



01. introduction

This dissertation explores architecture by forming an analogy with food. Food guides the ritual in the same way a built structure guides the consecutive patterns of life. Food forges relational bonds with the environment and our place in society. Architecture fulfill the same role.

The program will aim to create a food market; this civic space in Pretoria Central should be more than a food market, it must be a blueprint for social engagement. The aim is to form a common ground between the rural and the urban in an urban context: a consumer society that could be sustainable in the 21st century.



the problem is...



fig. 1.1

Today there are three main dilemmas that determine future planning, they are:

- Global Warming caused by CO² emissions
- Urbanisation (In 2008 the population that lived in urban areas has passed the 50% margin and it is expected to be 60% by 2030)
- Economic Recession caused by reckless lending on sub prime minimum.

In view of the above situations, it is clear that modern man's way of life must be reviewed. Food procurement as the basis to sustain life, can be assessed in the following criteria's:

CANNABALISM

The production of food is becoming more and more secluded from the human race. Where farming was the predominant vocation, the majority of people are now oblivious to where food comes from. The urban population has a perception that the city is separated from the natural world and that the 'environment' is some distant unspoilt land. Yet it is the environment feeds the majority of people everyday. Being detached from the natural makes one unaware of the effect the need of food costs the planet.

A few worldwide statistics:

Cities cover just 2% of the world's surfaces, but consume 75% of the world's resources. (Nakada : 2008)

Although the population increased with 70% from 1950, the calories available per capita increased

with only 17%. This means that everyone on earth could have a minimum intake of 2,720 kilocalories per day if food were distributed more equally.

Ironically there are still an approximate 798million undernourished people in developing countries as of 1999-2000. (Pfeiffer 2006:24)

As a result the human race is eating its own survival. The food industry needs to be re-examined to lighten the environmental damage that our appetite is causing the planet.

THE MIDDLE MAN

Today's food industry is exploiting the producers and consumers to profit from the necessity of food. The path of produce from farm land to the shelves is a complex and even unsettling structure;

The common practise is to acquire groceries from a supermarket chain store. These outlets buy their stock from municipal markets or directly from an agent. Retailers and mark agents determine the price they will pay the farmers. The farmer's expenses to produce the food is not considered, resulting in a producer that is unsure of a profit. The price offered may be less than the mere input cost of production. The predetermined prices give the middleman the power to manipulate the industry. This has devastating results:

According to Marion Nestle only 20% of the USA food retail price went to the producers, the other 80% is 'added value'. In other words profit, packaging and marketing. One cannot see how this adds value to the product self. (Steele 2008:p95)

The Tshwane Fresh Produce market determines their prices on basis of supply and demand. Agents take commission on; potatoes 5.5% to 5%; vegetables 9.5%-10% and on fruit more



or less 7.5%. This is over and above the 5% the municipality deducts from the price. In 2006 the market had over a R1 billion turnover for the financial year. (Tshwane:2006)

The main aim of the food industry is to make a huge short-term profit, not to save the land or to support the stewards of the land. It seems unfair that the same people that take all the risk to put food on everyone's table are the ones that get kicked in the face. The middle man walks away with the biggest piece of cake. So the industry that actually feeds us is being killed, slowly but surely.

SUB-PROBLEM: PUBLIC IS GONE

Supermarkets, the big sheds surrounded by masses of vehicle parking bays, are not compatible in urban centres, they are an urban enemy. Human scale is not a priority in supermarkets but only economic floor use and profit.

Malls are individualistic and separated. It does not prod one to be involved in community life. Malls and supermarkets do not welcome 'otherness'. The urbanite must conform to the taste of the masses. You may not raise your voice, hand out leaflets or take photographs. Where is the supposed freedom? Historical markets were the very core of brutal and chaotic city life. The anthropologist Marc Auge named supermarkets together with airports as 'non-places' that are only instrumental linkages with little authentic local identity and lack quality of living spaces. In contrast to this are traditional markets 'anthropological places', spaces that carry memories and associations. (Sievarts 2003: 71) The urbanite must adhere to these 'non-places' and this result in a community of passive stakeholders. True social interaction is lost and the individual becomes an island in a sea of depression as the urbanite does not belong and is not involved in his/her environment.

Carolyn Steele sums it up in the following: "The battle over food is not just about what we eat; it is about society itself.

Public life is the social glue of cities; public space its physical expression. Without them, urban society – civilisation itself – is fatally weakened. The role of food in forging both is immense.

Supermarkets fit in with our crazy, hectic lifestyles. But do we really want them to design where we live? In the end it comes down to whether or not you agree with Margaret Thatcher's infamous dictum that 'there is no such thing as society'. If we all wish for a comfortable suburban lifestyle, then supermarket cities – for those who can afford them – is the future. But if we believe civilisation should deliver more than that, we are going to have to fight for it." (Steele 2008:p152)



...the marketplace was the center of all that is unofficial; it enjoyed a certain extraterritoriality in a world of unofficial order and official ideology, it always remained with the people. - Mikhail Bakhtin (Beattie 2008:45)



When food security is under threat due to the effects of global warming the first survival mechanism is to convert back to an elemental lifestyle. This entails to grow one's own food. This will be in the best interest to save transport, pesticides and packaging but in view of the rate of urbanisation and the concept of a compact city, urbanites will not be able to sustain themselves. This is a utopian idea that is not sustainable. Vegetables may be grown in pots but a cow and chickens may be problematic in an apartment, three storeys high!

A market place will always be viable in an urban environment, especially one of high density. For economic as well as environmental sustainability the best practice (like the traditional market) would be that more medium and small scale farmers would dominate the industry rather the larger industrial farms. It would be in the best interest of the consumers as well as the farmers if the producers could control the market and not the middle man. However, the current system is not designed for this direct relationship of producer to consumer. This is confirmed by Chris Moerdyk in an article on news24 where he accentuates the fact that supermarkets do not have the infrastructure so that farmers can deliver produce directly to the masses. (Moerdyk: 2009) In traditional market places the farmers would have sold their goods themselves but to keep an everyday market and produce enough goods for commercial viability will not be possible; the administration of such a new sufficient market complex will later be addressed in Chapter 9.

Food is the social cohesion of human life, therefore if one designs a market there must be ample opportunity for interaction. A market is inherently a place of transaction (theoretical argument) on different levels. These levels range from the transaction of the market place to that of the city, the transaction between the urban and the rural, the transaction of goods to consumers and the interaction of the social urbanites. Therefore all these different levels should be laid on the table when a market is prepared.