Chapter 7
Practice of Consumption and Spaces for Goods/Retail Futures

Francesca Murialdo

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0932-4592

Middlesex University, UK

ABSTRACT
The change in the significance of goods is a process that, ever since the end of the Industrial Revolution, has triggered far-reaching changes in society as the term has lost any meaning in relation to its purely functional character and increasingly come to represent symbolic and cultural contents. “Practice of Consumption and Spaces for Goods” has the aim to investigate contemporary retail spaces as complex places combining many aspects that go beyond the spatial and functional to include the physical, social, cultural, and economic.

NOT ‘JUST’ SHOPPING (INTRODUCTION)
Interiors, intended as the discipline able to build (not only) physical connections in between spaces, people and objects, has deeply changed in the last decades, being able to generate innovative and collaborative insight and solutions. Its role and scope is continuously moving fast towards new contents, new meanings and different strategies.

The tools and methods of interiors as a discipline are able to draw connections to social context, being flexible enough to be shapeable on specific situations, promote social innovation, raise awareness about values and beliefs and question established ways of living, working and consuming.

The borders of interiors discipline, traditionally blurring with art, design and architecture, thanks to its culturally and politically situated nature, now include a complex network of knowledge, an interdisciplinary space in which many other disciplines and different actors route to embrace instruments and methods of enquiry. Interior architecture and design has today to deal with strategy, business, and politics, inventing new frameworks able to engage and innovate: a wider knowledge to fit the ever-changing world’s challenges.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-2823-5.ch007
In this framework, Retail Design, both in research and practice, is particularly relevant as an expression of this disciplinary shift, with an approach characterized by experimentation and a strong relational dimension. "Practice of Consumption" explores what seems today to be one of the distinctive features we can use to describe the social, political and economic phenomenologies which, for better or worse, influence our lives.

These places' roles, organization and form, are at once mirrors and heralds of societal transformation. "Spaces for Goods" cannot be reduced anymore to their physical appearance as places where goods are presented and sold. Retail spaces are experimental and experiential, merging with public spaces, cultural and leisure spaces, exploring possible relationship between public and business, public and public, product and public.

This chapter discusses Retail Design as a coordinator of a complex network of disciplines without precise disciplinary boundaries: consumption is influenced by social convention, production pattern, politics and ideology.

The history of retail is the history of society with its rules, and human relationships. There is a huge shift in what retail is and the role it plays - the future of retail offers new possibilities and challenges for an ever-changing context.

FROM PUBLIC HAPPINESS TO PRIVATE SHOPPING

The Declaration of Independence of United States of America in 1776 states that governments are created among people to protect their Inalienable Rights, i.e. Life, Freedom and the search for Happiness: a collective project, the pursuing of a common goal, involving everyone and keeping united a society which recognizes in the search for its happiness an inalienable right.

At the end of '800 (in the United States) the main features of that culture were the acquisition and the consumption as means to reach happiness; the cult of novelties; the democratization of wishes; and the value of money as a determining factor of the value of society (Leach, 1993, p.3).

After 1850, between the first and the second industrial revolution, the General Stores start to appear in big cities. The impact of the new trade structures on the city and the appearance of this new typology, felt like an epochal revolution, capable of deeply transforming the structure of social life until today.

With the General Store, leisure has been routed towards consumption: here is where «consumers start to feel as a mass» (Benjamin, 1982).

Happiness is normally bound to relative consumption; it depends on how much our consumption is different from the one of our equals (Bruni, Pelligra, 2002, p. 113).

Goods played a critic role in the transformation of the idea and perception of happiness: as the production capacity increased, the consumption capacity proportionally grew as well and happiness shifted from a political collective project to individual gratification to be consumed just like any other product.

At the beginning of the 1980’s, Margaret Thatcher stated that «society doesn’t exist» thus definitively giving way to the idea that all political and social axioms have to be routed in the economical sphere of liberalism.
Related Content

Hotels Online Opinion Visualization
[www.igi-global.com/article/hotels-online-opinion-visualization/236636?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/hotels-online-opinion-visualization/236636?camid=4v1a)

Abstraction in Motion: Folding_Pattern – A Study about Perception
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/abstraction-in-motion/138529?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/abstraction-in-motion/138529?camid=4v1a)

An Image-Space Approach for Collision Detection Between Multiple Volumes and a Surface
[www.igi-global.com/article/image-space-approach-collision-detection/65079?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/image-space-approach-collision-detection/65079?camid=4v1a)

About Building Stereotomy: Theory and Practice
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/about-building-stereotomy/149322?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/about-building-stereotomy/149322?camid=4v1a)