BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES
The interface of shopping centres and surrounding urban public space

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ABSTRACT

Shopping centres are a prevailing feature of today’s urban life, but their relation to the public realm is frequently criticised for subtracting ‘publicness’ from the urban environment. In the last twenty years there has been a shift away from the common inward-looking and enclosed shopping centre design towards designs that attempt to embrace the surrounding areas. This trend towards the opening up of shopping centres to their surroundings has led to the emergence of new kind of spaces, where the public space of the city and the private space of the shopping centre meet and overlap - what will be termed ‘interface spaces’ in this paper. In this context, the changing interface of shopping centres and the surrounding urban (public) space is reorienting the public/private spatial interconnectivity and consequently also the urban life experience resulting in the production of new public spaces. Through the case study of the recently-developed Rouse Hill Town Centre, in NSW, this paper sets out to consider the effects that the blurring of the boundaries between public and private spaces can have on urban life and vitality.

INTRODUCTION

In agrarian and preindustrial societies the shape of bazaars and marketplaces indicated the significance of the everyday needs and desires of society. The city form was a response to socio-spatial relations, as well as economic and political structures of the civil society. This is clearly illustrated in the case of Middle Eastern Bazaar Fig. 1. Indeed the distinctive form and central location of the Bazaar has defined it as an entirely inseparable part of the city as a whole. Socio-spatial aspects of the society are demonstrated by the public space structure, the physical shape and activities within, “a dynamic ensemble of people and environment” (Dovey, 2010: 7). It can be argued that these consumption spaces were originally a city’s focal points, from which other buildings of the city developed.

Figure 1: The Esfahan Bazaar. From left to right: Plan of Esfahan Bazaar and the surrounding residential area (F.Kiani, 1985) and the current Google Earth image (2011).

Having a notion about the earliest consumption spaces, the current trend towards the opening up of shopping centres to their surroundings reveals a comparable image. In the last twenty years there has been a shift away from the common inward-looking and enclosed shopping centre design towards approaches that attempt to embrace surrounding areas. These transformations lead to the emergence of ‘interface spaces’, which have a noticeable effect on urban spaces and public life, physically and experientially. This trend towards the opening up of shopping centres to their surroundings is increasingly common in developed countries such as Australia. There are many examples of transformed or refurbished shopping centres in the Sydney metropolitan area that unlike the inward-looking spaces of big-box type shopping malls, are now open to, and integrated with their surroundings Fig. 2.
Interface spaces are new kinds of spaces that emerge where the private space of shopping centres and the public realm meet and overlap. From left to right: Interface spaces in Rouse Hill Town Centre and Hornsby Shopping Centre (Source: Author, 2011).

Shopping centres have intensely altered the public/private interface in the social and urban context, mainly in creating “semi” or “quasi” public spaces (Sandercoc, 1997; Morris, 2001); and privatisation has been generally the central focus of most public/private interpretations of shopping centres (and interface spaces). Over the last two decades, the interface between shopping centres and the public realm has been denounced as a public eliminating force (Crawford et al., 1999; Dijkstra, 2000; Kowinski, 1985; Low & Smith, 2006; Sorkin, 1992). These criticisms are mainly concerned with the involvement of the private sector in ownership, management and control of the public realm, which has had impacts on social accessibility, exclusion and community needs (Low & Smith, 2006; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2011). However recent changes in the design of shopping centres have led to the emergence of interface spaces and the consequent impacts of the changes on the urban public spaces have led to new interpretations regarding the opposing face of the privatisation debate, that of ‘publicisation’. ‘Publicisation’, according to Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo (2009: 352), is the process whereby “private spaces acquire a more public dimension”. Indeed, in the current trend towards opening up of shopping centres to the public realm, interface spaces are blurred between what has been recognised as private and what has been known as public. In the book ‘Defensible Space’, Oscar Newman (1977) argued that there should be a hierarchical approach from the public space of the city to the private space. He advocated the creation of unambiguous semi-public and semi-private spaces to provide ‘zones of transition’ between public and private urban spaces which can lead to the increased inclusion and participation of people in public life and thereby reduce of fear and crime from the urban environment (Newman, 1977). However, to Madden (2010), Carmona (2010), Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo (2009), Sabatier (2006) and Mitchell (2003), these newly emerging interface spaces involve more ‘publicness’, as they are better integrated with the surrounding urban texture and provide for a diversity of uses and users.

This introduction has briefly illustrated the issues underlying the changing interface of shopping centres (as privatised space) and the public realm. Privatised spaces, for instance gated communities, have various negative consequences for urban public life. The purpose of this paper is to consider the extent to which the negative aspects of privatised spaces are evident in the case of these newly emerging interface spaces. Hence, it is worthwhile exploring whether the blurring of the public/private spaces and the demarcation of their boundaries can be criticised in the same way and for the same reasons as other privatised spaces. This paper explores whether the emergence of interface spaces has created a dynamic balance between urban public and private spaces or results in ambiguity, unclear delineation of public/private boundaries and hence unsafe spaces. However, this interpretation delves deeper by (re)defining the public/private notion and their relationship in contemporary society. In order to demonstrate the ways in which interface spaces have created and presented in the social and urban context, Rouse Hill Town Centre in north-western suburban Sydney has been chosen as an example to explore some of these issues.

(RE)DEFINING PUBLIC/PRIVATE SPACES

The notion of public/private spaces intertwines with diverse subject areas, but often the public and the private realms have been defined by contrasting them. Such an approach, as has been marked in the ‘differance’ theory by Derrida, which places the public/private binary into two opposing positions in order to define the relationship. This contrasting approach has been primarily conceptualised in political theory by
Weintraub (2009). He defined the opposing notions of public/private in four general categories. While Weintraub posited the state and the economy as the main criteria for defining the distinctive boundaries of public and private, the sociability category, which defines the public and private realm through an individual’s self-representation, does not suggest a boundary between them. Most other public/private arguments that have been developed in accordance with this concept, do not clearly determine a distinctive boundary between public and private spaces. Shopping centres are the best instances of the boundary between public and private spaces.

The ambiguity of shopping centre spaces has been explained as an illustration of the lack of clarity about public/private boundaries in the contemporary urban environment (Crawford et al., 1999; Kowinski, 1985; Sorkin, 1992; Staeheli & Mitchell, 2007). Staeheli and Mitchell (2007) described public/private boundaries in shopping centres as rather chaotic in regard to their physical shape, open or closed in terms of their integration to the surrounding urban texture, privately regulated and owned and publicly accessible. Usually a shopping centre space is introverted and hidden from the surrounding urban context yet accessible and open to public use. Apart from the experiential ambiguity of these kinds of spaces, Newman (1977) explored that non-hierarchical delineation of public and private spaces leads to the physical fragmentation and reduce the influence and responsibility of the participants (users), often forming unsafe spaces, and the likelihood of anti-social behaviour. To avoid crime and the creation of unsafe urban environment, Newman argued that there should be a hierarchical approach between public and private spaces. For Dijkstra (2000), similarly, the contrasting approach between public and private implies hierarchy, however, the binary of public/private cannot create a definite form or notion, hence conceiving of them as a continuum, through which many shades of public/private can be created. Dijkstra’s theory suggests the ‘publicness’ or the ‘privateness’ of a place ‘sits’ within the continuum in accordance with the presupposed definitions of the two opposites, rather than assuming a clear and distinctive boundary.

Rouse Hill Town Centre is a useful example of the changing interface of public and private in the urban context of Australian cities. The New South Wales Government announced Rouse Hill Town Centre, as a benchmark project for expansion of the north-west of the Sydney metropolitan area and a model for the future design of urban centres (Rudolph & Cottier, 2006). The aim of the project was to make a vibrant town centre as well as a successful shopping centre, which resulted in the distinctive integration of public and private spaces. The physical shape of Rouse Hill Town Centre is in contrast to the standard inward-looking shopping centre design. It consists of four main blocks divided by two main streets and pedestrian paths (sidewalks), which links the shops and the surrounding areas, as illustrated in Fig. 3. Although the layout has followed environmental imperatives, such as water management (Webber, 2003), it incorporates the elements of a traditional town centre. However, the assumption of the design has been made in ways which diverge from the expected principles of enclosed shopping centres as a private property. As such, Rouse Hill Town Centre provides no explicit boundary between the public space of the street and pedestrian paths (sidewalks) and the private space of the shopping centre Fig. 4.

With this form of design and spatial integration, the Rouse Hill Town Centre has been demarcated as a shared extended urban public space into the private space of the shopping centre. Madanipour (1996; 2003a) argued that the public space of contemporary society is the precedent of the nineteenth century transformation of the urban environment away from the city of contract and exchange to the stage for public performance. To give a better picture of the relationship between public and private spaces, Madanipour (2003b) defined private spaces as properties with apparent boundaries, while shapeless public space has been produced in mediation between these private properties. Indeed, the spatial design of the Rouse Hill Town Centre has enabled the private space to benefit the public in the way that is typical of a traditional town centre. From initial observations, although boundaries of the private property (shopping centre) are imperceptible, the public space of the Rouse Hill Town Centre prevails as the dominant control over the private space. Fig. 4 shows how this conceptualisation has been represented through the design of interface spaces.
Figure 3: Rouse Hill Town Centre layout, the four precincts and the interior connecting streets. Yellow represents the main street, green pedestrian corridors and red backyards (GPT, 2007).

Figure 4: Rouse Hill Town Centre: Main street, pedestrian and shops view (Source: Author, 2011).
For David Harvey (2006) and Hannah Arendt (1958) the term public has been seen as a shapeless physical space where political deliberation generates a democratic society. This idea assigns the distinctive place of the public/private binary to an ideological arena in which democratic societies have flourished. Habermas (1991) pictured this normative frame in the liberal public space. Similarly Arendt (2004) emphasized the essence of ‘publicness’, which has generally been controlled by democratic norms. Habermas (1991) designated the separation of public/private spaces in the emergence of bourgeoisie society through historiographical analysis. Yet he articulated the emergence of the public/private delineation process in the development of definitions such as “public budget” and “private territorial rulers’ holdings”. However Carr et al. (1992) argued that the uncoupling of production, selling and consumption in the seventeenth century had changed the public/private balance; and likely has spatial consequences. Besides this they argue that social, political and economic systems have a significant impact on the public/private balance, hence initiating the establishment of urbanity and civil society. To Carr et al. (1992) the physical structure of the urban environment is rooted in the public/private balance, while the economic system determines the ownership and opportunities for development, the political system controls the rights of gathering and the social priorities of users and uses. According to Newman (1977) and Carr et al. (1992), a safe environment (or a healthy life) depends on the balance of public and private spaces, where people need to have opportunity of using both. Although in the Rouse Hill Town Centre the restriction signs, such as Fig. 5 and Fig. 6, bring ambiguity to the ‘publicness’ of the Town Centre, the mutual spatial interaction, as shown in Fig. 3 and Fig. 4, has provided a balance between public and private experiences and the ways in which users can engage in both public and private domains. The challenge in the Rouse Hill Town Centre design was not only to ensure the hierarchical approach and to maintain a physical and experiential balance of public and private spaces, but at the same time to exclude some people to reinforce the inclusion of others.

![Image](image.jpg)

*Figure 5 and 6: Rouse Hill Town Centre pedestrian path and conditions of Entry (Source: Author, 2011).*

‘PUBLICNESS’ AND PUBLIC ATTITUDE

Building on the idea of Habermas and Arendt on the changing interface of the public/private realm and the civil society, Bauman (2000) highlighted civility as a public feature that cannot be private and stated that “it is the urban environment which must be civil” (2000: 96). However, civility, as Sennett (1977) asserted, is an activity which encompasses the essence of being under the mask of a stranger which then leads to sociability. Sennett (1977; 1993) justified this idea by defining ‘togetherness’ in urban public spaces. A city has public characteristics that offer ‘publicness’, which according to Sennett is “civility institutionalized” (1977: 264). In Sennett’s (1977) argument, it is more through social interactions that the essence of ‘publicness’ has been pictured as the expected meetings of strangers in urban public spaces among which “market exchanges” support rather diverse interactions. According to Sennett (2010) public refers to those places
that enable strangers to meet and gather, to have different activities and to access unfamiliar knowledge. Sennett (2010: 261) noted that “the amount of knowledge” about other people is the best measurement to justify “being” in a public or a private realm. Consequently, private interaction of individuals such as the meeting of strangers is what the civil society shares as a public space. In this case a public space is where people have limited knowledge about each other while they are using the same space; hence the meaning of public space with the dynamic process of people’s expressions in making interactions.

However, in many versions of the ‘publicness’ arguments, the concept of public space varies between exclusion and inclusion. In order to demonstrate ‘publicness’, to Arendt (1958), Dijkstra (2000) and Madden (2010), the inclusion and exclusion criteria encompass spaces which are simultaneously usable and accessible by all. Sorkin (1992) coined the idea of visibility to the two dimensions; but neither did he or others - such as Dijkstra (2000), Hénaff & Strong (2001), Body-Gendrot et al. (2008) imply a specific place and time for inclusion and exclusion to define ‘publicness’. Yet keeping the three core ideas of visibility, usability and accessibility as the main criteria, contemporary ‘publicness’ is oriented in a different way. In today’s public spaces, the ‘publicness’ has been detached from democracy through emphasis upon surveillance and the consumption oriented city rather than who is excluded or who is fighting for inclusion (Madden, 2010). To be more specific, Staeheli and Mitchell (2007) identified the quality of access and use – either visually or physically – in order to foster an alternative ‘publicness’. Upon these understandings, the presence and emergence of public interaction may justify some kinds of exclusion (Iveson, 2003). Indeed, the current urban public spaces exemplify the new directions in exclusion and inclusion, which also coincide with the need for sociability. Fig. 7 is the main square in the Rouse Hill Town Centre, an interface space, which illustrates this fact. The Rouse Hill Town Centre designers emphasise the spaces in which shopping centre serves as a vibrant urban public space. As such they introduce a particular public and gathering place, where people are welcome to perform under particular norms. Staeheli and Mitchell refined this dynamic approach as a “process of inviting – and uninviting – people” (2011: 83), or the production of a new urban public space.

![Figure 7](image.jpg)

Goheen (1998) labelled this dynamic process of people’s interactions with the term “public attitude” in order to demonstrate the influence of society’s expression on shaping public/private boundaries. The value of public space originally emanates from where people have an opportunity to orient their ‘inside out’. Accordingly, public attitude is responsible for the process of the making and remaking of the urban environment. This attitude creates a meaningful and dynamic process as different uses and meanings are always susceptible to change (Goheen, 1998). Therefore, this trend towards the opening up of shopping centres to their surroundings illustrates the interconnectedness of public attitudes in shaping the public realm. In other words, there is a mutual interaction between the changing interface of public and private and individuals’ coexistence in making and remaking the urban environment.

These two propositions have been also explained through another interpretation of the public/private interface and the current situation of civil society. Bauman (2000: 96) categorised urban public spaces into two interconnected groups; a place for free expression of self and a place for a city to present itself. This means that an ideal civil space, as Bauman (2000) articulated it, is a public place that contains both
opposites at the same time. Thus, public space is the demonstration of a common entity that can be accumulated by private and individual interests but at the same time cannot be reduced to either public or private. This articulation of public/private relationship is one of Bauman's key ideas about the current situation of societies, which reveal the uncertainty and instability of the built environment.

However, the dynamic modifiability of public/private boundaries and their changing interface in the contemporary society highlights the uncertainty and ambiguity of public/private demarcation. The concept is so complex that many scholars prefer to use metaphors such as “liquid”, “gel” and “flow” (Bauman, 2000; White, 1992; Castells, 1996), in order to explain the ever changing interface of public and private. Bauman (2000; 2007) considered these continuous changes of surrounding objects as a result of the individual’s uncertainty and instability, a “liquid” manifestation. As a result, the current situation has no “long-term life plans” and accordingly an individual’s uncertainty cannot be answered through a solid environment (Bauman, 2000). White illustrated the challenges of the public/private interface in the messy gel of sociability that is “made up by and of” individuals (1992: 337). In contemporary society, individuals “like gels”, may change their orientations in line with a “different order” or even a “problematic” one (White, 1992: 338), through which the public/private interface moulds the surrounding physical space. To this point, it can be argued that the decline of ‘publicness’ in contemporary civil society is accompanied by a decline in public attitude, as individuals reject participation in the public realm. According to this view the changing interface of public and private is a by-product of the change in the civil society and social capital in general.

**PRIVATISATION OR PUBLICISATION?**

The late twentieth century heralds a fundamental change of social capital which parallels a corresponding change in the civil society. Sennett stated three main reasons for the end of social capital in the civil society. He argued that these are “globalized, short term value and technologically complex organisations”, which have posed new challenges for contemporary society (Sennett, 2007). This combination will result in new institutions that lead to change in the culture of consumption and subsequently the public/private interface in the urban environment. Sennett asserted that industrial capitalism, in the nineteenth century, was one of the forces of “privatisation” and later a “mystification of material life in public” (1977: 19), which then leads to the emergence of consumer society. As a result, shopping centres represent a significant global image of consumption spaces (Sennett, 1977; Hannigan, 1998; Bauman, 2000) through becoming city marketing saviours in post industrial societies; acquiring new images in the public realm during the later part of the 20th century; and now being a “consumer-oriented” or “themed” physical environment (Gottdiener, 1997; Hannigan, 1998). Almost at the beginning of 21st century, debates over the commodification of public spaces as well as security issues accentuated the concerns about the ‘privatisation’ of public spaces. Mitchell (1995) emphasised privatisation of the public space by criticising the increasing separation of market and politic. Madanipour (2010) highlighted this idea by raising the issue of the emergence of new labour, ‘private sector’ and the transition from a ‘state’ to ‘service’ economy to demonstrate the driving force for the privatisation trend in the urban environment. Meanwhile, Low and Smith (2006) have noted the development of business district areas as well as controlled public spaces including shopping centres as the main feature of today’s urban environment that have accelerated the privatisation process of public spaces.

Indeed these ideas have followed Sorkin’s (1992) interpretations regarding the end of traditional public spaces. According to Sorkin (1992) traditional public space has changed to new kinds of spaces, security managed consumption spaces, which cannot be called public. However this view has been recently discussed through the hybridisation of economic and political dynamics to describe the negotiation of individualised life and the decline of traditional public spaces (Bauman, 2000; Sennett, 2007). For Sennett (1977; 2007) the individualised society, the separation of individual lives from public life has initiated the change, encouraged a private culture and led to the decline of the traditional public space. Regardless of the ownership and the management of the place, Banerjee (2001) identified new spaces, including different consumption spaces such as theme parks and shopping centres, as well as coffee shops and bookstores as new public spaces, essential for the contemporary urban environment where social interactions can take place. The emergence of these new spaces is the result of the change in economic and political processes, and therefore urban space is, as Mitchell (2003: 129) argued, “socially produced through its use as public space”. Consequently, the result of the dynamic process through which space is defined via ‘publicness’ should be regarded as “ the process of publicisation” (Houssay-Holzschuch & Teppo, 2009).

**CONCEPTUALISATION OF INTERFACE SPACES**

As has been stated previously, the recent redevelopment of shopping centres has led to the creation of new types of spaces, termed as ‘interface spaces’. These interface spaces, in contrast with what Voyce (2006) assumed would reduce and control diversity, have changed the quality of accessibility by creating a new balance between the public and private realm, a new public life. As the need for public spaces, albeit
controlled ones, introduces new spaces into the urban environment, according to Sabatier (2006), Houssay-Holzschuch and Teppo (2009) these new spaces involve much more than consumption. These new spaces can be seen as by-products of a process resulting in an evolution of the public/private interface. Studying interface spaces, however, leads to an understanding of urban spaces in which publicly accessible private spaces are retained as city streets and squares, creating a new form of public life.

Despite this spatial integration, the regulations governing the ownership and management of privately owned public spaces still authorise the privatisation of public spaces (Nèmeth & Schmidt, 2011). Pursuant to this discourse, interface spaces increasingly tend to prioritise the privatisation of public spaces through ownership and management and therefore, cannot be considered as traditional public spaces. Staeheli and Mitchell (2008) attribute ‘publicness’ to spaces that mediate between property and users, hence locating them in the public/private continuum. They argue that the assumption of being only public or only private might not be accurate. In fact, the ‘publicness’ encompasses an established relationship of property and people through which the space can be recognised as public or as private by occupying a position in the public/private continuum. In addition to this, for Madanipour (2003a), the diversity of uses and users can define a public space regardless of its ownership. These propositions may compete with the argument by Frank and Paxson (1989) on ownership of a space, as a publicly owned space may restrict more access and use in comparison with some privately owned public spaces. Therefore, neither privately owned public spaces necessarily imply the privatisation of public spaces, nor publicly owned accessible spaces exemplify a traditional urban public space. Fig. 8 illustrates interface spaces in the public/private continuum.

**Figure 8: Interface Spaces and Public/Private continuum (Source: Author, 2011).**

Thus any attempt to conceptualise interface spaces involves discussions around publicly accessible private space. There are various models for analysing ‘publicness’ of a space; however, the study on which this paper is based selects ownership, accessibility and use of the space as the main criteria to analyse interface spaces. These three criteria are based on the analysis of the previous models that have been recognised by Madanipour (2003b), Sabatier (2006), Staeheli and Mitchell (2008), and Németh and Schmidt (2011). Although the hypothetical conceptualisation of public/private relationship mainly derives from Németh and Schmidt, the suggested model in Fig. 9 is a revised model incorporating the design and quality of interface spaces. Following the interface spaces and the public/private continuum illustration on Fig. 8, Fig. 9 shows the interpretations pointed out from the specific criteria, which has been categorised into three main groups.
First, from a legal perspective, on the one hand the privatisation process relinquishes public use and accessibility to the private sector (Sabatier, 2006). On the other hand, the ownership and management of a space, as one component of being public or private, interconnects with the current operational situation of urban spaces (Németh & Schmidt, 2011). This provision raises concerns – of the property/people relationship - over interface spaces through ownership and management (Staeheli & Mitchell, 2008), which can demonstrate how these privately owned interface spaces are considered in the public/private continuum. The main question regarding the Rouse Hill Town Centre involves the private ownership and management of a public town centre. Indeed, privatised ownership, management and development of Rouse Hill Town Centre may have undermined the ‘publicness’ of interface spaces.

Second, although the lack of accountability in interface spaces for ‘publicisation’ of private spaces is understandable according to restrictions for users at certain times and places (Madanipour, 1996), meditation of the public/private interconnectability occurs mainly through being more physically integrated and widely accessible. Observations of Rouse Hill Town Centre reveal that restriction, control and surveillance signs and measures intensify the exclusionary nature of interface spaces. However, the spatial integration of interface spaces reinforces the public accessibility and provides a contented balance between public and private spaces.

Third, in order to ascertain whether interface spaces are indeed a trend towards the privatisation of public spaces or rather ‘publicisation’ of private spaces, the uses and users of the space should be examined. As has been stated before, the notion of ‘publicness’ strongly entangles the manifestation of people and their activities in the urban environment (Frank & Paxson, 1989; Madanipour, 1996). To Voyce (2006), privatised public spaces create rather private spaces by controlling and reducing the diversity of uses and users. However, in Rouse Hill Town Centre, the boundary definers compromise the public use of interface spaces. This approach may lead to social exclusion and stratification, which could have other negative outcomes such as exclusion of a number of potential users, amplifying gentrification and allocation of public spaces to a more homogeneous group of users. These diminishing characteristics of interface spaces results in inclusive privatisation of the public realm. The uses and users criteria is a significant aspect to understand where interface spaces ‘sit’ in the public/private continuum; however, whether interface spaces imply privatisation or ‘publicisation’ needs investigation, including how different stakeholders regard, experience and represent these spaces. This will be the subject of the author’s ongoing doctoral research.
CONCLUSION

In summary, these major conclusions can be drawn from discussions on the significant impact of interface spaces and urban environment on the future of urban space and public life of cities, and the ‘publicness’ of these spaces – blurring the boundaries between public and private spaces. The key issue, regarding ‘publicness’, is to have a clear sense of what interface spaces offer and under what conditions. In other words, what has been gained and what has been lost by their emergence. On one hand there is the desire for the improvement of the urban environment, yet on the other hand there is a need for the development and management of urban spaces. More recently, these approaches use consumption spaces - specifically shopping centres - as catalysts to develop, improve and maintain urban public space. In many cities such as Sydney, the combination of urban revitalisation and private interests has emerged as more privately owned or managed public spaces. Contrary to negative criticism of the diminishing aspects in ‘publicness’ and privatisation of public spaces and social exclusion, the development of interface spaces is likely to include both negative and positive consequences. It is clear from initial observations and analysis of Rouse Hill Town centre and the types of spaces that have been discussed as interface spaces, that they potentially propose publicisation of private spaces rather than privatisation of public spaces. Indeed, interface spaces in the case of providing more ‘publicness’ appear to offer a more integrated and vibrant urban environment and contribute to the improvement of public life. Although the emergence of interface spaces have led to the development of welcoming public spaces, the exclusion of fear and crime – the main factor in achieving these public spaces - provokes exclusion of some social groups from these new public spaces. While increasingly common in the contemporary urban environment, the impacts and consequences of interface spaces on urban life, vitality and accessibility remain a challenge.
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