

Urban Open Space

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IN

ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVES

Edited by David Canter, Martin Kramper and David Stea

pp. 123 – 150

Newcastle, 1988

* Ce texte a été publié pour la première fois par Perla Serfaty-Garzon sous le nom de Perla Korosec-Serfaty.

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade we have been able to observe a renewed interest in urban public spaces in general, and most particularly in streets and squares. both among town dwellers, theoreticians and practitioners of urbanism and architecture (Anderson. 1978; Appleyard. 1975. 1981; Jacobs. 1961; Rudofsky, 1969; Whyte. 1980). The term "renewed" is particularly adequate here as what we see is a reaction to the conception of urbanism which quite simply ignores squares and describes the traditional urban streets only as being the central point of an unbearable disorder (Le Corbusier. 1946; 1957).

To give back life to cities made arid by modern urbanism. three types of attitudes emerge. Firstly, one which is often put into practice for instance in French new towns (Chat in. 1975) and which does not question the theoretical foundations of functionalist urbanism, but which seeks "an improvement by creating as dense an urban centre as possible within the new towns (....) An accumulation of retail trade and collective facilities are arranged around squares. But while squares are rediscovering their traditional vocation as places for meeting and meandering, they are nonetheless just one accessory among others" (Favardin. 1982. p.76).

The second attitude is more critical of functionalist urbanism and finds its expression in the desire to integrate recent squares into the history of a given town (Krier. 1980).

Finally, the third attitude occurs in an already existing urban web, often quite ancient, and involves a program for the protection of urban buildings and sites, based on values which were defined from the XIXth century onwards by the Historical Monuments Service which, for example, was founded in France in 1830.

Restoration and protection concepts have from the beginning been a point for controversy (Parent. 1981) because very different answers can be given to the questions they raise at different levels. What makes a "historical landmark"? What building deserves to be restored and protected? What kind of restoration is the most "authentic" one? Or the most "aesthetic" one? Some architects or art historians favor a strict fidelity to original designs regardless of the modern context of the building or place. Others plead in favor of an interpretation of the architectural, aesthetic or social history of the building and for the choice of the time when the building was the most "beautiful" or "successful" etc ••• and technical issues make all answers the more complex.

Questions concerning the social stakes of restoration and protection are added to-day to this still on-going controversy. What is the social cost of protection measures for urban sites? Who profits from them, and who suffers? What are its consequences for the modes of place appropriation? These are the questions which we would like to discuss in this chapter on the occasion of the study of the practices of three French public squares and a Swedish town square which have recently undergone measures for protection and which have also been reconverted into pedestrian areas.

To do this, we will take as a basis several empirical studies on squares undertaken by the author and the Psychology of Space Study Group in the course of the past twelve years (Decker. 1976; Korosec-Serfaty & Kaufmann. 1974; Korosec-Serfaty et al. 1976; Korosec-Serfaty. 1981. 1982; Korosec-Serfaty & Schall. 1983; Uvy. 1976; Trameni. 1976). Our aim is neither to describe each of these empirical studies, nor to enter into a detailed account of their results. While each of them was designed to help us attain an understanding of the complexity of each case, we now wish to distance ourselves from the details of the studies, thus allowing us to articulate some of the thoughts they brought to our mind.

We thus offer a reflective piece on the cultural, social and psychological meaning of the preservation of urban places based on our interest for urban open spaces. This is why our intention is not only to compare the usage of these squares as they could be observed immediately before their transformation into pedestrian areas and their present usage, but also to adopt a wider scope. Indeed, we would first of all like to make an historical detour for each of these squares and to bring out the continuities and discontinuities between the traditional practice of these squares and their current usage.

Secondly, we will discuss from a general point of view the themes of thought which stem from the protection of urban monuments and sites, so as to situate better the squares which form the object of our study into a given doctrine of protection. As a conclusion, we will propose an analysis of the impact of the protection of these sites on their usage and representation.

SQUARES IN STRASBOURG AND STORTORGET IN MALMO

PLACE DE LA CATHEDRALE

The Place de la Cathedral (Cathedral Square) is the oldest square in town, just as the Cathedral is the oldest monument. Built on the site of a Roman sanctuary, it was destroyed and rebuilt several times. The present Cathedral corresponds to the reconstruction which was decided upon after a fire in 1176. Its building was continued until the XVIth century, the result being a gigantic and complex monument, which constitutes the main dimension of the spatial and architectural identity of the square and is the symbol of the town (Photo 1). The half-timbered houses which are traditional in this eastern part of France called Alsace, date from the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth centuries and constitute the other fundamental dimension of this identity. They carry the date of construction or transformation and each one is designated by a precise name to this day. The facades are sculptured and carry the owner's initials, thus conveying the social identity of the dwellers. These houses were built and inhabited by traders and artisans. They are alongside XVIIIth century freestone houses with tall and narrow facades, leaving no room for modern buildings.

The Place de la Cathédrale is a "natural" square, stemming from the necessities of various aspects of Medieval every-day life. Up to the XVIIth century, it was essentially a popular square where markets of all types were held, surrounded by shops and saddlers and second-hand clothes dealers. The Cathedral was a highly active place, where artisans and day laborers were engaged, lawyers gave consultations and the town's authorities gave their audiences. Leaning against the monument itself, there were stalls sheltering all sorts of artisans. Acrobats climbed up its towers and entertained the crowds with their performances. It was in front of the portal that the town's civic authorities were sworn in each year. In the XVIIIth century, the square begins to be transformed: bourgeois houses and shops disappear to make way for a large Jesuit college and an Episcopal palace, which was to become for a time during the Revolution the municipality's head quarters. Thus the Place du Chateau (Chateau Square) was created and to open the access to the river Ill (Figure 1). It was also during the revolutionary period that the representatives of the people gave the Cathedral the successive names of the Temple of Reason the Temple of the Supreme Being etc. by staging a number of celebrations. It was once again at stake during the wars in which France and Germany were opposed in 1870 and in 1914. In June 1940, Hitler with his suite of Nazi dignitaries took possession of it. In November 1944, the Division under Leclerc, who was at the head of the army which liberated Strasbourg from Nazi occupation, hosted the French flag on its spire. Since then, we have been able to observe other symbolic gestures such as a red flag, then a black one, floating above the Cathedral during the months of student unrest in

1968, but these gestures were quickly dispatched through the intervention of the local authorities.

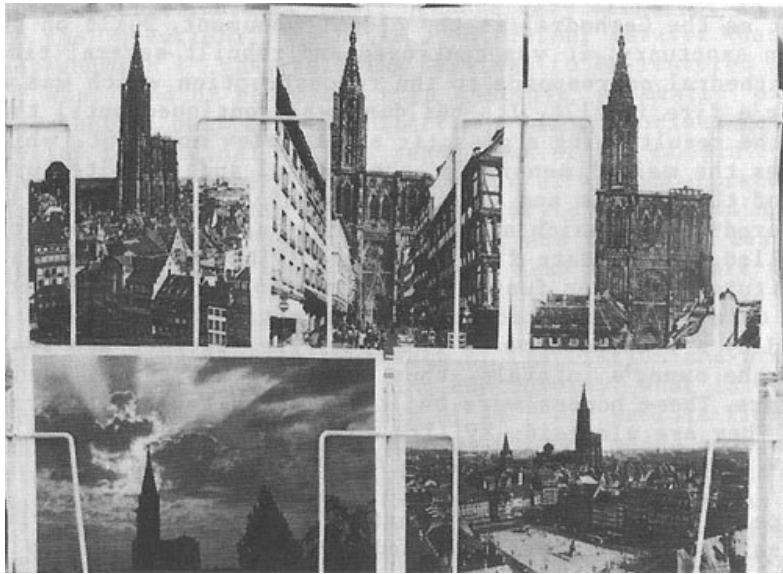


PHOTO 1 The Cathedral constitutes the main architectural landmark of Strasbourg

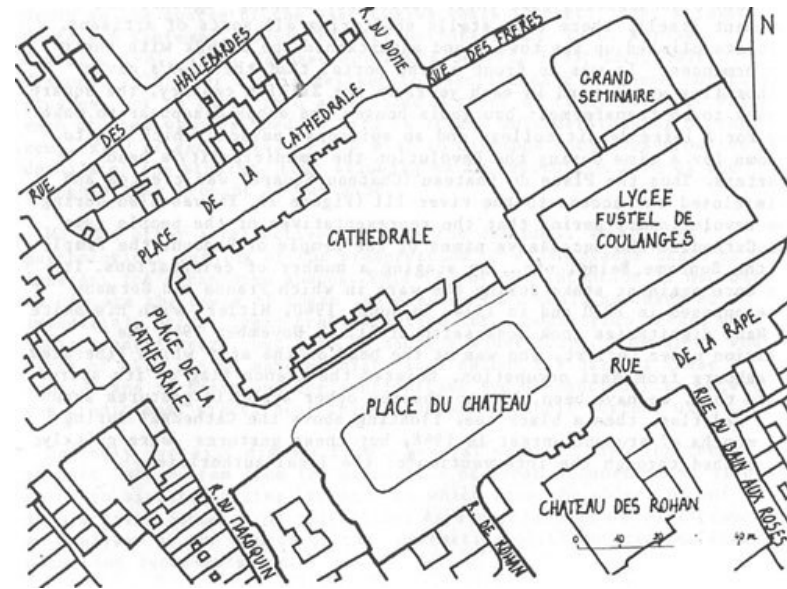


Figure 1

The Place de la Cathédrale is a pedestrian square today, integrated into a network of streets and squares (Figure 2) which are also pedestrian and cater to tourists being lined with shops dealing in luxury items. However, its situation (Figure 1) is such that a large number of trades and services are accessible to the dwellers at a short distance. At the present time it is surrounded by twenty-two trades, of which only one (a chemist's) can be considered as being necessary to fulfill every day needs. All the others are connected with luxury (antique shops, restaurants, etc.), with pleasure (souvenir shops, cafes), with the presence of the Cathedral (bookshop specializing in Christian literature) and with the preservation and commercial exploitation of regional traditions (a book-shop specializing in Alsatic studies, i.e. in studies concerned with the history, culture and traditions of Alsace, and another shop concerned with the culinary specialties and wines of the region) (Decker, 1976). The Place du Château which, in fact, completes the Place de la Cathédrale, is the home of .a

museum to which are added the various museums of the former Episcopal palace called the Chateau des Rohan. Only one public service is present in the square: the post office.

The Cathedral is still a place of worship. And yet it is incessantly in the process of restoration and all the city dwellers are familiar with the slow transference of the scaffolding along its facades throughout the years (Korosec-Serfaty and Schall. 1983). A few times in the year, prestigious concerts are held there. It is also haunted by a large number of tourists nearly the whole year round. As it dominates the town, the Cathedral can be seen from afar and the various developments in the town are supposed to ensure that this will always be the case. A few lines are enough to draw and represent it and therefore to represent Strasbourg on official paper as well as for the packaging of food-stuffs, emblems and so forth ... (Figure 3).

The square as a whole constitutes the major centre of attraction for tourists in the town (Korosec-Serfaty and Schall. 1983). Decker's systematic study (1976) shows that its dwellers are very much attached to it and are very proud of living "in the shadow of the Cathedral". They insist on the feeling of pleasure they get from looking at it through their windows. These dwellers belong to the middle-class, some belong to the upper middle-class but most of them are families of modest means living in run-down flats. On the whole, it is a very stable population and its composition has hardly changed following its conversion into a pedestrian space. This can be explained by several reasons. On the one hand, some buildings whose facades are carefully restored shelter trades which attract a large number of tourists: pastry or souvenir shops, restaurants, etc. (Photo 2). On the other hand, a few buildings, while carefully preserved on the exterior are relatively little modernized in the interior. Lastly, the rest of the buildings round the square have not been refurbished at all for decades (Photo 3). For the Place de la Cathédrale is still one of those historical urban neighborhoods characterized by an aging population due to an easy access to trades and services and to the existence of a large number of decaying dwellings. However, the rapid renovation of the other historical quarters of the town allows us to predict that its gentrification will not be delayed for too long.

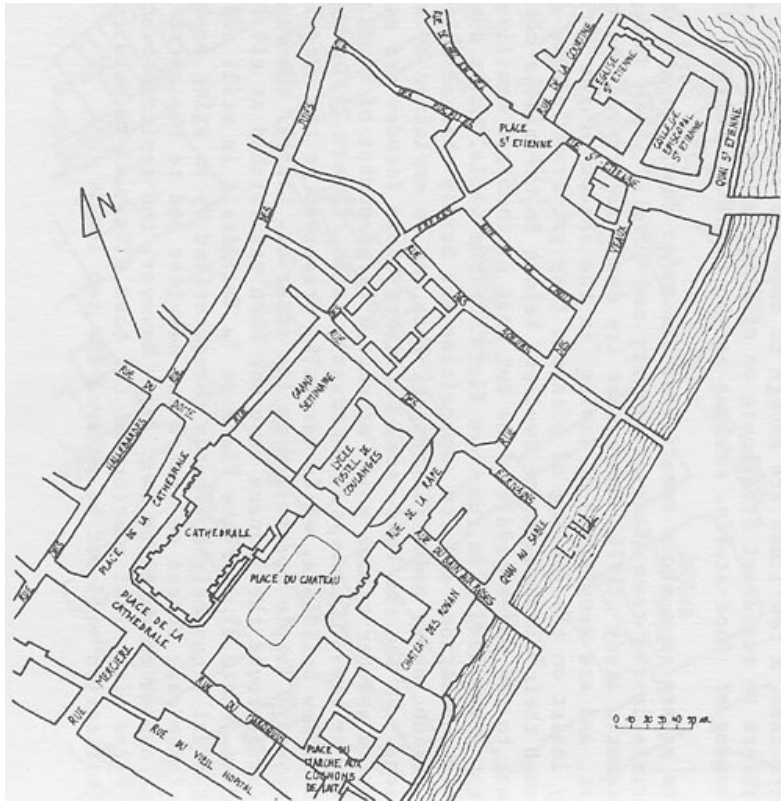


Figure 2

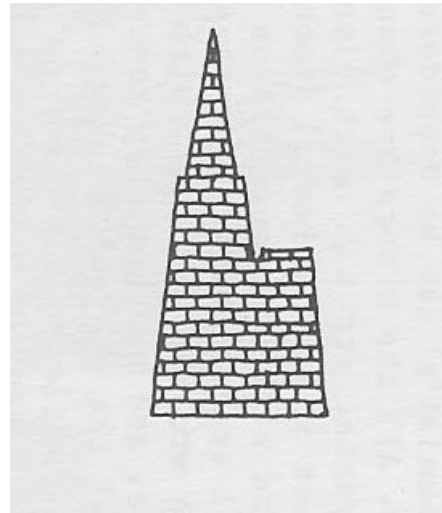


Figure 3

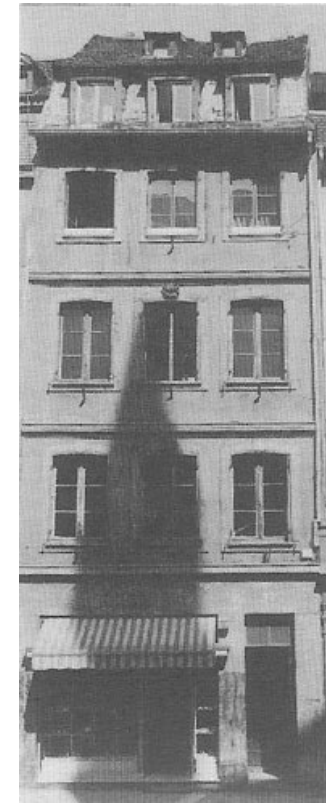


Photo 2: Decaying building,
Place de la Cathédrale

PLACE DU MARCHÉ AUX COCHONS DE LAIT

The Place du Marché aux Cochons de lait (Suckling-pig Market Square) can also be regarded as a "natural" square, stemming from the economic necessities of the Middle Ages. Located on the banks of the Ill (Figure 4) it has been for a long time a place for storing wood used for construction, covered with warehouses, but it was also an artisans and commercial square where traders in wine oil and cooked meats could be found.

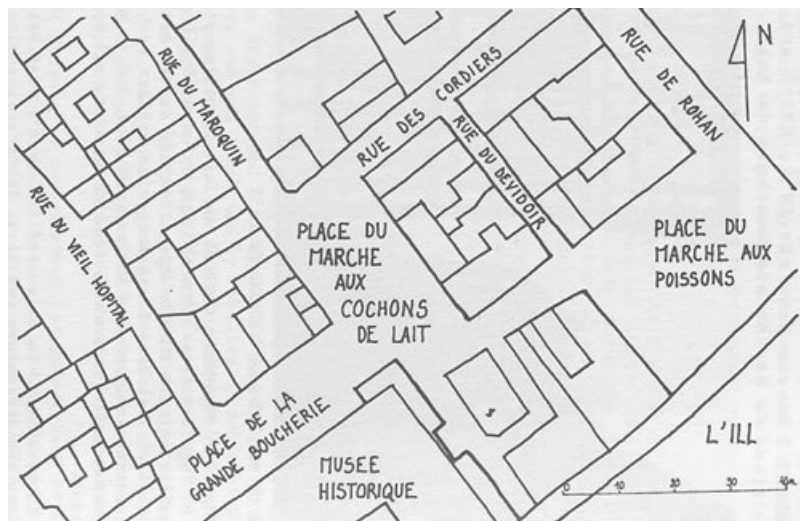


Figure 4

It is considered to be one of the town's most beautiful sites by both tourists and Strasbourg dwellers. for its dimensions which make it an intimate space (Lévy, 1976) and for its surrounding houses with their sides covered by sculptured wood from the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth centuries (Photo 4). It has been pedestrian since 1973. In the years leading to the decision to forbid cars access, it was a highly congested square, very busy and. in as much as it is situated a few steps from the Place de la Cathédrale, was much visited by tourists. A co-existence of commercial activities linked with everyday life could be

observed (grocer's, electrical goods shop, etc.) as could those linked with leisure, luxury items and tourism. Today, all commercial activity linked with fulfilling every-day needs has been replaced by traders in luxury items and restaurants which endeavor to preserve, or recreate, a traditional atmosphere.

When Lévy (1976) studied the square usage and representations, the dwellers of the square were still the ones who lived there before its transformation into a pedestrian area. They were mostly elderly people of modest means. Some years later another study conducted by Delor (1982) on the relationships between streets' and squares' names and the dwellers' social identity showed that the new dwellers were much younger and better off. They said they chose to move into the small and recently renovated apartments because the name of the place, its scale, the traditional architecture, its location near the historic center of the town merged to remind them of life in a small village.

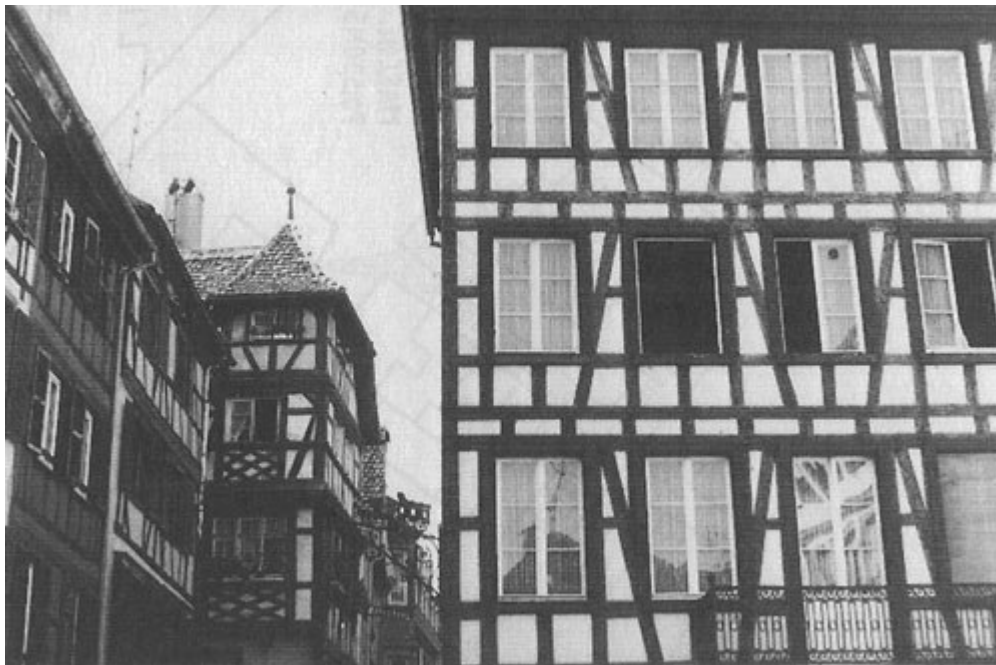


Photo 3: Houses from the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth centuries, Place du Marché aux Cochons de Lait.

PLACE ST-ETIENNE

Equally close to the Place de la Cathédrale, the Place St-Etienne (St. Steven's Square) is in fact one of its means of access, as is the case with Place du Marché aux Cochons de Lait. Its history is intimately bound with that of St-Etienne's Church which is, according to the legend, the town's oldest religious monument, founded in the VIIIth century (Seyboth. 1971). It has a troubled history, since it became a Protestant temple at the time of the Reform, became a church again afterwards, then a synagogue, "national property" during the Revolution. etc Since the XIXth century, the church, integrated with a high school, has been Catholic.

These religious references constitute one of the identity dimensions of the square which not only carries the name of a saint, but whose church, according to local tradition was founded by the brother of Sainte-Odile, who has given her name to a regional pilgrimage. All the neighboring streets carry names which bring religious institutions to mind: rue des Frères (Friars Street), rue des Soeurs (Nuns Street), rue de la Croix (Cross Street) etc. (Figure 5). One of the buildings, notable for its size, character and history is the present Residence for Catholic Students and was inhabited by families of noble birth from the time of its construction in the XVIth century before becoming the seat of the Nobility Directoire for Basse-Alsace for almost a century. The square, as is the case with its neighboring streets, has always been inhabited by religious personages and nobles but also by artists, painters and engravers who generally belonged to the aristocracy of artisans and were themselves renowned in their time.

Today, the Place St-Etienne is not reserved for pedestrians only.

Seen as a "village square" by its dwellers, who idealize it and are very attracted to it (Tramoni. 1976) it is surrounded by XVIth and XVIIth century half-timbered houses and also by elegant-looking stone houses which make it one of the most picturesque squares in the town (Photo 4). It is congested by traffic and is a densely populated square. Up to a decade ago, it was surrounded by a number of artisans shops and small traders (bakers. grocers. a cobbler and a smith) as well as by the upper class artisan (a book-binder and a confectioner) who frequently inhabited the square.

This diversity is today challenged by the proliferation of restaurants and clothes shops and the arrival of a younger and socioeconomically more homogenous population, belonging to the upper middle-classes. Numerous students and school children regularly use the square and create a certain animation as well as appropriation conflicts which are renewed daily (Tramoni. 1976).

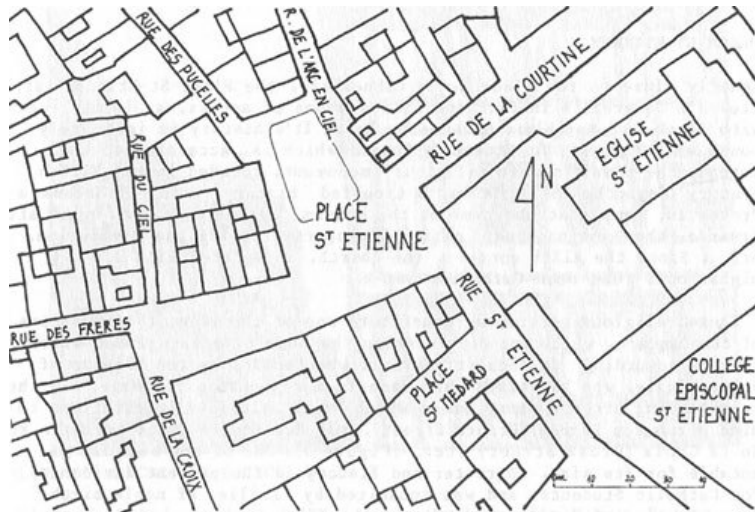


Figure 5



Photo 4: Place St Etienne is surrounded by various examples of Vernacular architecture well

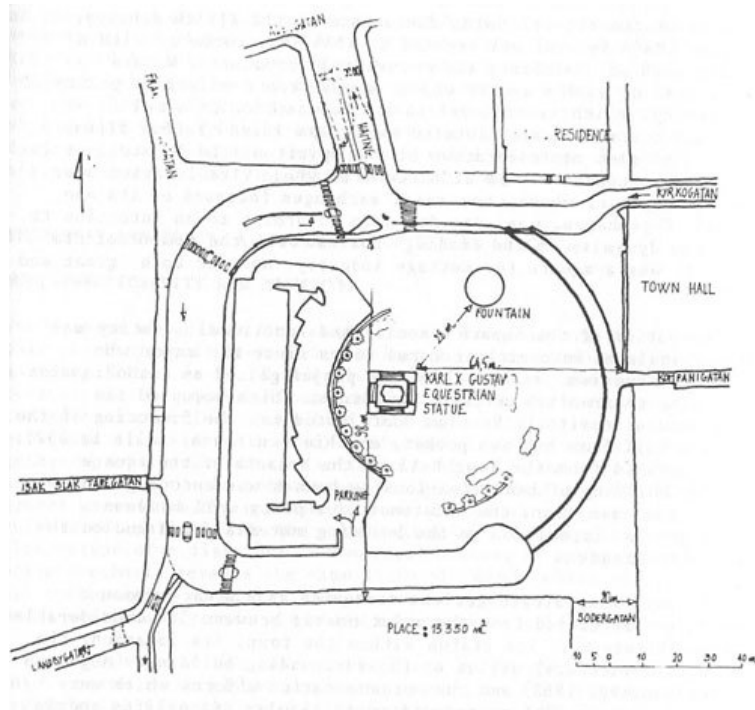


Figure 6



Photo 5: Stortget from south-west angle

STORTORGET IN MALMO

The history of the city of Malmo dates back to the XI 11th century Stortorget (Main Square) was created in 1534 in accordance with a deliberate wish to reinforce its commercial importance. We are therefore dealing with a square which stems from a voluntary policy of space-planning which is medieval in its conception of a multifunctional central square located away from large traffic flows. However, it is also representative of the spirit of the Renaissance in that it had to constitute an architectural whole. Its location near the town's harbor, whose commercial exchanges focused on its one true rival. Copenhagen was decided upon according to an intention to create a new dynamism in the trading routes. From the moment of its creation, it was a square for cottage industry and for both great and small trade.

The affirmation of the square's social and functional identity was rapidly translated into architectural terms since the mayor who inspired the dynamism

essential to the project gained an authorization from the king to demolish certain buildings, which occupied the square's future territory. He also contributed to the financing of the future Town Hall from his own pocket and his own house, built in 1525, is only separated from the Town Hall by the breadth of the square itself. The building of beautiful-looking houses was encouraged by a system of tax exemption, the existence of a party wall between buildings and an imposition on the building material used and on the layout of the facades.

From the beginning, Stortorget was conceived as a square whose monumentality developed from the relationship between its considerable dimensions (Figure 6), its status within the town, its location, the nature and architectural styles of the surrounding buildings (Mogensen in Korosec-Serfaty. 1982) and the ornamentation efforts which were concentrated upon it. The square underwent regular face-lifts and in the XVIIIth century many of the surrounding private houses were grand enough to be called "palaces" by contemporary observers. It acquired the architectural identity which we know today with its often massive and highly decorated houses and the mounted statue of King Charles X Gustav at the turn of the century (Astrand in Korosec-Serfaty. 1982). The statue was installed at the initiative of the town's notable persons, traders and local nobility. A fountain was also installed in 1964. It is the final piece of the principle elements of the square's ornamentation, whereas the decision taken in 1978 to make it into a pedestrian area gives it its current general appearance (Photo 5).

The square is surrounded by buildings whose symbolic value is undeniable, including the Swedish king's residence when he sojourns in the town, the house of the major who was in charge of its creation, and the Town Hall. This latter held for a long time, according to demand, popular entertainments, commercial transactions, meetings of the local authorities and a tavern. Opposite benches and a pillory were installed for carrying out public punishments. The square was a place for elections, demonstrations of power put on by the authorities or for the people in revolt (Henje-Sjoholm in Korosec-Serfaty. 1982).

Today only seven private persons own buildings in the square, out of a total of twenty-one buildings. At the turn of the century, thirteen of these had been built and were owned by private persons. Five banks were among the list of builders, whereas today we can count seven bank-owned buildings. One insurance company was listed among the builders, whereas four of them are now owners. In the same way, there are now three official buildings, whereas there were only two originally. Out of thirty-eight activities represented on the ground floors of the buildings, ten are activities which are directly associated with luxury: Oriental carpet shops, etc ...

YESTERDAY AND TODAY: A COMPARISON OF SQUARE USAGE

MULTIFUNCTIONALITY AND ENCOUNTER

The squares which form our sample have a long history. In two cases, this history would seem to be dominated by the monumentality of a building (Place de la Cathédrale) or the architectural whole which constitutes the square (Stortorget). However, an examination of their traditional practices show that this monumentality has in no way prevented a considerable social effervescence, for example the gathering of crowds to the acting out of civil and everyday activities and entertainment. In both cases, religious, civil and military powers as well as the representatives of economic powers remain unisolated spatially. On the perimeter of Place St-Etienne, the alternation of artisan and commercial houses of a mansion and a private school, reveals the same state of mind, which not only accepts the encountering of social groups but also turns its multifunctionality into a quality necessary to collective territory.

Finally, even in the case of the Place du Marché aux Cochons de Lait, which seems in no way an emblematic space, we find this spatial proximity between the people or institutions who hold a part of the political, religious or economic power and the most down-trodden groups of city dwellers. In the case of the Place de la Cathédrale, which has ever been a space where the symbols of different powers have been united and where the different forms of popular and elite cultures coexist, this proximity is simply more striking. But the Place du Marché aux Cochons de Lait is nevertheless outstanding for these two characteristics, since it holds several corporations' headquarters, acts as a refuge for the homeless, etc ...

These squares all illustrate the necessity for the poorest people, who were the most numerous until quite recently to work outdoors and this imposed, up to a certain degree, a diverse usage of exterior spaces and led to similar animation in towns situated in very different climates as is the case here (Korosec-Serfaty. 1986 a). They are all squares for gatherings, contrary to the royal squares of the XVIIIth century, for example, which are both meant to be emblematic and governed by spatial segregation intentions leading in this way to ceremonial and leisure activities (Lavedan. 1960; Leroy-Ladurie and Quilliet. 1981).

In Strasbourg, as in Malmo, our sample squares were to remain active for a long period in spite of the gradual disappearance of the small street trades (Hassin. 1978) and the progressive restriction of public sociability and play activities into interior or specialized spaces which affects the XIXth century, Opera Houses. Cafés, parks are designed to offer well defined entertainments and to ensure a new kind of public life (Korosec-Serfaty. 1986 b). The XXth century, with motorists and their usage of squares was literally to asphyxiate them. Decker's study (1976) undertaken before Place de la Cathédrale was transformed into a pedestrian area, underlines the extent of the conflicts between pedestrians and motorists. However, it should be emphasized that this state of affairs

guaranteed the installation of various trades and the cohabitation of dwellers belonging to different socio-economic groups.

From a historical point of view, therefore, we see a slow "emptying" process in these squares, analogous to the one observed in streets (Korosec-Serfaty, 1985), but it is their transformation into pedestrian areas which initiates the radical change of the inhabitants' usage and representations of them. Indeed, for the first time, their role is not linked with the needs of everyday life, nor to the expression of personal power nor even directly to leisure activities. Their role now is essentially to materialize the idea of common patrimony and to reify the values connected to this through architectural objects or settings. For the very idea of patrimony implies the recognition of the objects as being precious and therefore as being worthy of appropriation, The new symbolic value of these places was translated into a financial value, creating a new housing market accessible to another socio-economic group and which obeyed only the rules of property speculation. Indeed, these speculations have always existed. The new factor is that today they are hindered by local regulations only, issued by a single authority, while for a long time the power of town administration was held by a number of groups, whose interests were often contradictory. The conflicts between groups holding small pieces of power have for centuries upheld areas of liberty for the town dwellers against all the odds (Barel, 1975; Leguay, 1984). This liberty has been widely taken advantage of, in particular when collective appropriation of urban open spaces was concerned, in order to satisfy the needs of day-to-day living and to establish the identity of city communities.

PLACE SPECIALIZATION AND DOMINANT PRACTICES

THE RHYTHM OF USAGES

With the exception of Place St-Etienne, all these squares now have a winter aspect which contrasts sharply with their summer aspect, taking into account the important role played by tourism. In the same way, the daily rhythm of its usages is closely related to the working hours of the cafés, restaurants and luxury goods shops. As always, and for the same reason, the animation is located outside during the day and inside at night, though to a lesser extent. Only the usage rhythm of Place St-Etienne is based principally on school hours and the student calendar during the day and on the restaurant goers and dwellers at night.

THE PRACTICES

The dominant practices in the squares are essentially crossing it, lingering in it (sitting on a bench, or outside a café, etc), consumer activities (buying an object, a post-card, etc), aesthetic consumption (looking at facades, taking photographs) and play activities (watching a fire-eater, playing guitar, etc). These are marked to a greater or lesser extent according to the square. Play activities are rare everywhere except in Place de la Cathédrale, where jugglers and acrobats can be seen throughout the summer season. Crossing is the dominant function of Stortorget, which is also during the short summer season a lingering space. Consumer activities are especially intense in Place de la Cathédrale and Place du Marché aux Cochons de Lait, which are similarly the squares which evoke the highest rate of aesthetic consumption.

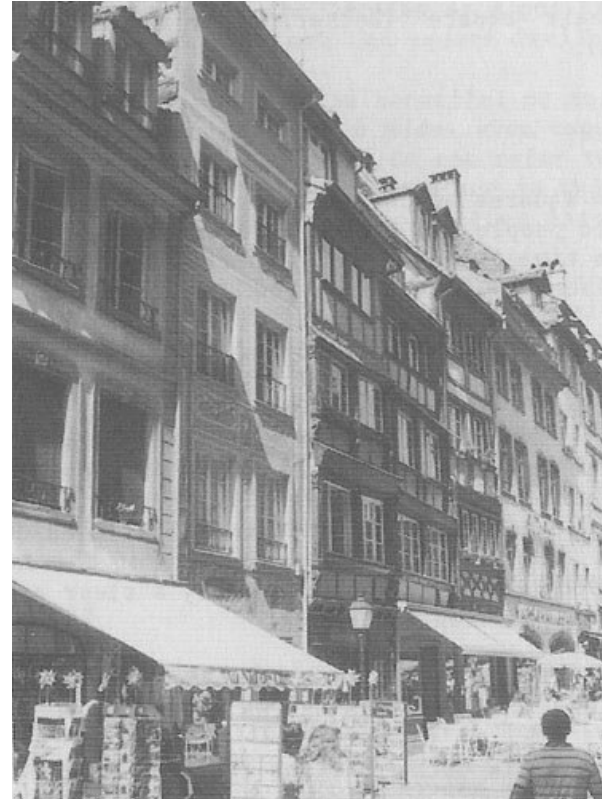


Photo 6: Aesthetic and goods consumption. Place de la Cathedrale

In all of these places, work is exclusively represented by commercial activities, based on one means of exchange, which allows complete anonymity, detachment and the "objectivity" of the transaction (Simmel. 1971). On the other hand, the play activities are reduced to watching others (passers by or peddlers) while keeping one's distance. They are based on everyone's personal consent to participate in or to withdraw from activities which are mainly aimed at providing some kind of entertainment, some kind of pleasure. This strongly contrasts with the shared games and play which, in the past, were imposed by either the religious calendar, the political power, the civil one or simply by bad weather conditions which made people stop all work (Verdon. 1980). Such games and play implied an active participation of all group members, and an obligation to take part in them. The leisurely participation we observe now is centered on the individual, and comes from him or her, precisely because leisure time itself is considered to be not only a right (Dumazedier. 1962) but some kind of private property.

In other words, although they imply several modalities of space appropriation, the dominant practices are more passive than active. We shall see that this fact has a direct influence on the image the dwellers have of "their" square (Decker. 1976: Delor. 1982. Levy. 1976: Tramoni. 1976).

CATEGORIES OF USERS

The users of all the squares belong to every age category. However, it is predominantly old people who linger in Stortorget. They come to sit in the sun for a time, while small children and adolescents are largely absent. Place de la Cathédrale and Place du Marché aux Cochons de Lait are visited by people of all ages, with young children being very rare. Considered from this angle, Place St-Etienne is the only square which has a balanced representation of the different age categories. Today, there is no notable frequency in the squares of users belonging to the most underprivileged socio-economic categories, although a few scarce vagrants can be seen from time to time in all of them. Again, this contrasts with what the history of streets and squares tells us about public life. Children of all ages used to be outdoors, as well as women and men, at all hours of the day (Aris. 1979: Farge. 1979: 1986) while we observe today a clear association between indoor places, children and women.

THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE DWELLERS OF THE SQUARES

The dwellers of Place de la Cathédrale and Place du Marché aux Cochons de Lait say quite simply that "everyone keeps to him or herself". However, in two cases (Stortorget and Place St-Etienne) one neighborhood association exists and shows an obvious desire to appropriate the squares. They expect the municipality to take their ideas and existence into account. However, even in the case of Place St-Etienne, we witness a contradictory discourse: the majority of the dwellers touch on the "village" quality of the square, and say that "everyone knows each other". But once under analysis, this expression brings us to "nodding" and "knowing by sight" relationships only.

However, this contradiction between the discourse and the reality is, on the psychological level, only apparent. For what is witnessed in all cases is the same idealization of the "village life", seen as implying close relationships between the dwellers and the existence of a network of mutual help and care, that can be observed in numerous studies on the social life of urban neighborhoods (Rosenberg. 1980).

ROLE AND DIMENSIONS OF THE IMAGE OF THE SQUARES

With the exception of Stortorget which is considered to be both immense and deserted, the other squares are thought to be beautiful because of their small dimensions, which give the impression of being intimate and yet, at the same time, open. Their beauty (and in the case of Stortorget their grandeur) is associated with the traditional styles of the surrounding buildings which are said to incite contemplation. We have stressed that this aesthetic pleasure takes on a particular form in the case of the Cathedral, with dwellers living in the belief that to see it from their windows constitutes a unique privilege. All the dwellers see the care for the facades as a positive action which elevates their own dignity as town and square dwellers.

The squares are also thought to be beautiful on account of their being "historic". The dwellers lend a wide, even vague meaning to this term, by which they mean "old". They do not refer to notable events or great facts which they know have taken place in these squares but to the fact that they have witnessed a collective past.

This past does not correspond to History as defined by historians but to a positive image of good old times whose main characteristic is that it constitutes a common heritage from which everyone can draw in his own way. i.e. a patrimony. As such, it allows reference to origins (Jackson. 1980). Because it is a simplified representation it reinforces a collective identity in this case a regional identity which is not fed with major historical and verifiable events but with general images of earlier ways of life or to use Jackson's terms. of a "vernacular past" (p.94).

EMBLEMATIC SQUARES

For this reason, we can say it is not this or that old house, or even for instance the Cathedral which is itself a monument in the eyes of the dwellers and visitors, but the squares themselves as places rather than as architectural settings. Indeed, it is what remains of the meaning of the past which gives special and similar character to the way people look at very different objects, like the houses of ordinary men of the "olden days" and "monuments" in the accepted meaning of this term. Therefore, today, the role of these squares is essentially emblematic for they represent a given vision of a collective identity. Historically, they were appropriated through daily uses, revolts and celebrations, while today they are appropriated through the collective internalization of their meaning as monuments.

All monuments are, by definition we could say, a reminder of something important to a group of men: faith, the adulation of a leader, a victorious war. etc ...In this way, they are both linked to an expression of what is sacred, and are also objects which are related to memory, even if the forms of this relationship differ during the Course of history and according to culture. The monument is didactic in the case of Medieval and Renaissance churches. It incites respect or loyalty which was the King's due in the Classical period, and is a means of showing the advent of a new era during the revolutionary periods. It may be an object devoid of exceptionally aesthetic qualities, or perhaps we should say that with each monument, its beauty represents an additional consideration, even if, in this as in all other cases, beauty adds another dimension and gives an individual meaning to the object. Thus, the "Little Mermaid" of Copenhagen is a monument in that it is the symbol of the town and most certainly forms part of its identity. Moreover, this example shows that the size of a monument does not necessarily have to be exceptional, even if once more, large dimensions can directly influence one's experience. Because of its position at the crossroads of the memory, the symbolic and the sacred, a monument implies an ability to appropriate its message, or its meaning. The history of places of collective vocation such as palaces, churches, cathedrals, town halls etc... shows that this ability was shared up to a moment which is generally situated as being towards the second half of the XIXth century (Goetz. 1985: Souchal. 1985). This was the period of great transformations, marked by the acceleration of urbanization and industrialization, when architecture was integrated with functionalist needs, even if it seems extraordinary to our eyes to consider the stations, post offices and Town Halls of this period as being functional (Jackson. 1980).

The loss of this common understanding of the meaning of monuments leave a space for interpretation open to individuals or sub-groups. This leads to controversy and conflicts to which notable persons and economic, religious or political leaders are no longer the only ones to take part. The man in the street also plays his part, through. for example, the Press etc ...The formulation of contradictory interpretations on the political meaning of a single aesthetic option as was for instance the case for the monument erected to the memory of soldiers lost in Vietnam (Howett. 1985) shows that agreement is reached

only on the notion that a monument is always full of meaning and that it is inside the space left for interpretation that confrontation occurs.

At the same time as the codes for reading monuments become weaker, the traditional functions of monuments are no longer necessarily fulfilled. Sites such as a battle field or statues erected in the name of a category of citizens, as with the Unknown Soldier, are designated as such. We propose the notion of the museumization of public squares, or better still, of urban public places as part of the same phenomenon and of their emblematic role as a powerful means to internalize an image of a community's past ways of life, whatever the flaws of this image: oversimplification of community bonds. Vagueness, romanticism, etc...

We would like to illustrate now some possible configurations of the dimensions of squares as museumized places and thus be led to offer a better understanding of this concept.

MUSEUMIZATION AND DISENFRANCHISEMENT

PLACE ST -ÉTIENNE

The dwellers of Place St-Etienne have chosen to live in this square, sometimes after a few years of waiting in order to live in an old neighborhood. By "neighborhood" they mean an urban territory with a strong social and architectural identity to which the inhabitants are attached and where it is possible to form interpersonal links. The meaning they give to this covers parts of its definition by sociologists who see in the neighborhood a geographical and emotional reality (Bell and Boat. 1957; Keller. 1968; Metton. 1980). They predominantly belong to the professions are architects, students, teachers, etc... and as such contribute to the evolution of values connected with urban ways of life.

They regret the departure of the dwellers they have replaced and the vanishing of small shops that could be visited daily. This is why they idealize the cake-shop, the only shop on the square they can use daily, as being in a way the only "natural" support of the neighborhood life, which they say is all they could wish for, For this same reason, they say they tolerate "their" tramps better than the ones who frequent other squares.

Although pedestrianization would be a relief because of the endemic illegal parking and the traffic congestion in the square, they are afraid of it. A pedestrian area attracts tourists who would recast their dwellers as theatrical extras against the scenery of an operetta. Their fear is to see the square rooted in an image, which would in no way be contradicted by the way in which it would be used by both the dwellers and passers-by. They refuse the idea that the value of this square as a fixed point for a collective identity should be pushed to its limit. In other words, they refuse its complete museumization and their disenfranchisement. It is because of this fear that they organize various gatherings of the dwellers. They thus try to resist the risk they perceive, to act on the vision they have of the square as a possible convivial place to live in. and to change its present social reality.

In this case, we observe on the part of the dwellers an understanding of the environmental messages imparted by preservation in general and by preservation associated with pedestrianization in particular. The risks are those of all official recognitions. In this case it is the overemphasis of this legitimization of the "nobility" of the place. Preservation and the ensuing gentrification are major factors in the museumization process which nevertheless remains incomplete as long as the dwellers actively appropriate the place. Through such an appropriation the dwellers at once act on their own image of the place to make it real, prevent the possible transformation of a protected place into a sacred area and. through the control they gain of the place they protect their own privileges.

PLACE DU MARCHÉ AUX COCHONS DE LAIT

It is a completely different case for the inhabitants of Place du Marché aux Cochons de Lait, who tell us on the contrary that the presence of tourists should enforce the eviction of the vagabonds and youths who linger in the square as they alter its "good image". In other words, they have internalized the sacred dimension which all museumization implies, and they would like the facade to be devoid of any flaws. This type of attitude confirms the expropriation of the inhabitants in favour of the tourists. It is a consented disenfranchisement by a population of more modest means and who didn't choose to live there following its transformation into a pedestrian area, but who have been there for a long time. They have made facadism their own, as is conveyed by protection measures.

This is particularly noticeable on an aesthetic level: the municipality had a fake well looking like a typical Alsace traditional well, installed at the centre of the square (Photo 7). Thus, the elements of the image of an old traditional and picturesque Alsace square are there: the half-timbered houses, the recently laid out paving stones, the well. The "old" inhabitants think this last object fits in the square, because it really tells one where one is. On the other hand, they say the "modern" concrete tubs of flowers should be removed, for these ornamental elements don't strictly belong to the "traditional" catalogue, which is precisely the catalogue of popular post-cards. However, the "new" inhabitants, like the dwellers of Place St-Etienne who also made comments on this well, say it is "non authentic" since the square never had a well throughout its history. They insist that preservation should "respect the true spirit of the past". We thus witness two kinds of social use of the past (Dubost, 1982) and two conceptions of the material means which should be used to convey the complex interdependence between sense of place, community identity and the sense of a shared history.

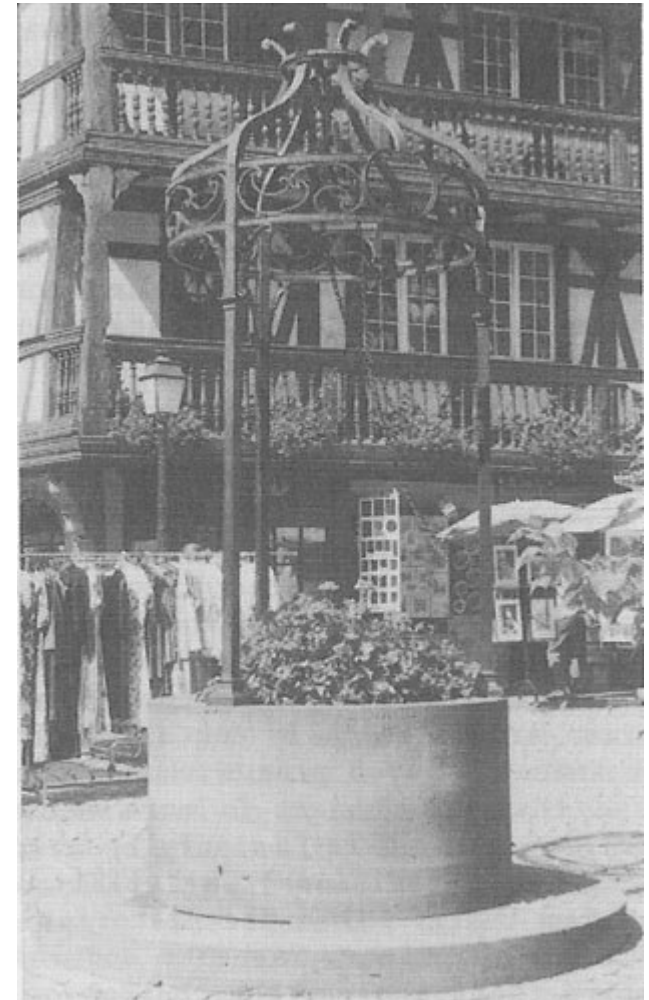


Photo 7. Fake well. Place du Marche aux Cochons de Lait.

STORTORGET

This main square is also, up to a point, an important feature of the good image of Malmo (Korosec-Serfaty. 1982). It features a very ordinary kiosk (Photo 8) where drinks and sandwiches are sold. During the interviews, the inhabitants of Malmo made negative aesthetic and social value judgments about it. They also say that the square should be more lively, and that the interactions between users should be much more frequent, from the photographic survey it transpired that the kiosk was one of the most active zones in the square and, from observation of users' routes and of social interactions, one of the most structuring areas as well. What is rejected therefore, on the level of representations, is the contrast between the now revered historical character of this symbol-square and the banality of the kiosk where people buy a type of food perceived as popular. We are thus confronted by what people say and what we observe, if the kiosk represents, on the aesthetic level, "an error of taste", yet, it creates precisely the kind of liveliness the user, they say should take place in the square. This rejection of any "wrong note" is due to the fact that all museumization puts the museumized object at a distance from its potential user and creates in the latter an essentially contemplative behaviour, which quite naturally evolves towards a demand for a logical attitude: the contemplated object (to which one no longer relates through the gesture, of daily life and necessities) must be perfect, or integrated in a flawless whole. i.e. perfect because it is untouchable and untouched.



Photo 8. Food kiosk on a grand scale.

CONCLUSION

In the case of Strasbourg as well as in Malmö, we have a fair amount of evidence on the role played by local authorities and notables in the final decision to protect the squares. However, a policy, be it of historic preservation, is not a phenomenon which appears ex-nihilo. It is integrated in the dynamics of values, ideas and attitudes specific to a given culture and time. In the 50's and 60's, the Strasbourg political leaders belonged to the same political trend which is in administration today. As a matter of fact, the town has had the same Mayor for the last quarter of the century. Fifteen or ten years ago, his administration agreed to have high rise buildings built and old quarters and structures torn down, while such decisions would be taken with more hesitancy today. The political world generally assimilates with some delay ideas which are articulated and spread by other people than political leaders. Therefore we should rather reflect on the cultural context which gave birth to the values connected with historic preservation. We suggest an interpretation in terms of power diffusion of class-related values.

Historically, the idea of preservation was spread by Art historians.

This fact has two implications. One is that preservation of architectural objects or urban sites does not include the people who use them. Therefore it contains always the temptation and risk to opt for facadism, turning buildings and settings into sentimental objects rather than into places for human action and for the dynamism of social life. The other risk is to make the material environment seem sacred and this means, one could say by nature, that the various modes of space appropriation are drastically curtailed. The official recognition of the value of given places should not mean that they become fetishes. i.e. that the object is more valued than the actions and human relationships of which it is only one aspect at best a support (Boesh. 1980) and a provisional materialization in a complex and continuous dynamism (Marx. 1934). The historical landmarks must be protected against passing times, fashions and individual whims. But in order not to become the symbol of the "burden of the past" (Ford. 1984), their protection should benefit from a more comprehensive approach to the various issues raised: profits and inconveniences, control of real estate speculation, the understanding of conflicting interests and of the sociological spectrum of the dwellers and users of the areas are all to be preserved, as well as the possible social consequences of a flexible application of a historic preservation policy.

Who might benefit from the preservation of an urban neighborhood? Who might be disenfranchised as a result of such an endeavor? Such questions should be clearly addressed, since all social groups do not share the same values. Specialists of popular culture often stress that the origins of many of its aspects

are to be found in elite culture (Julliard. 1985). The existence of a popular set of values that evolves in close relation to the diffusion of elite ones implies that different representations and uses of space exist. Appleyard (1973) and Goodchild (1974) have found, for example, that working-class urban residents have function-oriented images of places, while middleclass residents pay more attention to aesthetic and historical factors. Such factors contribute to the formation of a sentiment and symbolism which plays major role in middle-class' housing choices, be considered as ecological variables (Firey. 1979).

Therefore, the second implication is that the awareness of the aesthetic or historic value of objects and sites, as well as of art objects, paintings and sculpture. Etc... is not equally spread among all members of a given society. It is typically class-associated (Sandstrom. 1977; Bourdieu. 1979). In this case, it is a haute bourgeoisie view of the world (Aris. 1979). When, in the XIXth century, historic preservation is formally organized, it was connected to issues like national or regional identities, national pride as much as to certain ideas about Art, Beauty, and a vision of urban civilization.

Ideas about the preservation of monuments or historic landmarks are first printed in scholarly journals read by small circles of archaeologists and architects before being spread in the society at large. Nature conservation was typically an elite initiative and action (Zube. 1975: 1982). Elite theories on the ideal social use of urban open spaces oriented the design of XIXth and XXth centuries, parks (Baillon. 1975; Cranz. 1982) in spite of evidence that these theories do not necessarily coincide with popular environmental attitudes and use (Foresta. 1980).

All the squares under consideration here have been protected according to an elite conception of historic urban centers. They are also used according to middle-class conceptions of public sociability. We have stressed earlier that the bulk of activities which can be observed is oriented towards leisure and consumption, which are the two major dimensions of a middle-class image of public life in urban open spaces, and in squares in particular (KorosecSerfaty. 1985 a; 1985 b) as they allow the users to live the illusion of peaceful coexistence between all social groups, museumized places are, par excellence, the settings for such seemingly non conflicting coexistence of people. To conclude, we suggest that the members of the same social class first spread the modern conceptions of architecture and urban planning then experience disenchantment born from these ideas and their popular rejection and finally gave a new and stronger impulse to the spreading of historic preservation ideas.

The local political leaders, who often belong to the same social class, only then integrate them to their action. Thus we observe the following general process:

1. diffusion of values.
2. actualization of values through actual historic preservation decisions.
3. emergence of new environmental "status" and "messages" of protected places. i.e. implications for use, assertion of new aesthetic codes and translation of the "value" of the place to financial standards.
4. internationalization by the dwellers of an idealized image of the past;
5. rejection of elements (be they architectural, ornamental objects or behaviours) incongruent with those images.

Finally, a closer analysis has shown that the social class which articulate and spreads the preservation ideas is the one which has the ability to resist their implications, while it is an aged and modest population who not only must leave the place for newcomers but also internalizes without criticism the values conveyed by the museumization. Therefore, they are the only deprived group of dwellers. and their only compensation is in the fact that they participate to the glorification of their vernacular past. their collective past as ordinary people and not the past represented by heroes.