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Unofficial Propositions
for the PhD thesis *Building for Consumption*
By David Evers

1. Retail development is primarily but not merely an economic activity. The location and spread of shops can significantly alter traffic patterns, land values, consumer behavior and the livability of cities. Its consequences are therefore definitely public.
2. Corollary to 1: shopping center development should be seen as primarily a matter of the market with consequences for urban development, rather than vice versa.
3. The dispersion of retail functions from city to periphery is not a foregone conclusion, but a political choice.
4. Inside strategies such as developmental planning and town center management schemes are necessary but not sufficient for maintaining the health of inner city retailing; outside strategies such as regional coordination or restrictions on out-of-town formats remain essential.
5. Despite what some critics may say, retail policy is effective. However, the unintended consequences can sometimes be more prevalent than the policy goals themselves.
6. Meadows, farmland and natural areas are as a matter of course converted into office parks, residential areas and retail parks. Rarely are they converted back.
7. Convincing a department store to vacate a city center for the periphery is no easy task, but convincing it to return is harder still.
8. The most common criticism of collaborative, consensus-based decision-making is that it is too slow and costly. Adversarial methods, however, can be even slower and more costly in reaching a conclusion. Neither approach can claim to be better in terms of quality either.
9. If shopping will indeed be the only remaining form of public activity as Koolhaas says, then is there any hope for democracy, and, more personally, what sense does it make to write PhD theses and defend them in public?
10. The degree of resourcefulness, drive and imagination in discovering new forms of procrastination during the writing of a dissertation is a direct function of one's capacity for self-delusion; productivity is inversely proportional one's sense of well-being.
11. When arguing with an idiot, one must make sure the other person isn't doing the same thing.