Urban Voids:
Investigation into the problems and potential of the city’s residual and vacant space.

by

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Abstract
Over the years, we have witnessed the change in the urban environment and the urban voids that affect the fabric and image of the city. Much effort has been put into the revitalisation of cities that had threatened to become inhumane spaces eroding the street life and its daily transaction. However, in the effort to improve the situation and to create a “positive image” for the city, we have in the process created another urban void: sanitised spaces that are devoid of any sense of place, a void without its genius loci. There is a need to understand the implication of urban voids in order to contribute positively to the design of our urban environment. It is the objective of this paper to identify and analyse the reasons for the occurrence of the urban voids, to look at the impacts of these spaces and finally to discuss the possibilities of integrating the voids into the existing fabric.

Chapter one of the paper will start off by defining the urban void and identifying the problems of these urban voids.

✓ Chapter two, the causes for the emergence of these urban voids are identified. Five major factors contributing to the problem will be discussed: the automobile, zoning and landuse policies, the dominance of private over public interests, decentralization, deindustrialization and obsolescence.

Chapter three looks more closely at the approaches of the Modern movement and the subsequence reaction of Postmodernism towards urban design and try to trace the resulted emergence of the urban void.

✓ Chapter four analyses the impacts of the urban voids on the physical environment, the social life and economic development.

✓ Chapter five will look at the context in Singapore, illustrating and analysing the situation discussed with examples taken from the Central Business District

✓ Chapter six will focus on the promises of the void, looking at some examples where the void has been successfully and innovatively reclaimed.

✓ Chapter seven will conclude by accessing the current strategies taken to reclaim the urban voids, painting a scenario for the future development.