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Hyperconsumption, and 'One-Stop-Shopping' of the Cathedrals of Consumption: A Study of Architectural Sociology

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ABSTRACT

There are two concepts at different fields of study, which seem interconnected mutually, 'hyperconsumption' and the design concept of 'one-stop-shopping'. Hyperconsumption is a tendency to encourage individuals consuming for their own personal pleasure, which goes beyond object's utility, and tends to focus at meanings of personal and social. While the concept of "one-stop-shopping" is a design strategy for consumption sites, especially "cathedrals of consumption" — a term used by George Ritzer to picture the contemporary designed physical environments such as shopping malls, amusements, megaresorts, etc. This essay describes the concept of "one-stop-shopping" as a formulation of implosion's mechanism at the cathedrals of consumption for leading people to the direction of hyperconsumption. By using libidinal philosophy of Jean-François Lyotard, this essay reveals how intensities of economic libidinal — what push people towards hyperconsumption — are circulated in two directions, 'system' and 'structure'. And by "the concept of three steps" of Peter Berger, this essay also describes what really happened at individual, when the intensities of economic libidinal flow into the individual's consciousness structure, and at the same time, elaborates how the social interaction is involved in this process.

Key words: *Hyperconsumption, One-Stop-Shopping, Implosion, Consumption Sites, Cathedrals of Consumption, Intensities of Libidinal, Economic Libidinal*

Today, design — especially in the field of architecture - can no longer be seen as a problem solver which sides with public interests. Contemporary architecture is more functioned now as a desire impeller to material, by its certain pattern and form, and by social meaning contained in it. However, in its development lately, architecture is more suitably to be viewed as an object, than as a subject with the authority to solve various problems in societal life. As an object, today's architecture is designed no longer by the architects, but rather by the powers, who take and control the world discourse in the contemporary *episteme* to influence society and human behavior, that at finally, is pointed at accumulation of capital (see Eisenring 2008-b: 286–7; also Dahaner et al. 2000; Adian 2006). To comprehend this, we need to comprehend architecture by sociological aspect, and conversely, sociology by architectural aspect. Thereby, scientific question can raise here is "how a designed physical environment influences and is influenced by society and human behavior?". Architectural sociology

provides some approaches to answer such question, and examine how the form of architectural becomes the cause, as well as becomes the result of any socio-cultural phenomenon (see Smith and Bugni 2002-a, 2002-b, also Beaman 2002-a, 2002-b). Relating with the idea, this essay would be focused at two concepts. Both relating with world contemporary symptoms, firstly is hyperconsumption and secondly is the concept of 'one-stop-shopping' for cathedrals of consumption. Hyperconsumption relates to the contemporary problem of socio-cultural, while the concept of 'one-stop-shopping' refers to contemporary strategy for architectural design of any cathedral of consumption.

Consumption and Hyperconsumption

Hyperconsumption is a concept introduced by a French philosopher and sociologist, Gilles Lipovetsky (see Born 2008). He defines hyperconsumption as a consumption which absorbs and integrated more and more spheres of social life and which encourages

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individuals to consume for their own personal pleasure rather than to enhance their social status (see Lipovetsky et al. 2005, also Charles 2005: 13).

Actually, far before the concept of hyperconsumption was recognized widely, an American economist and sociologist, Thorstein Veblen, in his book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899, had introduced the concept of "conspicuous consumption". Conspicuous consumption is a symptom he observed at individuals in any society where over-consumption had become a social norm or expectation (see Veblen 1899/2009; also Prenhall.com 2009). Although conspicuous consumption has headed the symptom and idea of hyperconsumption, it is not precisely equal to hyperconsumption. However, in Lipovetsky's definition, hyperconsumption is clearly not solely pushed by social motivation, but also by pleasures of individual's private. The definition shows also that hyperconsumption exceeds the definition of consumption as elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu, which is only limited to social communication matters, and as the site of struggles over social distinctions (see Bourdieu 2009; also Corrigan 1997: 26–32). Hyperconsumption is also not limited to a way to construct an intelligible universe and to make and maintain social relationships, of what Douglas and Isherwood define for consumption (see Corrigan 1997: 17). Simply, hyperconsumption is not usual consumption we recognize up till now.

For Ritzer, hyperconsumption can be interpreted as a tendency to consume more than one needs, more than one intends, and most importantly, more than one can afford (see Ritzer 2008; also Ritzer 2004 in McCaskey & Burfoot 2004). He describes some things about the world of consumption are oriented toward leading people to the direction of hyperconsumption, namely advertising, branding, immateriality product, and consumption sites (see Ritzer 2008).

Advertising industry, according to Ritzer, now had exploited big expertise not only for leading people to consume, but also to enchant people into hyperconsumption (see Ritzer 1999: 191). This is in line with the opinion of Tony Smith (1997), that hyperconsumption is also correlated with the colonization of everyday life by an immense system of corporate propaganda.

Branding takes a role in guiding people at hyperconsumption, especially in making people spending more than they can afford by paying more for well-know brand, than they would for less-know brand, or unbranded items. Their impact is amplified

because their well-known logos and names are likely to be plastered all over these products. Logos and icons of the brands like McDonald's, KFC, Big Macs, Levis, Nike, Pizza Hut and so on, this time has become very chummy in the eyes of anyone almost in the whole world. The wide distribution of the icons and logos everywhere is meant nothing but to guide people knowing better and becoming intimate with the certain product brands. By such way, people are easily led to willing purchase for the products, even when the people do not require them at all (see Ritzer 2003: 419).

Many of immateriality products especially that detectable in internet are actually insignificant (e.g. games, gambling at internet casino, pornographic picture, video, and virtual sex) but can be purchased far more easily then they would be in the material world (see also Sembiring 2008).

Cathedrals of Consumption and 'One-Stop-Shopping'

The fourth thing is consumption sites. Consumption site is often designed gingerly by experts to lead people in the direction of hyperconsumption. It shows the settings of place, where people can easily consume. Consumption sites has become places to while away daily, and as such, they pose treats to alternative public sites such as parks, zoos, and museums. In the end, shopping malls and also magamalls, superstores, amusements, theme park, megaresort, cruisers, and the other consumption facilities like them, categorized by Ritzer as the cathedrals of consumption, are additional and very important contributors to the development of hyperconsumption and all of the advantages and problems associated with it.

In a different emphasis, cathedrals of consumption often also is conceived as new means of consumption by Ritzer. The cathedral of consumption is also a paradigm used by Ritzer in explaining analogically about the sacred environment of consumption, formed by the processes of rationalization and enchantment (see also Eisenring 2008). Rationalization here is functioned to quicken consumption, while enchantment is to attract consumers to these places (see Keel 2006). However, in the long run, to service and control large numbers of consumers, the cathedrals of consumption are forced to rationalize, and rationalization leads to disenchantment and the decline in the capacity to continue luring consumers or to create the dreamlike state needed for hyperconsumption. Because of this reason, cathedrals

of consumption stays in a permanent requirement for re-enchantment. Further, Ritzer arises three mechanisms to form the process of re-enchantment — namely simulation, implosion, and manipulation of time and space — what can make any cathedral of consumption finds re-enchantment.

Simulations are defined as copies or fakes (Ritzer & Stillman 2001). Simulation does not refer at particular territory, or certain reference and substance, but something awakened by models stemming from tangible thing, but doesn't have authenticity or reality in the real world (see Baudrillard 1991; 2005: 3, also Hidayat 2008, Coltrane 2007). Implosion refers to the erosion of boundaries between two or more, formerly relatively distinct spheres. Implosion develops mechanism "dedifferentiation" wherein boundaries between consumptions and the other aspects of social world become melted (see Ritzer & Stillman 2001). The third mechanism, 'manipulation of time and space', emphasizes at the ways in which spectacle and enchantment are resulted by creating the deceit effect of time and space at cathedral of consumption.

Ritzer's point here is that cathedrals of consumption are designed to increase the amount we consume. The cathedrals have also brought about changes in the way we consume. And, one-stop-shopping has largely become the norm of design for this cathedrals. Initially, the term of one-stop-shopping was aimed to refer at a company or a location that offers a multitude of services to a client or a customer (see Answers.com 2000), and usually just for certain type of goods or services (see Dewanto 2007, Kaufman 1996). However, lately the term has also been used to refer a pattern of design used in implementing the mechanism of implosion into the cathedrals of consumption. One-stop-shopping creates space structures at cathedrals of consumption combined in such a way to create other consumption spaces which can satisfactory the consumers with different pleasures. The pattern of one-stop-shopping tries to eliminate boundaries in which people have looked at the things just as usually, on the contrary, peeps out an enchanted world in which the usual things are recombined in such a way that makes them are seen as extraordinary things and as a new idea.

In this way, a set structures at cathedrals of consumption is combined in such a way to create new consumption spaces to satisfy the consumers with new pleasures. For example: fitness center is combined with easy going space, film theatre is combined with pub or restaurant, and cafe is

combined with hot spot internet. Any kind of setting like these emphasizes at a combination to draw consumers.

In broader coverage, at every cathedral of consumption, the design concept of 'one-stop-shopping' creates an "implosion" by combinations between a supporting facility of shopping with other kind of consumption, which is basically is combination between the forms of shopping and the forms of pleasure. This approach yields two sides: on one side, shopping activity is normalized as a form of fulfill the desire for pleasant consumption activities; here, people are arranged in such a way to visit a cathedral of consumption, not merely to expend their money and buy new goods, but also, visit the shopping mall, for example, means doing a journey which impressing and pleasant; while on other side, implosion also makes cathedrals of consumption as interesting everyday location for family and the place for vacation. The visitors generally assume shopping mall as place for everyone, a place where one can be dressy and acted suitably according to their custom. The concept of one-stop-shopping in architectural design enables a cathedrals of consumption to have abundant collections of goods and services for the shopping activities, and at the same time, makes any visitor feels enjoy and comfort when exists inside the public space (see Tani et al. 2001).

How the pattern of one-stop-shopping becomes effective to control and to push the visitors of cathedrals of consumption to the direction of hyperconsumption?. Let us reply the question by using the libidinal philosophy of Jean-François Lyotard. It would explain how the circulation cycle of libidinal intensities happened at cathedrals of consumption, then lead people to the direction of hyperconsumption.

'One-Stop-Shopping' in Hiding of Libidinal Intensities

In the early 1970s Lyotard developed philosophy of libidinal basing on the theory of Sigmund Freud on libido, by using the terms of libidinal intensities and affects, to refer the events of intensities and influence, or in general term, feeling and desire. The term of 'libidinal Intensity' applied by Lyotard is approximately equal with the term 'primary process of libido' used by Freud, the psychoanalyst, namely the strength in body at level which more basic from at simply means secondary process, which stemming from consciousness mind (see Woodward 2006).

For Lyotard, any art work has the values proportionate with energy intensity given to the art beneficiaries. The fewer the values of representation are contained at an art object, the more libido intensities can be channeled to the beneficiaries of the art work (see Lash 2004: 100). At the discourse of postmodernism, especially at art and architecture objects, unclear representation even gives bigger opportunities for the energy of libido to flow with freely, fully, continuously changed and constantly invests its intensities into systems and structures. How are the transformation and cycle happened?, Lyotard elaborates metaphorically a region on which libidinal intensities take place and on which they meet with the dispositifs that channel libidinal energy. Lyotard then calls the band as a libidinal bar. A band which is in the form of *moebius* strip which has only one side and there is no other side. The band shows main feelings and desires. Lyotard depicts the surface of the libidinal bar merges body, voice, movement, object or any kind of which can awaken the energy of libidinal which circulating continually (see Hegarty 2008). This region is material like the body, but it is not yet *organized*, thus the figure of dismemberment. This strip is then set in motion, circulating so fast it glows red with heat. It represents the primary processes of desire and libidinal intensity in which libidinal energy circulates in an *aleatory* fashion, not yet investing anything. Because the libidinal band is a *moebius* strip, desire circulates on only one surface; there is no inside or outside. When the band begins to slow down and cool, it forms what Lyotard calls the (disjunctive) bar, and the intensities are invested into the structure in social area (see Woodward 2006, also Wilson 2008, Phillips 2008). Further, it is depicted that above the libidinal bar, the intensities meet with dispositives which generate the libidinal. All of them forms the energy into system and structure. System exploits intensities of libidinal by channeling them into stable structures. But, the system also hides affects's (intensities of libidinal), conversely the 'affects' hide the 'system '. In other words, inside the system there are affects veiled, and at the affects there is possibility to shape or modifies system.

Despitefully, Piliang explains about the phenomenon of economic libidinal (or sometimes is called libidonomics) is emerging between desire and economics. Economic Libidinal is inclined to releases the satisfaction passion spillway, and opens the door to produce object as satisfaction agent (emotional, psychical, sexual) infinite. In Lyotard's libidinal philosophy, satisfaction passion in fact is

the incarnation of intensity of libidinal what sticks and hidden at physical environment, which when the libidinal bar circulates quickly, it is channeled at structure—individual and society. Further, according to Piliang, design now is not anymore as a problem solver, but as an organizer for the desire of material by affixing various images at the material objects. In this context, design is efforts done to stick economic libidinal at physical environment. In other words, design is created in such a way to invest meanings which can point people to the direction of hyperconsumption. Hence Piliang adds personal and social meanings into his definition of hyperconsumption (Piliang 2006:6, see also Purnamawati 2009, Hidayat 2009).

To complement our comprehending, we need to reply this question, "how the intensities of libidinal which is invested at the designed physical environment is flowed into the consciousness structure of individual and social?. For this purpose we would try to use the concept of three steps developed by Berger.

Channeling the Libidinal Intensities for Hyperconsumption

In explaining what happened when the libidinal intensities, which is hidden at the one-stop-shopping pattern of the cathedrals of consumption, is channeled into consciousness structure of individual, we can use the idea outline developed by Berger (see Berger & Luckmann 1966). A concept described a set of dialectical process through three steps: externalization, objectivation, and internalization.

Externalization is a process where human construct the reality, either mentally and also physically; Objectivation is a process where reality is constructed as a facticity. The world created by human being becomes something outside of themselves. The world then become an objective reality. That is why Berger expressed that society is a dialectic phenomenon. Externalization and objectivation are steps where the process of dialectic is happened. And internalization, according to Berger, is the phase where the world objectivated is reabsorbed into subjective consciousness structure. In short, through internalization, objective fact of a social world becomes a subjective fact of individual. The process of three steps by Berger can also explain of how the architectural design concept of one-stop-shopping for designing of cathedral of consumption, as a space of theatrical, invests, hides, and channels the intensities of economic libidinal

into individual consciousness structure of its visitors. For an individual who visits a shopping mall for the first time, initial externalization process may give the individual a meaning of shopping mall, for example, as a comfortable place which can fulfill his or her desires, even only for looking around. However, the pattern of one-stop-shopping of the shopping mall, added with social environment that exhibits the activities of the other visitors in expending their money anywhere, push the visitor comes into the process of objectivation. A dialectic process to absorb the objective meaning of shopping mall, which he or she finds at the social environment of the shopping mall. The more frequently he visits and observes behavior of the other visitors in that shopping mall, the faster the process of objectivation takes place.

This is clearly explained by the theory of symbolic interactionism, which assuming individuals as living in symbolic environment that constantly interpreting symbols around them. Connectively themselves with the certain symbols that exist around them, people can depict concept of themselves with others (see Turner 1991, Denzin 1989).

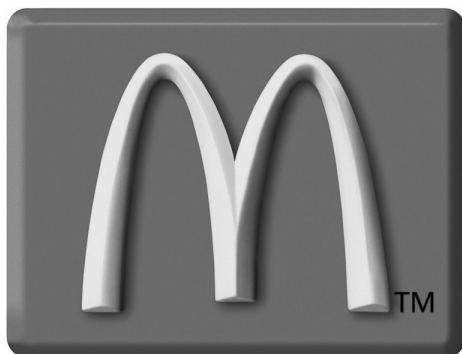


Figure 1.
The Icon of McDonald's



Figure 2.
The Icon of KFC (kentucky fried chicken)

A visitor visiting a shopping mall, will be confronted with social environment as well as with designed physical environment. Physical environment (such as mall's interior, circulation system and lay out with various symbols, signs and icons) and also social environment (existence of other visitors) force the happening of externalization, where individual soon gives a subjective meaning at various matters she or he meets in the shopping mall environment. When the first time she or he sees the icon in the form of letter "M" of McDonald's, the American franchise restaurant or the icon of KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) with the picture of greybeard, possibly she or he will only interprets the icons as an advertisement of ready made clothes product or simply decoration do not have a meaning (see Figure 1 dan Figure 2). But, the process of objectivation starts to take place when the visitor finds the source of the icon "M" at an outlets of McDonald's franchise restaurant at a corner of the shopping mall, and witness a number of customer clients which appearance relatively same with his or her appearance are enjoying hamburgers at the restaurant desks. Hence, it is happened a dialectical toward the meaning of the icon "M". The faster he absorbs all information — through social interactions, anywhere — about the objective meaning of the icon "M" of McDonald's franchise restaurant emerged by his social environment, the faster the dialectical process is happened, and the faster the process of internalization is also happened. By the end of this phase, the interpreting of an typical icon in the form of letter "M" is reabsorbed into the visitor's consciousness structure. By that way, the libidinal intensities are channeled to in consciousness structure of the visitor, what depicted by Lyotard analogically as when the libidinal bar circulates swiftly.

By the end of the process of internalization the visitor starts interprets the icon "M" in different way. the icon "M" now begins to be interpreted as an invitation to visit the restaurant of McDonald's, where at that place he or she would find others with life style that relatively equal to her or him. The phenomenon is depicted by Lyotard's libidinal philosophy as when the libidinal ribbon slows down and a space of theatrical emerges. A space what hides and investing the intensity of libidinal at two sides of the ribbon, namely at system (in this case, icon "M") and at structure (in this case, subjective consciousness of the visitor). Now the meaning of the icon "M" is internalized into the visitor's self, and it becomes her or his own property. By that way, objective fact of the icon "M" initially is objective

fact of social world is transformed into subjective fact of the visitor.

In order to be clearer, let us observe a personal experience told by a reviewer of BigWonk.com: "I can recall being in that mall for more than 6 hours and making multiple trips to car placing bags in the trunk. My intention was to buy nothing at all but it just so happened that the mall had everything that I was looking for with excellent prices" (BigWonk.com 2008). Even though he went to the shopping mall was to buy nothing, but the mechanism of implosion created by pattern one-stop-shopping of the shopping mall was possibly had made him tempted to expend his money. What was actually the reviewer experiencing when he was inside the shopping mall during more than 6 hours?. Possibly happened was an objectivation process of environment meaning — namely the economic libidinal intensities which were invested and hidden on the spaces of "theatrical" contained by the pattern of one-stop-shopping at the shopping mall. The process of objectivation was started when the 'reviewer' began to interact with other visitors. This is an adjustment process of individual's self at world, as to be expressed by John Dewey, mind of someone grows in the framework of his or her efforts to adapt to his or her environment, and that the minds is supported by the interaction with others (see Ritzer & Goodman 2004: 289). Possibly he really was not going to expend his money even one cent dollar if only there was no any other visitor there, or if he didn't witness the activities of other visitors in spending their money at various spaces of consumption and pleasure created by the pattern of one-stop-shopping of the shopping mall. In that process, he tried to comprehend the objective meaning which he was absorbed through the process of objectivation dialectically into his consciousness structure, what called by Berger as a process of interanlization. The design pattern of one-stop-shopping together with the social interaction taking place at the shopping mall possibly had given him a particular objective meaning, such as: shopping mall is a bed of down and, however, there is no reason to not burn a hole in pocket there". The subjective meaning might be only emerge momentarily only when he was inside the shopping mall. However, it is enough to make the reviewer was snared into hyperconsumption. He expended his money for goods and services that might be more than he needed, more than he intended, and possibly, more than he was able to reach. (refer back Ritzer 2008; also Ritzer 2004 in McCaskey & Burfoot 2004).

The above account gives us a comprehending detailly about how a visitor of a cathedral of consumption absorbs the energies of economic libidinal from intensities of libidinal which are invested and hid in the architectural design, into his consciousness structure. That the libidinal energies he absorbs makes him to act to the direction of hyperconsumption. The account also gives us a comprehending about how the social interaction, which is taken place at the designed physical environment what he visits, is involved in that process.

Conclusion

The above discussions have revealed that the economic libidinal intensities, what push people to the direction of hyperconsumption, are circulated in two directions, system and structure. System in this case is the pattern of one-stop-shopping of a cathedral of consumption, which investing and hiding the economic libidinal intensities. Whereas 'structure' in this case is individual and public which absorbing the energies of economic libidinal to the structure of their consciousness then invested as dispositions to act to the direction of hyperconsumption. The circulation between systems and structure can be imagined as the circulation of intensities libidinal between the two sides of Lyotard's libidinal bar which in truth is only consisted of one side. The structure absorbes economic intensities of libidinal what hide in the system. On the contrary, objective fact of libidinal economic that has been absorbed at the structure becomes input for the owners of cathedrals of consumption to reinvest the intensities of economic libidinal at new cathedrals of consumption, and the development of one-stop-shopping concept in architecture designing at a shopping centre is a good example for it. In other words, the concept of one-stop-shopping is an economic libidinal intensity that is invested into the sistem. For momentary observer, condition seemed is the situation where the circulation of Lyotard's libidinal bar is slowing down. — in analogy of Lyotard's libidinal philosophy — so it seems there are two sides, structural and 'system', where both invest and hide the intensities of economic libidinal. Through the description, we have replied a part of the question submitted at initial part of this essay: "how a designed physical environment influences and is influenced by society and human behavior?". At least we have replied how a cathedral of consumption using design pattern of one-stop-

shopping invests, hides and then flows economic libidinal intensities into the structure — in this case, individual and people who visit it — to move them toward hyperconsumption. On the contrary, desire and sense of public become inspiration for expansion of design pattern, namely through flowing the energy of economic libidinal into system. While system or an element of system in this case is the cathedral of consumption and its pattern of design what adheres in it.

Hereinafter, in replying the question that still remaining — "How an individual adapts to objective meaning of public or group, in the process of influencing mutually with designed physical environment?" — we have applied Berger's concept of three steps. And by that concept, we have described what has become of a visitor, for example, when he or she visits a shopping mall for the first time. Initially, the visitor possibly has a subjective meaning differentiated with the objective meaning of the most other visitors. However, the pattern of one-stop-shopping of the shopping mall, what supported by social environment which exhibits the activities of the other visitors who are shopping to burn a hole in pocket, makes the visitor comes into the process of objectivation. The visitor then absorbs the objective meaning of the shopping mall, to be made it as his or her subjective meaning. Thus, by that way, economic libidinal intensities are absorbed into the structure of the visitor's consciousness, that finally can push the visitor to the direction of hyperconsumption. That is the way in which design pattern of one-stop-shopping at the cathedrals of consumption leads people to the direction of hyperconsumption.

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