

VI International Seminar City, Retail and Consumption

Retail, Consumption and the New
Forms of Urban Governance



Book of Abstracts



Livro de Resumos

Lisbon, IGOT – UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA, September 12th - 16th 2017

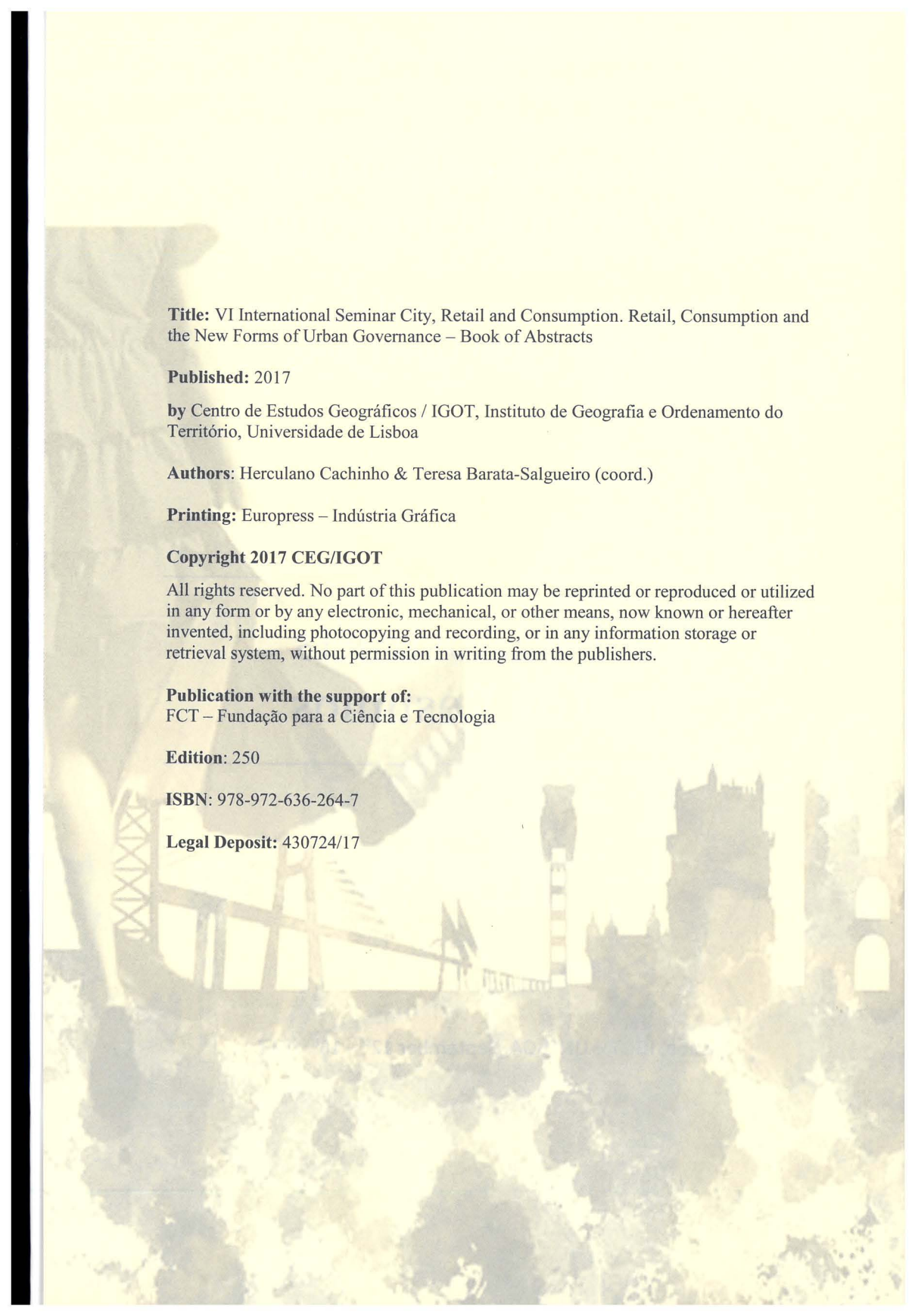


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The background of the page is a faded, artistic illustration of a cityscape. On the left, a large stone bridge with multiple arches spans across the scene. In the center and right, there are various buildings, including a prominent tower with a spiral design and other structures with arched windows. The overall style is somewhat sketchy and painterly, with a warm, yellowish tint.

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Title	Mapping deadmalls landscape: how VGI support research and actions on abandoned retail heritage
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Keywords	Retail dismantling, Deadmall, Voluntereed Geographic Information (VGI), OpenStreetMap (OSM)

Over the last two decades, Italy experimented on one hand a deep transformation in retail sector, due to a process of deregulation, which stimulated the growing of retail chains, the attraction of foreign capitals and the modernization of retail networks, and, on the other hand, the impacts of the economic crisis, which affect consumption practices and users' behaviours. The combination of these factors and the consequent evolution - in number, dimensions and formats - of retail poles (Brunetta & Morandi, 2009) generated a strong territorial competition for urban/metropolitan areas with a progressive market saturation that, amongst other effects, accelerates the obsolescence of older settlements.

In U.S., similar trends caused a selective process for a number of big box stores and shopping malls, and in several cases, they result in the appearance of deadmalls and ghostboxes. Italy is on the first phase of this process, where the number of these "retail greyfields" is increasing and where scholars and public actors are becoming aware of their territorial presence that, due to their mass and landscape impacts represent a sort of landmarks of retail abandon (Cavoto, 2014). The group of Italian deadmalls is composed by an heterogeneous set of elements, where together with timeworn settlements, also recent structures appear, sometime unfinished or just partially completed. They all belong to an increasing stock but is difficult to provide reliable data at regional or national scale.

In recent times, several authors, described those new italian landscapes of economic desertification (Turri, 2000; Cavoto, 2014; Inti, Cantaluppi, Persichino, 2014; Minelli, 2015). Unfortunately, they provide just fragmentary descriptions and not interpretative readings of the phenomenon. One of the cause could be the lack of a shared knowledge, based on exhaustive information and institutional data. This deficit imposes a reflection about the role of alternative databases based on alternative sources in the research about retail dismantling and depletion of local economic systems.

The aim of this contribution is reflecting on the opportunities related with the involvement of Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI) on this issue (Goodchild, 2007), especially when related with the platform OpenStreetMap (OSM) and presenting an original methodology of spatial analysis and territorial monitoring. This approach, developed within the URB&COM Lab of Politecnico di Milano is an useful tool for the collection and the classification of data, and is especially effective for the stock of closed, abandoned or dismantled structures. The methodology—allows to set up a shared geography of dismantled retail activities both in urban and suburban contexts, and has been the starting point for several recent research related with the monitoring of urban retail systems (Limonta and Paris, 2016).

Title **The new (public) space: on shopping centers, political demonstrations and other “public” practices at private-ownership-collective-use spaces in Portugal and Europe**

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Keywords Shopping centers; collective use spaces; political demonstrations; Portugal; Europe

“You will find everything sold together in the same place (...): figs, witnesses to summonses, bunches of grapes, turnips, pears, apples, givers of evidence, roses, medlars, porridge, honeycombs, chick-peas, law suites, allotment machines, irises, lamps, water-clocks, laws, indictments”.

Eubulus, IV century Greek poet (Athenaeus, Deipnosophistai 14.640 b-c)

Between the romanticized version of a Greek agora and the intense contemporary shopping centers there isn't probably a disparity as considerable as we can imagine, since both can be easily mistaken with the ancient markets and the public squares of today. Before, as now, there is a clear separation between the production of discourse and the experience of the symbolic spaces of the city.

It is a fact that shopping centers are, in general, seen and used by people as effective "public spaces" of the contemporary city. Not only the consumption practices, carried out on them, are effective builders of identity; but they are also places that we actually recognize as receptacles of lifestyles and gradually complex socialization processes.

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