not as clear cut as the orientation of the stalls but also very important feature of markets. Gehl's statement is not only true for outdoor streets but also for markets and inner shopping areas. Within markets there is twice as much shop on the same surface area than within shopping malls. The size of shops within a market do not exceed 25 sq meters, while in shopping centres there are around 50-100-200 sq meters. It seems than in Budapest not all local authorities are aware of the choice they have to make between the benefit of intense social activities created by small size shops and the economic considerations of larger floor area shops. "I doubt that they had some kind of background study, since the call is very vague. For every shop size they give 20-50 sq meters, which means, I can make double or half size buildings. It will become the responsibility of the architect how large shops and market building to design." (Kertész) In order to have intense life on the markets market stalls should be as small as still achievable to do business in them. "To accommodate the greatest number and variety of vendors and to keep the cost of rent affordable, the size of each stall should be minimized." (Spitzer et al., 1995) There might be need for one big supermarket, and even the central market in Budapest has a supermarket on the -1 floor, however it should only be a supplementary function.

It is the many little shops which give life to the market. One can never get bored since it is so quick to get to the next stall and have a look on another pile of goods. The numerous many little stalls help circulations since it forces people to compare prices and go back and forth between stalls to make up their minds. With two steps one arrives into a different world of vegetables or cheese. And as we learned from Jane Jacobs (Jacobs, 1961) "the sight of people attracts still other people, is something that city planners and city architectural designers seem to find incomprehensible." Allowing single vendors to occupy many stalls to create an oversized single-stall on the long run could ruin the mix, the intensity and the liveliness of the markets, and therefore should be avoided.

Thus markets differ from shopping malls and other shopping centres in the arrangement of space which helps enriching encounters and social activities. The ratio of aisle floor area over shop floor area is higher in markets. Markets foster the highest possible number of stalls to be arranged within them by having small available rental places and in turn this policy would also keep customers off the limits of the shops and forces the people to go around the stalls. Since most of the people are visible on the paths within the shops or stalls there are more people to look at, there are more chances for social activities. Both of these architectural features are contributing to the good quality of urban public spaces since they foster encounters and help the density of social activities. Therefore it is this physical attribute what helps creating the lively, open atmosphere within the market.

"The activity generated by people on errands, or people aiming for food or drink, is itself an attraction to still other people"(Jacobs, 1961) Looking, gazing, watching are according to cognitive theory important stimulus seeking behaviours. In a market as in many other public spaces we want to see each other; it is the view of other people, the swarming of people which makes the quality of our urban life. In markets there are plenty of opportunity for flaneurism, for watching other people to browse, to select, to shop and to chat with vendors and fellow shoppers. Thus we can argue that markets are certainly unique shopping spaces since due to their architectural layout they foster social activities, they promote social interactions. For this reason the quality of the public spaces of markets is worth further analysis. In the next chapter we will look at the most

important architectural attributes of markets which are perceived as important factors for high quality public spaces.

4 ARCHITECTURAL AND MANAGERIAL CONCERNS FOR MARKET PLANNING

In Budapest the most common form of a market is the covered market hall. There are only a few exceptional temporary markets, such as the so-called MDF car-booth markets and the weekly market on the Havanna housing estate, which are both open markets and work only on Saturdays. Most markets however are more stable and are open daily from 6 am until 6 pm, except Sundays. The layout within the market halls is traditionally just a few rows of tables within the main hall area, while small shops are lined up by the walls of the market. At some markets even in the main hall individual stalls have been installed, such is the case at the Central Market. The most complex buildings, such as the Lehel market and the Fehérvári úti market can have more levels and also can accommodate other functions such as the post office or pharmacies, so complex that many people would not even call them markets any more. These markets all manage to flourish social activities within them although to various degrees.

Looking at the many different types of market layouts one starts to wonder why one is working better than the other. What makes good quality urban design when it comes to markets? In this chapter I will analyse three different aspects for good quality market design: the arrangement of the site, some amenities at markets and the role of nostalgia towards the “lost rural paradise” in the form of family farmers. Whatever is the type of building of the market these factors are important for the quality of the space and for the quality of life the space can generate.

4.1 Arrangement of the site

The arrangement of the site is the backbone for any market and something which have to be thought about in advance, since these are characteristics which cannot be altered later on. Considerations include obtaining the right size for the market, the system for uploading goods, and allowing good circulation within the market. I will give detailed explanation of these aspects in this chapter.

The market works well if it occupies all the space available for it. If there are empty stalls and empty areas it results in a feeling of decay. The market is best if it has a somewhat crowded atmosphere. The market is good when it is full. You have no desire to enter an empty market. It is extremely difficult to estimate the right size, which gives this pleasant well proportioned feeling, but endures the peaks of Christmas and Easter too. (Kertész) However municipalities at many market renewal projects aim to increase the size of the market building, mostly for financing the cost of reconstruction. The size of the new market building is decided according to economical return considerations, and the size is blown up for higher rental revenues. From both social and economical point of view this argument is mistaken, since it will cause a somewhat loose space. Unless new market buildings accommodate new functions such as new community play areas or libraries, etc. or otherwise there are fundamental societal changes in the area – new transport lines to attract more visitors, new housing development, or changed travel patterns and its supporting parking facilities – there is not much reason for building a substantially larger market than what an old, well-functioning and not-overcrowded market occupies.

“The market was not an architectural challenge but a societal. There are so many personal interests at play at a public development. We were given an enormous programme, which, I am glad, did not succeed. Only two third of the original plan has been created because the municipality run out of money in the last moment. I personally believe that the first part, the open hall would have been enough for a bit more compact, but still well functioning market, and would have given more open public space.” (Berzsák)

The size of the new market is decided in the municipality. It should be the role of the local authority to commission studies about the use of the market, to create a sound programming for the development project. (Kertész) A usual solution sought by local authorities to increase the floor area of the market on the same site by introducing second, third layers. This would create a more relaxed space distribution on one level and at the same time doubling the rentable floor area. However second layers rarely work.

What we learned from the 100 years of experience of building market halls, that it has been confirmed that the galleries don't work. In the central market hall it is a tourist attraction place, but it does not work in any other place. The market hall in Hold street is echoing from emptiness. It is a cursed idea. We managed to get

around it by putting the parking lot on the top of the building, so for those who arrive with a car that will be the main floor. Muddled up the senses of people with this idea and aired some life into the upper floor. (Rajk)

There are definitely problems with the gallery at Csepel market, where no business could be charmed up to the gallery. It could be added that second layers are prone to be dead if the main floor area is in itself too spacious or the gallery is not comparable in size with the main floor area: it is just an add-on. In Csepel both of these assumptions are true. Such non-essential, non-functional second floors are the hardest to rent and the hardest to give life to them.

The manager of the Lehel market has taken the two levels of the market as a challenge. He was the first manager to invite different public functions into any market hall in Hungary, even before shopping malls have started. He invited the post office to be settled on the gallery level of the market, and later on the land registry office and a pharmacy. In this way it is only the main floor of Lehel market which is still a market and the second floor is not a market any more: it is more a shopping centre or a mall, since the new functions do not have the same outward looking atmosphere, but rather they are individual shops. Another clever deception has been done at the Fehérvári uti market for the benefit of giving life into two layers: the street entrance is halfway between the main and the first floor, while the size of the two levels are nearly the same, so it is really hard to decide which is the main floor.

In the market it is the hall I am most proud of. It is a very harmonious space. And we managed to create a good circulation system, with the escalators, the stairs, and the bridges. It is easy to look through all three levels and easy to circulate among them. When you enter you feel the swarm, the noise but at the same time the building, the built environment gives to it a kind of strength, a frame, maybe because of the materials, the walls and balustrade are made of cement, it is massive but at the same time pleasant. (Kertész) At Fehérvári uti market even the third level – which is the level for the restaurants and buffets – is widely used. And it is due mainly to the ease of the circulation with the inviting escalators and the many options to move between the levels, which just shows that it is not really the number of levels but the ease of circulation which matters. The gallery level works ok, but would be much better if there would be more connections between the main shopping area and the gallery. (Vörös)

“To facilitate circulation and comparison shopping, nearly all public market halls operate on only one level. Basement or second-story spaces generally are difficult to lease, and the businesses located there often do not perform well.” (Spitzer et al., 1995) It is therefore not necessary to stay only on one layer within a market, but rather it depends on the ease of circulation whether a double or triple layered market would work or not.

Wide enough aisles would accommodate shoppers to stop and chat without disturbing the flow of people, otherwise number of small talks and spontaneous conversations would lessen. However if the aisles are too wide people would be too worried to start talking to other people. It is the closeness, the crowdedness of the place that people are forced to bump into each other which helps them to start conversations.

The ease of circulation at markets not only means the flow of people but just as much attention should be given to the circulation of goods. On contrary to the social encounters generated by bumping into each other at markets, it is rather distracting when big bulky carts knock down people, or force them to move and spoil the ongoing conversations. The most obvious aim in terms of the free flow of people: “that goods and people should not meet before they meet at the stalls”. In other terms they should not cross each other’s ways during uploading. The traditional way to solve it comes with time-regulations, but with changing patterns of wholesale markets it is becoming less and less capable of managing uploading. The rhythm of inflow has changed and instead of only arriving at the early hours of the day, now it is throughout the day that fresh goods arrive to the market. Than another option is to use – if exists – the cellars for the transport of goods and having internal corridors within the building for the stalls. Basement levels are also useful for storage capacity allowing minimal space-use of the main floor area by single farmers.

Another popular option is to have outdoor upload for the market. This would mean that the stalls around the walls of the market are all facing inwards, and that individual vendors are able to park their trucks next to their shops back-doors. However this option should be avoided if possible. Since the space given shop owners would prefer park their truck at their shop entrance allowing only the minimal amount of goods to be taken into the shop. This custom however blocks passageways and gives an un-orderly look to the whole market.

To put it shortly the market works well if it occupies densely its space, if it has a good circulation which eliminates the disturbing encounters between goods and consumers. Compact, full but not overcrowded, is the essence of a good functioning market. For this reason the layout should be easy to understand and also should be easy to get around. Stalls and shops should be kept to a minimum size, while aisles should give a comfortable space to pass by people but not as wide as to prevent from zigzagging. And if the local authority is aiming for multi-layered market then the layers should have equal importance and multiple and easy to use options are essential to circulate between the two levels. If possible underground uploading and storage facilities would help good circulation within the market, or otherwise strict time restrictions for loading should be enforced. At the next chapter we will look at the factor of additional amenities for well functioning markets.

4.2 Amenities

With the dawn of supermarkets shopping has changed its fashion and its rhythm. New shopping markets also changed our shopping habits. If markets are to survive the upsurge of shopping malls and supermarkets they have to accommodate new requirements for comfortable shopping. "These days we do not have time to go to the market. Maybe the elderly have to whom it is a great place to hang around. But we are more worried to find a parking lot, or not to overrun the time meter." (kertész) It is true we need more time at the market. Comparing qualities and prices, lingering around it takes more time than just go to the supermarket. If physical conditions improved users would lengthen the average time spent at public spaces. This is true when a street gets pedestrianised (gehl), but also it is true for markets. We spend twice as much time at markets as it is necessary to do our shopping. According to a survey at Lehel market hall 60 % of people spend more than 3 hours at the market at once. It is the clear cut result of social activities at the market. "This is why we have decided together with the deputy mayor, to allow cars to park for free for two hours. One can easily do their shopping in 1 hour, but than they would have no time for social life." (Balogh) Having this in mind the management of Újpest market when opened a car park they let it have free for the first two hours.

Another idea was developed by the Lehel market which also relies to a higher degree on shoppers with cars. They found out in a survey that the average load people carry is about 6-7 kilo, while the average time spent on the market is about 50 minutes. To boost shopping capacity of customers and to encourage them to spend more time at the market they introduced shopping carts familiar to us from big supermarkets. "First in Europe it was at Lehel market that we introduced shopping carts at a market. Shopping habits have changed, but when I first introduced even my colleagues were dubious. Now people are complaining at the municipality that there is not enough of them. We have to follow the changing shopping habits." (Vörös)

It is thus the change of shopping habits to which Lehel market responded positively. "We had another dilemma with the market: to have a shopping cart at the market or not. The biggest difference between a market and a supermarket is that in the market the goods I have in my cart I have already paid for. And thus we approached the company producing the shopping carts to develop a type which could be closed from top, with a kind of lid. We should not vision customers only in the old fashioned way: that people come with two big baskets which they would drag home. People will shop less without a shopping cart and thus it would hold back the good functioning of the market." (Rajk)

Thus changing shopping habits and needs should be accommodated at markets. It will not be a fairy-tale market from our childhood any more, but people will continue using them. And as long as the essential features of the market will not be destroyed by compromises they are worth taking. Changing shopping habits are visible not only in the use of transport to get to the markets but also on the activities performed at markets. Markets are becoming not just mere shopping areas but social hang-around places and thus the importance of leisure activities, cafés and bars and social happenings are rising.

In recent years open air Garay market has been redeveloped into a shopping mall-housing estate complex while the market was transferred to the basement. Shops are empty in the mall and thus also the market struggles for life, half of its stalls are always empty, there are few customers who can find their way around and still like the place. However it has one lively area: an open area in the form of a horse-carriage where people are free to sit down to eat or just wait, relax. The same style of sitting possibility has been installed at Vác market where vendors started to alter the form of the market to their own taste. "The owner had put out a kind of grape harvest cart something, which is ok at a harvest but here at the market? People are not

supposed to sit down at market. However if there had been a request, it should have been down precisely, and at another area, but not just like that.” (Sáros)

For a market to foster social activities it is important to have places designated for relaxation, for eating or drinking. Pubs, cafés and eateries are essential parts of any lively markets. Amenities for eating would foster users to linger around in markets, spend more time and boost even more action. “In public markets, commerce coincides with intense social interaction, so adequate space where people can linger is desirable. Benches or tables and chairs should be provided if food is sold for eating on the premises.” (Spitzer et al., 1995)

However these areas are very difficult to create at markets, since the functioning of markets would eliminate any rentable space for more commercial activities, thus reducing even the in-designed spaces for lingering. “The problem is that life would wipe out such places for lingering. If it will not be in the way than there something else will be put in its place. We can’t really create comfortable sitting areas since the management will eradicate them and the space will be rented for money. Maybe outside the market, that would be good and at Fehérvári although there are some possibilities to sit down, however that is not very welcoming.” (Kertész)

This need for sitting and chatting is a new impulse at markets and articulated with the hollowing out of other shopping spaces. Since commerce in the narrow sense has more or less abandoned markets as institutions, with other institutions having much higher revenue, they are searching for their own niches. Thus being able to sit down at markets is becoming an important factor for taking pleasure in shopping. This is the case at Vienna Nashmarkt but also at Fehérvári uti market which has a striving eat-in area. The secret of this market area is that the benches, chairs and tables do not belong to any individual shop-owner, they are free public spaces overlooked by the community of the restaurants. So people could freely sit down, even to eat their own food, sandwiches and bakery products. The more neutral a sitting area becomes the more attractive it will become for market users to linger around.

4.3 Family farmers

Thus communal spaces where people gather, maybe eat a sandwich or have a cup of coffee are getting more and more important at markets, just as much as the marketing power of family farmers. Family farmers, called *őstermelő* in Hungarian are the icons of Hungarian markets. According to the general opinion they are not trade businessmen but farmers who sell their home-grown food and they are the essence of the market experience.

According to my experience the market is different from a mall because here we have family farmers. We are lucky to have in a year around 120-150 family farmers at our market, who would bring in the freshest of the goods, picking the goods on the day before. They are real family farmers you can see it on their dresses, on their products. For example they would not come in the winter months, since although they have some vegetables, potatoes, onions or apple but not that much. (Balogh)

However in most of the cases this idea seems to be outdated. “What have changed in the life of markets is that these days there are no more family farmers. It is just a mere legend. The classic old lady who would get up at 2 or 3 am to take out fresh radish and carrot from the soil to pack it up and take it to the market... this is just wishful thinking, a kind of nostalgia. Instead experience shows that these people are lacking capital to rent a proper shop. So they also go out to the wholesale market in the morning and resell whatever they buy at the market.” (Rajk)

Family farmer is a vanishing occupation and most of the sellers at these stalls are just tradesmen without enough resources to rent a shop. There are other urban legends told by the architects themselves that professional vendors would hire old ladies to dress up in old traditional folk costumes to sell at the stalls opposite their shops.

Whether it is true or not it shows the importance of family farmers in the marketing of markets. I am not sure, that the market would remain market without the “family farmers” (Rajk) It shows the level of attachment of people to family farmers and the kind of trust and authenticity they create. It is not the farmers themselves but the space and the atmosphere they create which is important. They are part of the market show. Family farmers are part of the marketing features of the markets.

It is not only the people themselves but the physical space created by the presence of family farmers within the market hall is important for the atmosphere. Therefore including a space for family farmers is essential for the “feeling” of the market. There is a strong pressure on market managers from the society in search for authenticity. The part of the market where the open stalls are is the liveliest in Lehel market hall. At other places for example at the Central market it is a different case. Here family farmers are less numerous and less visible as well, being at the back entrance of the market. “The most thriving and most profitable part of the market is in the middle. There where we have installed the stalls for family farmers. With the way to put the stalls into the middle of the market we could re-create the old fashioned market atmosphere of the old Lehel market.” (Vörös) This is the place within the market with the most talking and watching, this is the loudest corner.

The professionalisation of the farmers brings challenges for the physical space. „Changes in the occupational structure are also more visible. Even at the family farmers’ stalls – from which there are 100 at Lehel market – they would rent 4-5 and they would bring in the goods by small tracks.” (Rajk) This process is capable to eliminate the atmosphere of the space, therefore it should be guarded carefully. If we aim to achieve a market which is not only a shopping experience but also a social experience the spatial arrangement of family farmers are important in the arrangement of space of the markets. It is not the authenticity of the food but the authenticity of the space which matters. For the latter it is more important to maintain the small-stall structure, not to allow the compilation of stalls into a mega-stall. It is even more favourable to create a space for other even charity merchandise for NGO’s, school etc.

Amenities at a market have to be responsive to the changing needs and shopping habits. They have to cater for the changing habits of transportation, of changed farming patterns. Changing supply and demand structures are in odds with the atmosphere of the markets. However it will not prove to be favourable to rigidly cling to old traditions but we should be able to find the space of the market within this new structure. If it is the “marketplace” atmosphere which counts than we should be able to provide more space to linger around more amenities for sitting and chatting. And finally the reduction of family farming around Budapest should not lead to the weakening of the function the spaces of family farmers played in the life of markets but other authentic and small scale vendors could replace their places and take up their role in the social space.

5 TO CONTROL THE UNCONTROLLABLE: MANAGING MARKETS

I was accused for closing off the market at Fehérvári street. I was asked: What kind of a market is where you have to enter through a door and it is not even visible from the outside? However it was the expressed requirement of the owner: to close off the market. It was purposeful because they were in constant confrontation with the district authority, with the city authority, with the police that they penetrate the surroundings. (Kertész)

So far we have treated markets as ultimate urban places for social activities. Therefore it might sound strange that architects are ready to talk about markets as a cancer on the body of cities. It is another paradox of the markets: we like them, because they burst with life but at the same time it urges us to control this life. The most common expression and the tasks architects seemed themselves to be faced with concerning markets was that markets have to be controlled. Markets –since they are such an intense urban activity – invite all sorts of spontaneous activities: small street vendors, many of whom could be selling unofficially goods from obscure origin, and also beggars, homeless people who hang around giving help in moving heavy stuff in return of some vegetable and also petty crime. On Teleki square market there has been even a washing machine on sale in the middle of one aisle, and once I could buy real cheap – probably stolen – bicycle from the bartender. Markets cannot stay within their boundaries, they overflow their limits. Whatever hard an architect tries to control the market through vigorous design and activity planning life would overgrow it like a rainforest. Stalls would install small umbrellas against the sunshine, or put up nylons against the frost and cold, would make their own signs and advertisements or would attack aisles with their merchandise.

In Hungary the problem with markets is that it is all penetrated with the repulsive atmosphere of the market, which would infiltrate the space and quality of the surroundings of the market. And it is all because it is impossible to stop at the limits. A market would sprawl, It lives a life of its own and in no time would it become entirely uncontrollable. Stalls would shoot up from nowhere, would grow in number and illegal vendors would appear and dirt all around it. It is like a tumour which would grow uncontrollably. This is

terrible. We cannot manage a market as a closed system, which would guarantee that it will work in a cultured way. (Kertész)

The bursting life of markets is not seen as desirable by city leaders. Markets are synonymous with dirt, rubbish, with unwanted elements, with smuggling, with stinking. Therefore markets have to be controlled. However as soon as a market is deprived from all its dirt, noise, smells and frenzy it would become a supermarket. It is a strange paradox and a real urban development challenge to keep the atmosphere of the market, however within its boundaries. The question to be answered is how is it possible to control a market without losing its atmosphere, without losing its social activities. If a market will be part of a city-renewal programme this aspect also has to be taken into account. If the urban shopping experience of markets are to survive for many more decades it is important to learn how to control market activities.

There are two basic different methods to control markets, both having their own consequences for social activities. The two methods are to control markets either in space or in time. Both of them have their architectural and urban design consequences. Controlling markets in time would mean that markets are not available as public spaces for 24 hours a day. They would become temporal, visible only on special days. The control of markets in time is seen as an ideal in Hungary. "On a Friday morning [In Gent] trucks encircle the market place – there is junk there too – for an open air market. But conversely to the market in Vác at 2 pm as for a miracle everything disappears and at 3 pm one can eat from the pavement because it is all cleared up. There are no tables, no boxes, no wrappings, no stalls, nothing visible left from the market." (Sáros)

Market activities which are controlled by time would leave market squares for the evenings or on non-market days as open public spaces. This form of market is idealised within Hungary but at the same time conceived as unmanageable for mainly two reasons, from the vendors' stance and the other is from the managers' stance.

"In Hungary it is absolutely impossible to have a temporary market, mainly from the vendors' point of view. If he has to remove his goods and even his stall is removed and the space is cleaned after him, well he would not feel secure enough to be able to come next week. It is a security issue for the vendors; the continuity of the rental is only felt evident if the stalls are rented continuously." (Sáros)

"The model of open air temporary markets proved to work for thousands of years, however at the moment it is not an option in Hungary. Everything is ridiculously over-regulated, to the point where it becomes unconceivable. Every authority puts in its own regulation. (Cságoly)

Since the control of market through time is perceived as inconceivable in Hungary; managers, owners and architects turn to control the markets in space. What it means is that outside of market hours the market is not visible, to make its boundaries clear and visible. It is done usually with walls closing it off from the surroundings. In this way it is easier to control the activities of the market and to decide on responsibilities.

"From the point of view of management it is absolutely necessary to be able to close a market." (Sáros) The reasons for closing off the markets had many very understandable reasons: health and hygienic considerations, urban beautifications, financials – since it is easier to collect the rent – and as we have seen in terms of illegal activities, responsibility issues.

These two kinds of control mechanisms of markets have different consequences for social activities. While an open air market could boost activities in a neighbourhood, it is also a shallow urban space. Out of market times the urban square would be usually empty and deprived of activities, unless the market is so small that its place can be taken up by a café. Larger markets would leave emptiness for the urban spaces. The same emptiness is different for the markets halls, since the building itself encapsulates the void of activity. It is also true although that the market hall is also more rigid and thus it would not allow alternative functions such as concerts and other gatherings. The empty space left after markets should also be carefully examined when deciding on the type of the market.

The open air market is a flexible use of urban space since it can be easily removed. It is beneficial for the vendors, especially in the cold winter months that these markets operate only a few hours a week. In the many open air markets in Paris stalls are erected only twice a week for about 6 hours. On the other hand this flexibility has consequences for the number and intensity of social activities on the market. They treat the urban space very generously, but at the same time they do not offer that much possibility for lingering as the market halls would provide.

Infrequent, open air markets, although very proficient in managing space, concentrate much more on the narrow commercial activities and allow less opportunity for social activities, for social gatherings. Installation of amenities such as common sitting areas is mostly missing from open air markets. They do not facilitate the smooth operation of cafés and eateries, and thus they are weaker in building up social communities.

On the other hand the market which is regulated in space is much more flexible in time. A covered building fosters all kind of activities. The opportunity offered in market halls for sitting and chatting is a strong force for the development of regulars. Sitting areas are not typical for open air markets but for market halls.” (Rajk) The market is open 12 hours a day, 6 days a week and is bearable in nearly every type of outside weather. Thus it is a more predictable space.

Deciding on the type of control over markets local authorities would choose also the type of social activities and social life which could develop at markets. Whether it will be just some nodding and shaking hands or also sitting and chatting – will depend mostly on the construction of the time and space of the market.

The most recent tendency in Budapest is stemming from this constant bad conscience for creating closed market halls. Architects try to re-create public spaces within the markets. To close off public spaces within market areas, to create semi-public spaces which could be regulated, and life on them could be monitored. However the question is still open that they will also be only an illusion of public space (Banerjee, 2001) or will they be part of the transformation of public space and restructuring of community life and places of social inclusion.

„We wanted, since we had no chance outside of the market, since the roads are busy, to create a public space within the market. This is why we created this small park, which is quite, but also it is possible to close down with the market.” (Berzsák)

This tendency could have different effects: to recreate the agora - the open public space – within closed boundaries is to lose its main feature, to create semi-public spaces. We privatise the public spaces. This is the question for the next decades to decide whether these semi-public open spaces will really work as community spaces and how they will affect the in-between spaces around markets, the squares whose functions had been transferred into the belly of the markets.

6 CONCLUSION

From its rustic outfit and openness, markets invoke nostalgic sentiments in people. There is a natural urge in people to go to markets, to experience markets. Also people spend more time in markets than they would need to finish the strict necessary activity of shopping. The quality of our urban life depends greatly on the social contacts we might have with our neighbours, also on our relationship with complete strangers. Markets offer a societal space which is denser and more impulsive: there are more social interactions and encounters. But we have just too often seen redeveloped markets which lag behind the original atmosphere of the run-down previous market. Markets can be communal spaces, but the functioning of the life on markets should be understood both by local authorities and architects so that they regeneration would reinforce this social quality.

“It is equally possible through planning decisions to influence patterns of activities, to create better or worse conditions for outdoor events, and to create lively or lifeless cities.” (Gehl, 1971) Understanding the mechanisms of the markets as public spaces allows us to further influence social activities, which is especially important when planning new market areas.

Many of the social qualities of markets can be found in the physical arrangement of the space they occupy. A market is different from a shopping mall thanks to its inner structure: numerous small outward looking stalls would show openly the activities going on at markets and would allow people just to look and gaze other people. The activities going on in the public area would further enhance the density of encounters and social activities. The physical layout of the markets enhances social activities and foster social encounters. The necessary activity of shopping is transformed into a pleasure seeking social activity.

However it is also true that shopping habits and needs have changed dramatically with the dawn of shopping malls and big supermarkets, which have consequences for other, more traditional forms of shopping, such as markets. Markets will not survive if these new needs are not catered for. While markets are important social

places, we should not forget: this is a competition. If I only take a market as living from its traditions and running as a public facility left from socialist times I will loose in the market forces. (Vörös) Thus markets have to accommodate new needs such as free parking and shopping carts, but at the same time it should distinguish itself from markets through the many places and activities available for social interactions. It is a kind of revised traditionalism which would keep markets not only as lively urban places but also places with strength to keep neighbourhoods together and to support social ties.

My experience is that the least specific framework I create for the life within a school or within a market, the best it is going to work. From this follows that we should start from zero and should let it develop. We shouldn't start straight away with erecting a building; we should leave it to breathe freely, to form and to develop. (Cságoly)

The biggest challenge for the redevelopment of markets is that they are both welcomed and detested urban spaces. They are full of life but at the same time they sprawl into the surroundings causing disorder and civic discontent. In the eyes of architects and local authorities markets have to be controlled or in time or in space. Since controlling mechanisms have consequences on the social activities of markets, thus controlling leaves local authorities with the difficult task of balancing social activities of the markets.

We have learned from the examples of Budapest market renewals how to influence patterns of social activities in markets, how to create better conditions for a lively market atmosphere and thus how to help creating lively cities. However there are no exact measures, a golden rule to give for market regeneration. The market is a very mobile function. Of course we should give space for social encounters, but it is in constant change. What works at 8 am will definitely not work at 4 pm. Not only spatial, but also temporal factors are at play. You cannot solve a market in a rational, analytical way. The more I concentrate on the small, analytical problems the less my building will work. All its details will work, but the building as a whole will not. I take pleasure in things and do not want to solve them how they work. Intuition will show a few options which will help. (Cságoly) The social construction of the site is so strong that life would always slip out of our analytical hands. Every market site is a world in its own and the quality of the urban space also depends on the social, physical and environmental conditions of the neighbourhood.

Interviews were conducted during summer 2009

- Balogh Angéla (manager), Újpest market
- Berzsák Zoltán (architect), Csepel market
- Cságoly Ferenc (architect), Fény utca market, Gödöllő market
- Kertész András (architect), Fehérvári úti market
- Rajk László (architect), Lehel market
- Sáros László (architect), Vác market
- Varga István Péter (architect), Újpest market
- Vörös Péter (manager), Lehel market

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