

# The Heart Of The City: An Analysis Of The American Model In The Case Of Mall Del Pacífico In The City Of Manta

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## Abstract

The American model represented in one of its dimensions in shopping centers has been implemented in different geographies and cultures, in a generic, controlled, heated that disconnects the individual with the outside of the city, both physically and culturally. The objective is to analyze the incidence of the American model: Mall del Pacífico case, in the loss of direct contact of the inhabitants with the heart of the city of Manta. The proposed design was exploratory, through a descriptive methodology with a mixed approach, establishing as a starting point, a documentary analysis of bibliographic sources, direct observation with the on-site visit, and the survey. Among the main findings were identified through conceptual theoretical evaluations and the results of the diagnosis, as it is evident that the heart of the city was a place of social encounter, where the individual was socialized on a larger scale, identified with their customs, traditions and cared for his environment, has been losing social appeal to the eminent American model identified in shopping malls.

**Keywords:** City; Mall; American model,

## Introduction

The heart of the city is a unique space, a stage where the socialization of the citizen with the outside world takes place, because it is the consequence of the development process and project of society at a specific historical moment; it is the product of human initiative, as well as the result of the activity and work of the city in each era.

In its beginnings, urban planning and studies sought the life of urban centers and public space in a spirit of open community life, where public facilities represented an exaltation of cultural values, for community life.

The debates around the loss of vitality and the traditional social values of the relationship of the individual in the city prompted the study of this concept of the heart of the city. The movement of the

population from the urban center to the shopping centers and the new relationships offered by technological and communicative training offered dispersion and abandonment of the urban center and of complex social relationships.

Among the nine points on monumentality (published in *Architecture and Community*) by Josep Lluís Sert, Fernand Léger and Sigfried Giedion, "The heart of the city, towards the humanization of urban life", by Josep Lluís Sert, "The synthesis of the Arts" by Le Corbusier, "Architecture and Planning" by Walter Gropius, "The Doorn Manifesto" and "The Habitat Charter" of the so-called Team X, marked the future and the evolution of the thought of the Modern Movement in urban planning, the most famous was undoubtedly the Charter of Athens.

The urbanism proposed for the functional city had to consider the vital needs of the individual and not the interest or profit of a particular group. The proposal of urban planning, according to the Charter of Athens, is to guarantee individual freedom while benefiting from the contributions of collective action and submitting to them. The conjunction of private and public interests in their fair balance are the only ones that can guarantee the spiritual and material plane, individual freedom and the benefit of collective action referred to in guideline 75 of the Athens Charter; The protection of the city's heritage is also urged.

It is at the VII CIAM held in England that the first contributions were identified regarding what was later called the fifth function of the city: the "heart of the city". In this, the search for a new urban model was studied, in the face of some criticisms arising from rationalist approaches derived from the study and application of the Charter of Athens. The bases of analysis from empirical experiences manifested in the study were the implementation of the great roads for mobility, the incorporation of natural values and the preservation of historic areas.

The heart of the city as a fifth function relates the metropolitan area and the center and implies an interest in public space and an overcoming of the strict functionalism derived from the Charter of Athens. The center is constituted as the unique element that gives meaning to the urban complex where there is social relationship, vitality, and identity. That is why the historic center is not necessarily understood as the heart of the city, but to the civic and representative center of the modern city.

The concept of the heart of the city was defined by Josep Lluís Sert, but also worked on by Ernesto N. Rogers, Le Corbusier, Sigfried Giedion, Walter Gropius, among other modern authors. For Sert, the only real

advantage of living in the city was to bring people closer to each other and favor the direct exchange of knowledge and information: that people exchange ideas and be able to discuss them freely since in peripheral neighborhoods "the news, information or images always arrive through the media intervened by various interests: one sees only what is shown and listens to what is told terribly dangerous"(Sert, 1951).

The heart of the city is not a neutral and passive space on which objects are located and activities are carried out, but its form and perception is in a continuous process of change, a process of change that derives from the space-activity interaction (Duhau & Giglia, 2012). The urban center is perceived from its use as a social product by citizens. That is why it is directed to admit that the urban center is a social product.

The centralities of the cities of Latin America have been characterized by a strong occupation of public space by people with limited economic resources, a situation that local authorities consider to be the central focus of the problems of the urban image.

The content of the action is as important as its protagonists. The physical space conditions the development of human activity, and, at the same time, these activities and the uses of that space identify and characterize the heart of the city; That is why they depend on the relationship established between space and the human being, and from that relationship a social product emerges (Goss, 1993).

The city of Manta in the province of Manabí in Ecuador currently has a remarkable mix of forms of urban development. On the one hand, the morphology of a typical citizen space in Latin America predominates, where the street is established by the road, sidewalks and arcades, in which important forms of social coexistence are developed, demonstrated through commercial, labor

and habitat activities (Sáinz, Camino, Orozco, 2013)

But next to this traditional space are the closed peripheral urbanizations born in the heat of the private vehicle and public communication infrastructures. With this form of city, the application of the American model of closed private shopping centers is also born, which isolates the individual from direct contact with the city.

Likewise, for the specific case under study of the city of Manta, the objective of this research is to analyze the incidence of the American model: Mall del Pacífico case, in the loss of direct contact of the inhabitants with the heart of the city of Manta, that is why it seeks to rediscover, understand and raise in a theoretically supported and applied way the problems of the loss of the heart of the city identified in the Central Park; same that has been losing its social function of centrality, a place where people walked and recognized each other, a meeting place full of vitality, which opposes the arrogant, unsustainable and individualistic American model represented at its maximum scale by the illustrious Mall from Pacific. This created city model advocates the fragmentation of the social fabric, promoting the city of fear.

### **Materials and methods**

The proposed approach is exploratory, establishing as a starting point, a documentary analysis of bibliographic sources with theoretical support related to the background and incidence of the American model in the loss of centrality functions in the hearts of Latin American cities and in the case under study of the city of Manta in Ecuador and descriptive in the sense of showing the phenomenon as it occurs in reality, to base the social effects on urban development through the factors that can influence the American model every day is imposed through its attractions and benefits before the forgotten center of the

city, under the perspective of complex systems. The research is a case study type; focuses its interest on the city of Manta, province of Manabí in Ecuador because it is identified in a notable incidence of the American model. The techniques used to respond to the stated objective were the documentary review, direct observation with the on-site visit, and the survey that through this the instrument was established through the questionnaire of questions with the objective of identifying the motivations of the settlers. of the city of Manta who visit the Mall del Pacífico and the main causes of losing direct contact with the heart of the city, identified in the central park.

Therefore, the nature of the data was qualitative and quantitative, under an ethnographic design with a descriptive scope. According to (Hernández, Fernández, & Baptista, 2014) the researcher "uses data collection and analysis to refine research questions or reveal new questions in the interpretation process" (p.7). The type of sampling used is non-probabilistic - intentional or convenience, which according to (Otzen & Manterola, 2017) allows selecting those accessible cases that agree to be included. For the development of the survey, the collaboration of the workers of the premises of the Mall del Pacífico was of vital importance; That is why in the instrument, taking into account that the response time by the respondents was minimal so as not to interrupt the activities to be carried out during their visit to the Mall del Pacífico, questions were established with very specific response options and those that we considered could be presented to us. a better diagnosis of the problem under investigation. In a period of 45 days, a participation of 223 respondents was achieved who responded to the instrument in its entirety.

### **Analysis and discussion of the results**

Through the application of the survey as a research technique, the objective was to identify the motivations of the inhabitants of the city of Manta who visit the Mall del Pacífico and the main causes of losing the direct contact with the heart of the city, identified in the central park.

The age of the participants was identified from 16 to 66 years. The age group of 23 to 39 years concentrates the highest percentage of participation 43.4%, followed by the percentages corresponding to the groups of 17 to 22 years of 29.1%, from 40 to 57 years 20.2% and from 58 to 66, 7.3%. 60% of those who responded to the survey are women and 40% men.

Regarding the question: Which of the two places do you prefer to spend your leisure time with your family? The Mall del Pacífico is the most frequent option (61.6%), followed by Parque Central 38.4%. It is very important to note that among the respondents who select the Central Park, they are in the age range of older adults.

Regarding the motivations for visiting the Mall del Pacífico, 42% chose because in the same place they find premises with various services, 28.3% feel safer, away from crime, 19.2% because of the options of recreation and 10.5% because it is less environmental pollution and noise levels.

Within the most preferred areas when visiting the Mall del Pacífico, 39.2% go to the food court, 31.4% to the Supermarket, 16% to stores selling clothes, shoes, and electrical appliances, 8.4 % to the Banks and 5% to the pharmacy.

In the open question about the reasons why you prefer to get away from direct contact with the city and do without visiting the Central Park, coincidences were identified in the answers of 52% of those surveyed in criteria such as the increase in criminal acts, for lack of recreational attractions and the distance between essential services.

63% of those surveyed appeal to the corresponding authorities to design and implement actions for the rescue, maintenance and conservation of the heart of the city, as well as the development of cultural recreational activities in the central park that in past decades was identified as the agora of the city and the reinforcement of the police in this area for the security of the citizens who yearn for the return of the social contact that was established in this area.

It is evident how that social meeting place, where the individual was socialized on a larger scale, identified with their customs, traditions and took care of their surroundings, has been losing its social appeal to the eminent American model identified in shopping malls. In the case of Manta, the most representative is the imposing Mall del Pacífico, a place where citizens not only from the canton of Manta, but also from neighboring cantons and provinces, visit for the attractions and offers it presents. This model encourages the loss of direct contact of the individual with the city but finds the satisfaction of several needs in the same place and above all security and protection.

It is perceived in the new generations, the identification with the American model of the Mall del Pacífico shopping center in the city of Manta with an essential approach, while older adults generally yearn for the central park as a pleasant place, of tranquility and social exchange. and they see no possibility of returning to their traditions, due to how degraded and desolate it is today.

In the recovery of the heart of the city, the role played by local governments is of vital importance through the implementation of "recovery" programs of central areas and historic centers, as well as investment in the maintenance and promotion of historical heritage and cultural, all with the aim of

making the urban space attractive for private capital investment.

Within the framework of cultural geography, commerce, as a place of exchange, is an ideal place to study urbanity, when the processes of globalization of economies and the uncontrolled growth of cities call into question the quality of urban life and of social ties, as well as identities.

Based on the results obtained, it can be argued that the objective of the survey was fulfilled. Its usefulness is relevant in a current environment where the American model of shopping centers is taking up space every day and fosters the loss of an open social life in the direct contact of the inhabitants with their customs and traditions, in which development research urban development of cities has become the main concern of scholars of this matter and of society for some decades, who observe with great concern how cities continue to grow without efficient control mechanisms that achieve effective administration of the urban space where they are located. it lives.

### **Model of the Latin American city**

As mentioned, (Borja & Castells, 2004) the urban communities of Latin America, after a period of rapid development and rural extension, have achieved a development and have obtained obligations that the urban areas of the past never knew. Meanwhile, the organization in the urban plan has created another science, where the current organizers are concerned with the structure of the city, its processes of development and decay, and the investigation of all the geological, social, political and monetary variables that have shaped the city.

In recent times there has been a lot of discussion about the nuances of lack in the construction of urban areas, their weaknesses, and deficiencies, in particular those that are being developed, which makes the surrender of the city to live on the limits

has become a common choice of natives. That is the reason why it is seen that everything generally lacking in its creation has turned out to be rural.

Low knowledge is necessary to address these problems, where new urban guidelines are required, as well as organization and structure, in turn it can be known that according to (Bhabha, 2012) since the mid-1970s, the urban areas of America Latin America have experienced a progression of significant changes, predominantly, these progressions are due to a decrease in the pace of urban development caused by the decrease in internal relocation from the countryside to the city and certain social and political changes that altered the foundations of urban improvement. .

As it is also necessary to know that at the time when the main models of the Latin American city were distributed in 1976, the location was still under the financial impact of the import substitution industrialization system. Financial and organizational forms, even in the urban space, were firmly coordinated by the state (Bhabha, 2012). From that moment on, all Latin American nations, except Cuba, have changed to another monetary worldview, in view of neoliberalism, and the solid impact of globalization is seen. The withdrawal of the state, privatization and deregulation allowed financial specialists, organizers and residents more prominent opportunities. This can be seen in the structure of urban areas.

Latin American urban areas have maintained their character and scale until the middle of the 20th century, when customary society was broken by progressively serious procedures of globalization. In Ecuador, with the authentic approaches of urban areas such as Quito, Loja, Ibarra or Cuenca, the traditional urban model worked reasonably based on the monetary and social requirements of pre-modern culture.

Based on the network of the Laws of the Indies, the temporary request depended on the functioning of roads and squares, the symbology of the exteriors of open structures and the typologies of residential development. The network shows in these urban communities the practical adaptability it gives rise to and its ability to help different jobs. These are urban communities where the social space, the gathering place, the action in the open space is of incredible value. In turn, it shows (Arias, 2011) that in certain capitals in the 19th century and in a summary route from the mid-20th century, the changes in the urban communities of Latin America experience a solid acceleration. There is an adjustment in the size of urban capacities due to the development of the population, the expansion of the complexity of regulatory capacities and the change of vehicle frames.

Ecuador, like the vast majority of Latin American nations, experienced during the mid-twentieth century different wonders that decided urban development, Manta was no stranger to the urban changes that occurred due to these procedures, which incorporate, among others, the difference in the financial model towards import substitution industrialization, which caused a solid relocation of the population from the countryside to the city; and, in the last quarter of the previous century, the oil explosion and the impact of the neoliberal model, where they state (Berdegué & Meynard, 2012) that in this sense, the financial changes of the 1990s were aimed at making the state it privatizes open efforts and the destruction of the social framework seriously restricts the limit of state executives. The pattern towards sheltered and safe accommodation became the decisive element for the development of the city's exterior.

In this way, this procedure is joined by a development of the detention of specific neighborhoods by the affluent population,

the spatial division as an indication of division and social disintegration is currently communicated through physical obstacles and impediments in access. Common detachment replaces the past example of the open and complete city. In this sense, practical health islands are formed with patches of abnormal state of administrations, utilization, and night life, meanwhile, outsiders feel physically undermined.

These procedures of social polarization were reflected in another spatial redistribution: an increasing number of natives are looking for a private and effective association of their neighborhood that provides them with administrations that were previously open. The surrender of the administration and control of urban development by the State and its assignment by private artists caused the emergence of urban structures that are attractive, lucrative and significant for the market. These new urban structures have fundamentally disappeared for the victors of the financial changes, to be dedicated shopping centers, urban entertainment centers, non-public schools, and private buildings, supervised and open to the general population (Janoschka, 2011).

Latin American urban structures were significantly modified from the primary speculations in a model of 25 years ago, in this sense, the procedures of globalization and monetary exchange have diminished the polarization between the rich city and the poor city, while the isolation expanded to an exceptionally small scale.

It is noteworthy that, starting in the 1990s, some urban structures from the mill of the North American city spread into the urban areas of the subcontinent, where the result is a closed urban scene, the loss of open circles and a change in the propensities of the natives. The details of this imaginative model of a privatized and divided Latin American city reflect on the angles of

reference and, meanwhile, establish a connection between the speculations of the United States. Also, urban progress in Latin America.

The global advances mentioned above are described at the neighborhood level by means of decentralized structures and inwardly coordinated enclaves, due to the new spatial connections within the urban district supplanting the conventional image of concentric or sectoral application of homogeneous spaces by a focal business zone (Lulle and Thierry, 2013).

This wonder expands the rivalry with coordinated shopping centers in the city center and even builds a parallel: while the focal point of the city of Manta, with more than 10 private neighborhoods and more than 25% of its space, is privatized and it closes to the open, it becomes an interior for the supply of those conceived, the new centrality in the avenue (km 50) becomes the center for the occupants of private urbanizations, in this sense, it is not feasible that as spatial changes are emerging new urban centralities for the entire agglomeration.

Meanwhile, in these new centralities as in the closed accommodation buildings, another type of open and obvious space is created; incomprehensibly the latter is secretly created, abused and controlled, so to speak, the privatization of ownership and availability made the squares lose their focal capacity as an outflow from the general population, and end up in unadulterated points of use.

On the other hand, urban changes include new improvements in small spaces, but also totally new centralities that appear outside the city territory, for (Henaó, 2012) states that where conventional focal urban capacities do not have a useful association with the urban core and are located elsewhere, confined to rural areas.

These attributes underline the inclination towards a very isolated and divided city. The current Latin American city is being created towards a city of islands. This derives both from the separate settling of structures and capacities in their development and, furthermore, from the consequent detachment from previous urban spaces through the development of walls or dividers.

This improvement of uncoordinated urban parts should be taken as a break with the Latin American city usually open and separated by open spaces. From here, the Latin American city becomes an urban structure moderately close to the American city. Although the new developments do not show parallels with different procedures seen in the United States, they share numerous approaches for all intents and purposes, particularly in forms of privatization, which include all layers of the population, as well as in urban speculations made by private artists (Janoschka, 2011).

Given that the procedures of change occur in an ordinarily territorial Latin American urban condition, where social and political structures are generally different, we continue to discuss the average Latin American structure of the city, however, in recent decades, this structure has been greatly altered and another visualization must be used.

The changes in the urban space and the procedures of progress in the city of Manta are not a unique case, because several contextual investigations record the new isolated and closed improvements in practically each of the cities of the continent. In turn, they mention (Borsdorf, 2003) that, in comparable circumstances in Quito and Lima, as (Lanzeta, and Martín, 2013) affirms that in Santiago de Chile in terms of the new dissolution procedures of the old structures. The same that portray

comparative changes of the urban space in different urban communities.

In all reliable aspects in the city of Manta, changes in mediations are carried out through street openings or internal changes, however, the most significant change is the renunciation of the memorable approach and the production of another in the interior, or some approaches. Together with the presence of wide and uncontrolled peripheries. The economic upswing of the most recent decade has produced critical tensions in urban communities, expanding social contrasts in a city portrayed by the spread of neighborhoods from mass migration from urban communities to sprawl and sprawl of real estate.

For this reason, we can say that the adjustments in the urban space of the city of Manta are not an outstanding case. Private urbanization procedures and the propensity to confine lodging and business buildings were forced in most urban communities in Latin America, and even in medium-sized urban areas. Experimental contextual analyzes in different urban areas and nations show comparative results: the monstrous increase in gated communities, limited plazas and supermarkets incorporates the upper wage layers, the progressive working class and even the lower working class.

### **The heart of the city**

A heart accumulates, channels, cleanses, and appropriates the blood to where it should go for the proper functioning of each part of our body; however, in addition, it feels, communicates, energizes and increases feelings” (Rogers, Sert, & Tyrwhitt, 2013). A heart in the city is known for the fact that it accumulates individuals, integrates exercises, and circulates the newly assembled development to better places for its effective operation; Likewise, it is the declaration of the general population living

in each city and the elections made by their rulers.

Structuring a city, where always remember that our primary methods for vehicles is our own body, is to interact with the core of each person who must be protected and understood in a place that encourages him to live. Individuals who understand this most likely give the general population living in the city an honorable personal satisfaction, where they themselves, in recognition and without knowing why, give their best in every demonstration they put on.

By 1951, Josep Lluís Sert, leader of the CIAM congresses (International Congress of Modern Architecture), together with his partners, achieved a progression of points that were called under his name the heart of the city” (Herzer, 2015). There they alluded to open spaces as spaces of opportunity for the idea, that is, spaces for aggregate meetings where feelings are exchanged through words, to put it clearly, the core of the city manages urban problems and open spaces as a meeting point for social joints in a public.

The core of the city is an interconnected interior, where the physical and useful exercises of the city are resolved: "The possibility of the focus contains two standards: one geometric (related to a specific urban structure) and another utilitarian (Regarding destination and use)". In this way, a city can have at least one approach, depending on the utilitarian and geometric need of that city. On the other hand, regarding the urban structure, he guaranteed that "we must make urban areas for nothing and living men, that is, for men fit to be unique.

Research into the heart of the city is presented from now on, since one of the principles must be safeguarded in the social experience. Logical research shows that the focal territories of urban areas are obsolete and ugly, and that what once comprised the



heart, core of ancient urban communities is now deteriorated. With the extraordinary development of the outskirts over the last hundred years the characteristic result of new methods for vehicles, modern development, and earth theory.

Previously, numerous urban areas had characterized structures and worked around a focal center that was regularly the decisive variable of those structures. It was the urban communities that formed the nuclei, but thus they made the city a genuine city, and not just a total of individuals, the essential component of each evident creature is its interior or nucleus, which here we call the Heart. (Sert, 2015)

These days, in urban areas, individuals gather on boulevards brimming with traffic, in totally sinister conditions for an expansive difference in thoughts. Properly organized network meeting approaches can become a structure where other public activity and a strong municipal soul can create (Ferretti, 2017).

Taking into consideration what muller (2004) and Sert (1955) said, it is known that the reason for making a city and having your heart draw blood through the totality of its supply routes depends on each native being awake and aware of what it is; Encapsulating a functional investment, in turn he affirms (Sert, 2015) that each of the components of shopping centers, enormous sustenance and commercial chains have expelled social commerce, having a sense of security and close to everyone. They are the declaration of the predominant general inclination of the nonconformist, where the course of walking has remained before, gaining the use of vehicles and transports by small relocations.

The desolation of the heart of the city of Manta, identified in the Central Park social axis of the historic center of the city, extraordinarily influences its capacities of centrality when the American model wins, represented in the Mall del Pacífico that

segregates the inhabitants from direct contact with the city and the usual lifestyles, in fact, we are convinced of the requirement of direct correspondence between the natives, to give a solid structure to the municipal culture, from now on prevented by the living states of our urban areas, connected to the political, social and monetary structure. Figure 1 shows the geographical location of the Central Park of the city of Manta.

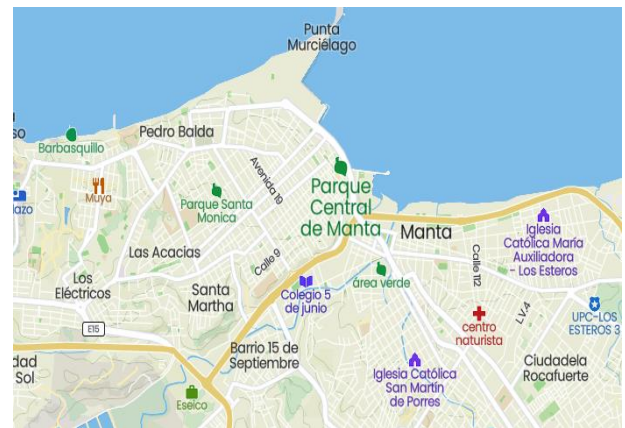


Figure 1. Spatial location of central park in the city of Manta, Ecuador.

Source: adapted from Google Map (2022)

Meanwhile, the instruments of urban organization in the city of Manta have led people to abandon the old focus, where their main fascination was the appearance and association of the Port. Business zones have been growing suddenly along the new central veins and avenues and achieve that kind of pollution that spreads from the city's focal point.

This procedure of continuous and untimely decentralization; and the subsequent hypothesis with the land, comprises a genuine risk to our urban communities and the solidity of their usual qualities, supporting only the interests of a couple contrasted with those of the residents in general.

### The city of Manta

During Ecuador's pre-Columbian history, Manta was home to, in any case, seven unmistakable civic establishments. As certain examinations indicated, the Maya landed in Manta around 500 AD, but discovered that it was officially occupied by different meetings, so they resigned (Sáinz, Camino, Orozco, (2013). There is no thought of the general population that lived here between the landing of the Maya and the victory of the Incas, however, there is agreement that the present-day city of Manta, in the past known as Jocay, was used by the Incas and the former occupiers. Indigenous people as a focal point of trade.

The Spanish traveler Bartolomé Ruiz was one of the leading Europeans who landed in Jocay in 1526. Then, in 1534, Pedro de Alvarado landed with his navy in Bahia, from where he left with his men in a successful campaign, they found the indigenous population of Jocay without suspecting that their chief, Ligua Tohallí, was a prisoner. They also discovered a lot of gold, silver, emeralds, and valuable stones. During the Spanish settlement, the Manta area was a part of the domain of Guayaquil and remained so until the end of the eighteenth century. Its history as a business focus begins long before the Inca conquest, when it was completed as a trade site for the indigenous meetings of Mancha and Inca.

The victor, Pedro Pizarro, described Jocay as an exceptionally huge city, to which the sanctuary arrived by a huge road, on whose sides there were statues up to 2.5 meters high, inherent stone, talking to its boss and clerics, body nudes, for which the Spanish winners pulverized them (Camino, 2014).

Established in 1534 by Francisco Pacheco, and in 1563 by President Hernando de Santillán of the Royal Audience of Quito, who requested that it be established under the name of San Pablo de Manta. From that time until November 4, 1922, it was part of

the canton of Montecristi and stopped to be a provincial hall (Giler, (2016).

This fishing town would continue to develop by an essential hint of symmetrical plot between convention and discernment, which climbs the slopes that extend at the entrance, framing an extended semicircle in a moderate but friendly procedure until the 60s, when the development of deep water, the city's pier will begin to develop incessantly maintaining the symmetrical plot, accommodating 2 centralities isolated by the Manta River (the urban neighborhoods Manta and Tarqui) that at that point will be flooded to the edge, with the impulse of the national populist governments and the neighborhood that will advance in the bases of clients the intrusions.

From the supposed lost decade in Latin America, a municipalism emerges that will recover urban communities, request rents from the state and make their own rents before the disappearance of the paternalistic state. In Manta, since 1996, after an arrangement of recovery of urban communities that began in Quito "legacy of humanity", and then spread to Guayaquil, Cuenca and Loja, the modernization of the city began (GAD Manta, 2020).

What is more, coincides with the task through a state salary law that does not change quickly, the Strategic Development Plan was made in 1977, which plans the changes of the city and the Manta Plan 2020 with a broader vision of a reduced city, well served and joint, with extraordinary local and global intermediation.

These two plans experienced Urban Plans, and Regulations, depending only on the Regulatory Plan of 1989, which was extemporized adjusted to requests for reorganization of the domain, updating of street networks, new offices and foundations, migratory houses in danger and the numerous activities of new jobs of the land, for the housing industry, shops,

accommodations, and an important dynamic of the land of advances, homes and workplaces.

Currently, the largest mechanical base is in the urban area of estuaries, and in addition, there are some scattered enterprises in the city that produce natural pollution and traffic problems, so it is important to design a modern park to migrate these manufacturing plants.

Manta was no stranger to the urban changes that occurred due to these procedures, which incorporate, among others, the difference in the monetary model towards industrialization by import substitution, which incited a solid relocation of the population from the wide-open area to the city; and, in the last quarter of the previous century, the explosion of oil and the influence of the neoliberal model.

In 1999, to save the pair of authentic engineering estimation structures of the Canton of Manta, the Inventory of Cultural Property was completed, within the system of a Study carried out by the Municipality of Manta and the National Institute of Cultural Heritage. This research included a "basic registration of the property of Manta, urban, landscape and environmental heritage (Camino, 2014)

A review was completed in 22 urban units, 26 structures were inspected, and similar ones were stored. In addition, the Lighthouse and the 2 urban complexes of the city were included, which present formal productive attributes, typologies of sites, unique components at the façade level and in general. There was a total of 29 properties flooded in the inventory, which were proclaimed as resources that have a place with the social legacy of the country, on March 1, 2000, through Ministerial Agreement No. 594, distributed in Official Gazette No. 48, on March 31, 2000. Walk 2000. These products recognize Manta and give him his personality, becoming a source

of wealth, as a substantive component to help our character and as an initial stage for a social exchange to imagine a typical future. (PDOT GAD Manta, 2020)

On the road to San Mateo is the area of greatest urban expansion, marked by the construction of urban projects and housing solutions; situation that is also evident along the Ring Road. It has about 20 hills between 20 and 40 meters at sea level, where neighborhoods such as Bellavista, Las Cumbres, 20 de Mayo, among others, are located.

The transportation began by canoe and sometime later the railroad that covered the Manta-Portoviejo-Santa Ana route appeared, and whose central station was located on 12th Avenue and 13th Street, according to the story. In the mid-90s there were only two bus lines, 15 fewer than currently exist. Transportation was a little further back from the La Ensenadita neighborhood and the commercial sector of La Bahía in the 60s, since this whole area in the past was an arm of the sea. The city has four rivers: Donkey, Manta, Dead and Tiger. The latter is the one that crosses the La Florita neighborhood. All by nature are dry riverbeds, originated because Manta is one of the driest cities in the country due to the scarcity of rainfall.

The most luxurious and expensive two-story hotel in the past was called Aragónés, located on Avenue 2. Several years ago, it was restored and is now the Cancebí Museum. In front is the Palace of Justice, formerly the Central Bank of Ecuador, another meter ahead is the Civic Square, where the Central Market worked, now located on 12th Street.

The port authorities of Manta, with their own funds and in pursuit of the development of the province, led the project for the construction of the Scenic Malecon from July 1997 at a cost of 3,060 million sucres, with a construction area of 25,742 m<sup>2</sup>,

surrounded by green areas consisting of 300 palm trees and a large tourist infrastructure with various food outlets, handicrafts and information, which is why it has been declared a tourist area of the first order in the city of Manta. The work that was inaugurated on February 20, 1998, has basic hydro sanitary and electrical services as well as buildings for tourist information, security and administration, 22 premises for the sale of food and drinks, tourist viewpoint, telephone station, central square for events, vehicular parking, access roads, among other facilities.

The Scenic Malecon is located at the foot of El Murciélago beach, located in the center of Manta and extends west to the sector known as Barbasquillo and without limits in the same direction to the urban parish of San Mateo. In its surroundings are located buildings such as the Central Bank Museum, Hotel Oro Verde, Cabaña Balandras, Manicentro, Yacht Club, Mall del Pacifico, Supermaxi, CC Coco Manta.

Among the main tourist areas of the country, the city of Manta occupies one of the first places. Its resources linked to tourism are integrated into other important productive activities, such as trade, industry, fishing, among others, which are facilitated by the advantages of having an easily accessible seaport and an airport.

For the planning of the Scenic Malecon, a series of circumstances was considered based, in a special way, on needs demanded by the community, such as visual, shape, equipment, height, vegetation, vehicular and pedestrian accesses, shadows, color, among others. But the most important one has to do with the relationship between the city and the port, as a natural beach area. Its design is horizontal in nature with the purpose of respecting the natural landscape to the maximum and integrated man with his environment through his senses, with routes at different angles provoked with the aim of

breaking the continuous perspective, motivating the user to the healthy pleasure of walking, and making this activity interesting and pleasant.

Its spaces provoke day and night, a place where various social events, artistic and sports exhibitions and manifestations of cultural groups that project an improvement of the self-esteem of our community are held. The Scenic Malecon, is a sufficiently versatile and functional space, adequately covers the needs of the user, making it a place of passive and active recreation

The Scenic Malecon is served daily by national and foreign tourists and spend a pleasant time with friends or family, surrounded by its magnificent beaches, located in the heart of the city, which invite you to rest in various ways, where the imagination flies to the rhythm of the breeze. On the Scenic Malecon every year the carnival party is celebrated where great national and international artistic shows are presented.

### **Cultural attractions of the city**

Manta has four museums and other centers of cultural attraction among which are cited:

- Ethnographic Museum "CANCEBÍ": Previously it was a Hotel, and today it portrays the life of the peasant and the Manabite fishing cholo. It is in the center of Manta, has seven exhibition halls and a historical archive which for a year has been set to open its doors.
- Museo Centro Cultural de Manta: It shows the "remains carved in the face" on the route of the Manabite cultures including Valdivia, Machalilla, Chorrera, Jama Coaque, Bahía, Guangala and Manteña.
- University-Archaeological and Ethnographic Museum Dr. José Reyes: It is located in the Eloy Alfaro Lay University of Manabí (ULEAM), has

various photographic, archaeological, numismatic galleries (coins and banknotes of Ecuador) and ethnographic exhibitions.

- **Archaeological Museum of Pacoche:** Located in the commune of Pacoche via Manta-Puerto Cayo, where there are pieces collected from the surroundings of the Loma de Ligüiqui, there are also collections of ceramics with the styles of the Manteña, Jama Tardío, and Bahía culture.

### **Centers of cultural and recreational attraction**

- **Los Esteros Shipyard:** center of cultural and tourist attraction. It is an open center and is in front of the beach of Los Esteros. It presents the landings of artisanal fishing, constructions of large boats, also has a center of restaurants that offer typical dishes of the city, and you can practice recreational activities such as beach soccer, beach volleyball, sport fishing, etc.
- **La Dolorosa Church:** located in the neighborhood "La Dolorosa", this church has a historical weight for the tragedy that occurred in October 1996 where an American plane (Boeing 707 of the Million Air company) crashed affecting 54 houses and killing 32 people.

### **The imposing American model in the city of Manta**

Imported from the United States and closely linked to car mobility, the shopping center is a model that has been implemented in different geographies and cultures with very limited variations: the same brands, the same gastronomy in a generic atmosphere, controlled, heated and disconnected from the outside, both physically and culturally. An ideal atmosphere only to consume, without even providing rest spaces or the conditions

for "common" spaces to function as a true public space, understood as a space for the relationship between people, socialization. An interior space, privately owned, and with very restrictive rules of use, which emulates an exterior "public" space (Carrión, 2003).

It is curious to see how buildings in such distant and different contexts, offer such homogeneous spaces, solutions, and elements. The first note that could be made is that the aesthetics and philosophy behind these malls, as well as their purpose exclusively as a 'machine to sell', are very similar anywhere in the world (Cuenya, 2016). Buildings like these fully represent the phenomenon of the globalization of architectural language and the reproduction of a social and economic model on a global scale.

The concept of a street space with commerce on both sides, where you can walk protected from the weather and where the citizen/customer chooses in which store to make their purchases, is an invention that finds its historical roots in the post-Industrial Revolution society. The emergence of the bourgeoisie, and with it the seed of the current consumer society, began to shape in this direction the form of contemporary urban centers. The best-known historical germ of these new urban spaces, where social life and commerce were completely superimposed, are the passages covered in the Paris of the nineteenth century (Gómez, 2011). These luxurious shopping streets, covered by sophisticated glass and steel structures to allow the passage of natural light, can be considered the antecedent of the contemporary shopping mall, generating small "cities, miniature worlds" within the urban fabric of the city.

But the mall as we know it today, is considered an 'invention' of the Austrian-American architect Victor, who in 1952 defined his vision in an article in the magazine *Progressive Architecture*,

awakening the imagination of developers and municipalities. Gruen conceived in 1956 the first prototype of a closed shopping center in Edina, (Minnesota, United States) and his initial idea was to include in the set all the elements that make up the city, that is, housing, schools, public spaces, and vegetation. (Echeverria, 2015). Gruen's original utopian project for the concept of a street space with commerce on both sides, where you can walk protected from Mall eventually omitted the rest of the elements in its realization and all the innovation was concentrated in the "enclosed space for shopping" format.

Later the office "Victor Gruen Associates" continued to design many shopping malls, defining a specific typology of buildings for this commercial purpose (Nadai and Larcher, 2016). The enormous diffusion of this generic model that simplifies to the extreme the overlap of urbanity, social life, and commercial activity, modified the consumption patterns, the way of moving and the leisure habits of millions of American families. The model that has been extended to this day is, therefore, totally focused on the issue of consumption, leaving out the reflection on public space and the city.

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The incredible economic success of shopping centers in America was reinforced by the consumerist style and, finally, in a progressive way, many cities ended up abandoning their urban center by turning the shopping mall into the container of social life or the meeting place for teenagers. In 1990, the mall experienced its peak of popularity and in the US opened its doors 140 new centers a year.

This format was extended to other cities and countries, being also imported to Europe and installed in the old continent as a reformulation of the commercial gallery invented in cities such as Paris, having little to do with that archetype. It is created in parallel with a new urban and consumer culture that involves the use of the car, the expansion of the urban footprint and life on the periphery. European cities, with an intense urban life in their centers, also reproduce this model.

The American model in Latin America has evolved at its own pace over time. The first indoor mall in South America opened in São Paulo in 1966, the Shopping Iguatemi. (Solá, 2007). As in the United States, this Brazilian shopping center transformed the geospatial dynamics of shopping throughout the region. In São Paulo, shopping Iguatemi slowly attracted the upper class and distanced it from the classic boutique district of Rua de Augusta. In 1969, the Plaza Universidad, designed by Sordo Madaleño, one of the first Mexican architects of hotels and shopping centers, opened its doors on the outskirts of Mexico City, in the trendy area, the University City.

The Pacific Mall in the city of Manta in Ecuador is presented with an investment of around 200 million dollars of 120,000 square meters on five levels, 1500 parking lots, is currently the largest private investment project in Manta and Manabí, generates 350 jobs; implanted in a land of 30,000 m<sup>2</sup>. It is considered the best

shopping center in Manabí and is among the five largest in the country. It has 200 commercial premises, a mega-commissary and a five-star hotel with 165 rooms. Figure 2 shows the image of the Pacific Mall of the city of Manta.



Figure 2. Pacific Mall. City of Manta

Source: adapted from official facebook page. Pacific Mall (2022)

The North American imprint on the Mall del Pacífico in the city of Manta, where the elements of the consumer's imagination congregate, is evident. Although many aspects of the design at this resort reflect European or local tastes, the structures themselves, with ample parking for car access, restaurant area, and movie theaters, illustrate the growing American influence on Latin American shopping cultures. This new structure in the city of Manta not only introduces commercial architecture to the region but provides a place where you can view and buy imported brands.

One of the operations necessary to achieve the greatest possible integration of the shopping center in its urban environment is to dilute the boundaries between interior and exterior, favoring that one enters the other, making the enclosed space more permeable, more physically and conceptually connected with its immediate environment (Carrión 2004). The physical limit of connection

between the two is the façade and a good part of the intervention is focused on it (Lulle and Thierry, 2013). The façade becomes an 'interface' of connection with citizens, serving as a support for many types of new activities (climbing, descending a slide, watching cinema, viewing a digital platform with which to interact through the mobile, increasing the presence of plant species).

Today it is necessary to think of the citizen-client, not as a mere consumer to whom you try to sell as much as possible, but as someone who can enjoy having a different experience while visiting the center. Promoting the idea of public space in a privately owned building is a conceptual challenge, which goes against the very definition and objectives of a shopping center. But this new economic reality requires a rethinking of the precepts that have worked so far, which opens up new possibilities and strategies, which have a place thanks to the economic and urban crisis.

The shopping center model, as we have known it so far, needs to open to the space that accommodates it, let it enter, be less hostile to the environment and its visitors, and provide an experience more connected to the reality of users and the city where it is located (Ochoa, 2001). On the other hand, the current crisis makes it possible to incorporate uses and programs that, expelled from other spaces, can be used to introduce new content to available spaces.

Regarding the work they are doing in Barcelona, it is seen that it is a good job, in Chile for some time there are some malls that apart from including food courts, include benches, offices for the payment of bills, clinics, libraries, theater and concert halls, language schools and professional institutes, among other things. It is good that they reinvent themselves, from time to time you must update themselves in every way, if they do not want to update themselves, they

can no longer do anything else, just rest until death comes.

Malls or huge mallshave gone from being the star products of the twentieth century, in the United States, to becoming the victims of the XXI (Mullers, 2004). A whole way of life based on consumption, which also includes leisure and the possibility of socializing for a particularly individualistic citizenry, disappears with them. And it is that the pandemic has accelerated the closure of at least 25% of these centers, and there may be many more if those who survive do not learn to reinvent themselves.

The reasons are several and come from afar, but the pandemic and the obligation to have to stay at home, the increase in online commerce throughout the country has led to huge spaces, with very little influx of public, which will have to reinvent themselves.

The pragmatic goal of this association of fun with commerce is to increase the time of stay of the consumer by offering other activities than the purchase of products. This is equivalent to reinforcing the social function of the shopping center, making it a "place of life", as the marketing speeches claimed, which would allow shopping to be revalued. Of course, the shopping center always tended to integrate leisure to be a social space and thus make its frequentation profitable (Goss, 1993), starting with the morphological principle of the mall (ormallin English) that consecrated its closed interior space to a mercantile form of the promenade. Heir to the shopping galleries and department stores, the shopping mall articulated in a modern way the purchase, the vitrine, and the walk. But the late post-Fordist context requires optimizing the synergy between commerce and leisure by three main means.

The first is the improvement of the urban quality and the comfort of the interior environment so that the room is as pleasant as possible (with the use of certain materials,

the work on the spatial arrangement, the settings -light, colors, sounds-). The other proposals are more novel: several recreational activities for a fee with specific equipment such as cinemas and food spaces, but also sports and cultural centers; and free events that are more cultural (musical, theatrical shows, and workshops for children) than commercial events (animations linked to special offers or games with gifts). (Ferreti, 2017). The postmodern character of the integration of leisure is evidenced in the theming, which is applied above all to interior architecture and can cover even the concept and / or design of recreational facilities. The set of these elements helps to build an imaginary of consumption through an attractive environment, which allows us to understand how the shopping center that integrates leisure embodies, better than the most utilitarian types of consumption spaces, the global objective of re-enchanting consumption.

## Conclusions

The American model of shopping malls is represented as a place of reproduction of the middle class; as well as in a process of distinction and reconstruction of the social and cultural identity of an increasingly heterogeneous class, whose possibilities of access to the signs of status have diminished or are threatened.

The urban location of shopping centers is linked to their better degree of integration into the city, which clearly differentiates it from the suburban or peripheral model. This particularity emphasizes the role of shopping centers in proximity practices and in the sociability of the neighborhood, which is why the different modes of access vary depending on the factors of location and the relationship with the urban environment of each shopping center.

The lack of motivation of the inhabitants of the city of Manta to carry out their leisure



activities and go to meet their basic needs in the centrality recognized by the central park, in that meeting place of social exchange, where the individual had a direct contact with the city has been losing its attractiveness, due to the presence of the American model that represents the Mall del Pacífico shopping center for all the attractions and possibilities it offers to all who visit it.

It is eminent that the cantonal governments must establish as one of the priorities in the Development and Territorial Planning Plans, the recovery of the historic center presenting the inhabitants with relevant social attractions with the transformations to which the cities are subject in their urban development; as well as citizen security, based on the weakness of the so-called closed shopping centers, identified by the American model that isolate the individual from direct contact with the city.

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