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Strategies and Conflicts of Market Hall renovation: the case of Helsinki

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Introduction

In May 2015, less than one year after opening following a €15 million renovation, Helsinki's Old Market Hall celebrated its one millionth-visitor (HS 2015, Yle 2015). While city officials in Helsinki celebrated the apparent success of the Old Market Hall's re-opening, the mood was different across town at Helsinki's Hakaniemi Market Hall. Of the city's three market halls, it is the last one scheduled for a major overhaul. In the hall's upstairs level, a spread of stalls selling clothing, second-hand goods and fabrics, elderly couples huddle over coffee mugs in the seating area of the second floor's only food shop, a cafe, still serving as the day's last customers wander toward the exits. A small journal bookmarked with a pen rests on the counter of the coffee bar, easy to miss, and looking much like the kind of sign in book found at quiet museums and monuments. This book, however, opens to tell the story of local resistance to the city's vision for the upcoming renovation- plans that include the addition of a restaurant to the upstairs level in a move to increase traffic and sales. It is a petition book placed by the second-floor vendors association, who along with many customers and other Helsinki residents, believe the addition of the restaurant is unnecessary and will destroy the hall for future generations. But if the city's recent success with the old Market Hall is correct, and if the busiest part of Helsinki's third market hall (*Hietalahti Kauppahalli*) is arguably its gourmet restaurant, why shouldn't such a renovation plan be implemented in Hakaniemi?

Market halls are unique features in any contemporary city, for they exist at the nexus of three worlds: they are often located at sites of historical and architectural significance, are public social spaces usually managed by local governments, and they function within a wider environment of retail and planning systems. This paper reviews literature on market halls in the UK and elsewhere to explore the reasons behind the decline of market halls and the increasing appeal of city managers to redevelop them, along with the conflicts that can accompany such renovations. This case in Helsinki adds to the debate on market hall renovation, wherein Gonzalez and Waley have argued that halls are at a “critical juncture, on the one hand in decline but on the other, a focus for redevelopment along gentrified lines” (2012 pp.1). Through interviews with vendors, analysis of a community petition and a review policy document, this paper argues that improvements to market halls should reflect not only the goals of urban regeneration, but the livelihood of traders and the wider values of the communities they serve. Some basic policy recommendations are provided at the end of the paper.

The Functions of Market Halls

Market halls are unique features of cities, often located at sites of historical and architectural significance, and function both as public social spaces and as nodes within larger urban retail systems. They are also subject to increasing pressures from city governments to perform as revenue generating spaces, from both land leases and as destinations. This next section explores the multiple functions of market halls from the perspectives of place, society, and retail centers.

Foremost, market halls are places, recognizable structures within their towns and cities, symbolic of their many functions and history, and often valued as architectural assets in their own right (Jones et al 2007). Meanwhile, the physical structures of market halls enclose places of daily business for vendors and customers. Additionally, market halls appear on the urban landscape for other residents of the city, both as part of the contemporary visible cityscape and as symbols of a city's history. Yet, market halls are unique from many other historical structures because they are public spaces, and provide social and economic functions beyond their physical and historical value.

While outdoor markets can be traced back to the first cities and human settlements along trade routes, the shift to enclosed and later covered, markets have roots in multipurpose medieval town centers (Lewis 1961). In the UK, outdoor markets eventually gave way to the development of halls dedicated to trading off of the streets, and was followed by "a widespread shift in market ownership from private to public hands" (Schmiechen and Carls 1999, p.34). As market halls were founded by or fell under management of cities, they became public assets, often with their own governing agencies and boards like city parks (Jones et al 2007). While even private shopping spaces like shopping malls have been observed as centers of social activity for over a century, market halls offer a unique space for a diverse range of social functions.

While the roots of markets in general as public spaces are ancient, their dual role as public commercial spaces in the modern sense is similar to the social history of other shopping spaces such as shopping malls, with roots in the arcades of Paris and iconic 19th century department stores (Crawford 1992). Like these other spaces, market halls provided a place not just to shop, but to stroll and socialize, to simply *be* in public. For women in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the market hall offered one of the few places to exist in public outside of the home, while more recently market halls have been observed as important spaces of both consumption and social interaction for immigrant groups and the elderly (Morales 2009, Pottie-Sherman 2011). Today, market halls provide a setting for many social functions. Besides the regular interaction between vendors and customers, market halls are meeting places for friends and neighbors, safe places for the elderly and

immigrants, sites where culture is practiced through traditional ways of trading, and increasingly places where new and 'alternative' consumption practices are explored through a growing market for fresh and organic foods (Coles and Crang 2010).

In addition to the physical structures and social functions of market halls, they also function as centers of commerce. "They are instrumental in incubating new businesses, facilitating the expansion of existing business, and promoting income-earning opportunities" (Morales 2009: 1). To vendors and customers, market halls are places of exchange, especially for products hard to find elsewhere and for groups whose needs are not readily served by mainstream retail options. As retail centers, market halls exist within wider networks of urban retail markets.

Table 1 outlines the various functions of markets halls for different groups. In recent decades, cities have come to compete regionally and globally for tourism revenue, often through the promotion of cultural heritage (Kotler 2002, Uysal 2013). In some cities, historic buildings have been partially turned into retail centers, benefitting from central locations and the presence of pedestrians, observable in the US at Boston's Faneuil Hall and Union Station in Washington, D.C. (Crawford 1992). Yet, many market halls have seen decline in popularity and increases in vacancies. As unique historical structures in the urban landscape, already populated by pedestrians and commerce, market halls are subject to increasing attention from urban governments as potential sites of renewal (Jones et al, 2007, Gonzalez and Waley 2012, Smith et al 2014). The next section explores reasons for the decline of market halls and steps that have been taken in some cities towards their renewal.

Decline and Rise of Market Halls

While once found all over Britain as vital parts of local retail environments, market halls now "often seem neglected, half forgotten and some towns and cities a threatened species" (Jones 2007). Physical deterioration of the structure (hygiene, utilities, façade) is the proximate cause leading to reinvestment. Other issues related to the site may be poor visibility/signage, poor logistics for delivery, and poor access to transportation and parking. The relative location of market halls changes as well, such that what was once a central location may be peripheral to new population centers and nodes of commerce (Jones et al, 2007). Most of these factors, however, are symptoms of problems relating to other forces.

As retail centers, the economic vitality of market halls depends at least partly on wider trends and retailing and structural changes in the economy. "As small retailers within town and city centers, market traders have been, and continue to be, vulnerable" (Jones 2007). Competition with supermarkets and regional shopping centers is often cited as a reason for the underperformance (real

or perceived) of market halls. Global restructuring in recent decades has led to increasing corporatization of the retail sector, along with a move into smaller storefront locations by large chain stores (Clarke et al 1997, Lowe 2005).

	Consumers	Vendors	City/Community	Government
<i>Physical</i>	Convenient local shopping, reduced environmental impacts	Daily workplace	Visible part of cityscape Historic/symbolic value Potential link to adjacent spaces	Site for heritage/tourism promotion Site of either neglect, upkeep or reinvestment
<i>Social</i>	Regular interaction with vendors, relationship with products purchased Place to explore alternative consumption practices (fresh/organic/foodie/local) Potential to encourage 'city center living'	Site to practice long-standing trading practices Relationship with customers	Meeting place for friends and neighbors Safe place for elderly, women, immigrants Promote social interaction in public space Site of cultural activities	Municipal service, collective good Site in which to respond to consumer needs, business needs, community and immigrant needs
<i>Economic</i>	Place to purchahse goods and service	Place to conduct business, earn a profit Incubate new businesses Point of entry for immigrants into business	Center of retail activity Encourage local business growth and development Serve underserved populations/income groups Promote assimilation and accommodation into labor market	Opportunity for regeneration, wider city planning goals Site of regulation, business development Revenue-generating Opportunity to collaborate with public and private associations over shared goals

Figure 1. Functions of market halls for different groups

As public assets, market halls are also at the mercy of the agencies in charge of their maintenance and promotion. Gonzalez and Waley argue that “the reasons for the decline of the traditional retail market in Britain have to be contextualized within the particular trajectory of recent neoliberal urban political economy rather than any supposed ‘natural’ trends in retail geography and consumer behaviour” (Gonzalez and Waley 2012). Following long periods of disinvestment by public authorities and competition from other retail centers, attention is once again turning to market halls as potential sites of redevelopment. The renovation of market halls can be seen as a compliment to wider trends in urban management that promote heritage tourism and city-center renaissance. “Refurbishment and renovation on the one hand and redevelopment and relocation on the other are being pursued in the belief that market halls and covered markets can play a key role in enhancing the viability and vitality of town and city centers” (Jones et al 2007). In the following section, we will explore the history and present state of two market halls in Helsinki, Finland. As described in the introduction Helsinki’s Old Market Hall has recently opened after renovation, while Hakaniemi Market Hall is slated for an extensive remodel in the coming years.

Data and Methods

In April 2015, semi-structured video interviews were conducted with 5 vendors the upstairs level of Hakaniemi Market Hall, and via e-mail with the director of Helsinki’s Wholesale Food Agency. In addition, over 200 comments from an online petition to halt renovation plans in Hakaniemi were analyzed to learn more about the reasons for opposition to the renovation. Policy documents related to the renovation plans were also reviewed.

The renovation of Helsinki's market halls

The market halls found in Helsinki today originated in an era before the dominance of modern retail stores. Originally outdoor, the city’s markets can be traced back to as early as 1743, with the first enclosed hall, now known as *Vanha Kaupahalli* or Old Market Hall, constructed in 1889. In tandem with the adjacent to the outdoor Market Square, or *Kauppatori*, the original Kaupahalli served as the main marketplace of the city. In the late 1890s, a British visitor described the scene of these sites of commerce:

“The market is a feature in Finland, and in a measure takes the place of shops in other countries. For instance, wagons containing butcher’s meat stand in rows, beside numerous carts full of fish, while fruit and flowers, cakes and bread-stuffs in trucks abound. Indeed, so fully are these markets supplied, it seems almost unnecessary to have any shops at all...” (Cited in Kent 2005, p. 16)

Esplanade park, with its parallel streets that lead to Market Square, was once the cultural center of center of Helsinki, lined with hotels and restaurants serving the small city's elite through the 19th century (Kent 2005). Trading in the Market Square began in 1818, with early regulations and rents overseen by the City. Following increased regulations brought on by the Public Health Act of 1879, the city commissioned plans for an indoor trading area, and 1889, the Old Market Hall opened its doors. The hall served local middle and upper-class Helsinki residents, and carried a good reputation for quality. Customers included hotels and hospitals, which ordered food from the hall. In later years, the president of the newly formed Republic of Finland, as well as upper-class ladies could be spotted shopping and socializing in the hall.

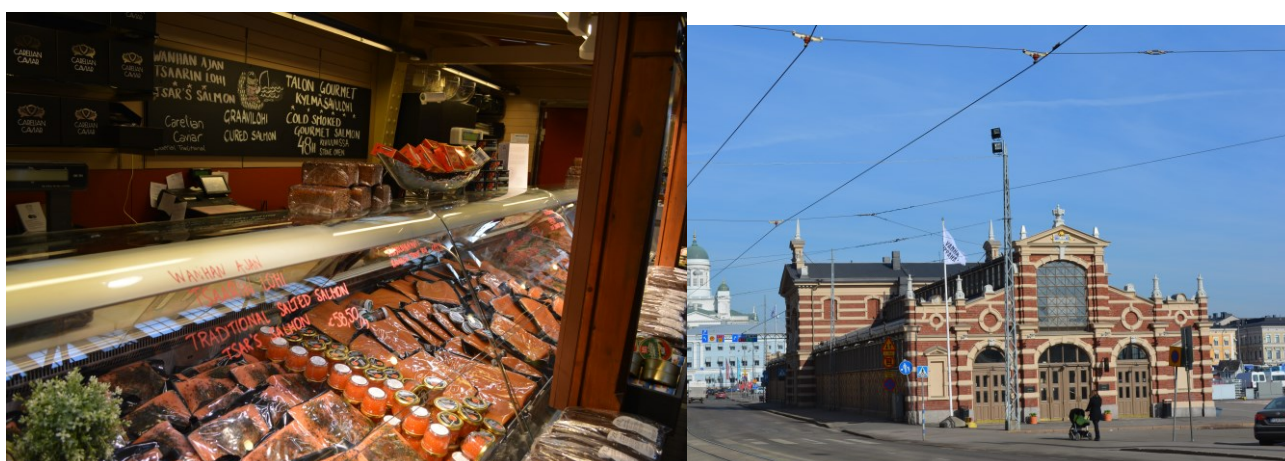


Figure 2. Fish for sale at the Old Market Hall, central to tourists, re-opened in 2014 following renovation

The Old Market Hall and Helsinki's Market Square are located in one of the most expensive areas of the city. The Market Square is still occupied daily by an array of orange tents, although vendors today sell more than produce and fish. Moose keychains, trinkets from Lapland, T-shirts, and hot dogs are available for tourists who funnel into the park from two nearby cruise ship terminals. Inside the Old Market Hall, visitors find a corporate coffee chain, a small Alko store (the state-run liquor store of Finland) and additional food options, including 'Scandinavian Café' and a kebab shop selling burgers of reindeer meat. There is a wide selection of fresh (and expensive) meats and fish, sometimes with signs in English highlighting local authenticity (Figure 2). Following the recent renovations, websites and tourist materials promote the high quality (and historic) shopping experiences of the Old Market Hall, as well Hietalahti, another market hall on the other side of downtown. Along with the historic appeal accompanying the websites for the two renovated halls, the strategy for Hietalahti Hall has involved the promotion of pop-up shops and the highlighting of the hall's outdoor flea market on city tourist websites. Likely because the Old

Market Hall has historically been in a wealthy neighborhood, and is located at a busy tourism hub of the city, the renovation never experienced widely-publicized resistance, and is openly celebrated as a success by vendors and city officials alike. Meanwhile, the market hall at Hakaniemi square is part of a different history, and the remodel has encountered significant resistance from vendors and Helsinki residents.



Figure 4. Hakaniemi Market Hall, the busy working-class neighborhood of Kallio

Across Pitkäsilta bridge¹, in the historically working-class neighborhood of Kallio, Hakaniemi Market Hall (Hakaniemin kauppahalli) is a large, two-story building situated at the north end of Hakaniemi Square. The square and its surroundings are a vital cultural and historic and cultural center of the Kallio neighborhood with strong working-class associations (Kopomaa 1997), presently home to union offices and the site of annual Labor Day marches. The square hosts daily vendors year-round selling seasonal produce, hot breakfasts and coffee, and occasionally clothing and second hand goods. Hakaniemi Market Hall was built in 1914, and has undergone renovations twice, in 1956 and 1971, to update ventilation and install escalators (HS 1971). The lower level of the hall contains 34 occupied stalls, mostly food vendors, and one vacancy at the time of writing. Much like the original vendors of the Old Market Hall, butchers represent the largest group of vendors (11), followed by bakers (8). There are also produce and dairy stalls, several delis or cafes, a flower shop, and a few stores selling mixed dry goods, sweets, or cured sausages. The composition of the vendors is similar to the mix of stalls found in Old Market Hall when it opened in 1898. This is one way in which we can see Hakaniemi as a “traditional” market hall. The upper

¹ The Long Bridge, or *Pitkäsilta*, has symbolic meaning in Helsinki. Built in 1912, the bridge is actually a short span that connects the wealthier downtown with the historically working-class neighborhoods of Kallio and Sörnäinen. “Across the long bridge” has a similar meaning as “the other side of the tracks” does in American vernacular.

level of Hakaniemi Market hall is currently occupied by approximately² 25 different stalls offering clothing, crafts, and everyday services such as a locksmith. There is one cafe with a central seating area upstairs.

According to the City of Helsinki Real Estate Agency, a €15 million enlargement and improvement project to Hakaniemi Market Hall is scheduled between early 2016 summer 2017. Current rent annual rental revenue for the future hall is expected to double from €400,000 to €840,000 once the remodel is complete (Premises Center Report 2015, YLE 2014). During a Helsinki City Council meeting in September 2013, the City outlined plans for an extensive parking project to be undertaken in the adjacent Hakaniemi Square concurrently with the market hall and related site renovations. The view of the city was clearly in favor of parking- even if the other improvements to the hall are not undertaken, the parking is necessary, but without the approval of the parking project, no maintenance to the hall would be carried out.³ This follows the opinion of the city that the reason for the supposed decline of the entire Hakaniemi area is a lack of parking spaces. “Despite its central location, the Hakaniemi area’s development has stopped and the area has clearly declined in the last decade” (Helsinki City Council 2013). The project also called for a zoning change requiring a major supermarket as part of the project. Opposition to the supermarket from the traders associations in the hall was noted in the same filing, and a letter of concern from the trade group representing the market hall’s second floor vendors was submitted to the council. Among other things, concerns were expressed about temporary facilities during the construction period.

A Growing Resistance: “Keep the market alive as an inheritance for future generations”⁴

The interviews with the vendors on the second floor of Hakaniemi Market Hall revealed a long-standing mistrust of the city’s upcoming redevelopment plans. All those spoken with felt that they were in the dark about the details of the remodel and had been for a long time, and a sense of hearsay and rumor permeated the discussions. All of the vendors interviewed also expressed that they wanted to return after the renovations but were unsure if they’d be able to. The biggest fear among the vendors was that rents would increase following the renovation. For some, increased rents would mean relocating, while for others it could mean the end of business altogether. One clothing vendor, the fourth generation of a family that had run a stall continuously

² ‘Approximately’ because, as revealed in the interviews, at least one vendor rented an adjacent stall when it became available so it wouldn’t fall into the hands of “opportunistic” second hand vendors looking to turn a quick profit from the temporary lease.

³ In Finnish: ”Mikäli Toriparkkia ei lainkaan rakenneta, myöskään Torikeskusta ja kauppahallin peruskorjaushanketta ei voida sen jälkeen nykyisten suunnitelmien pohjalta toteuttaa.”

⁴ Comment 145

in the hall for nearly 100 years, explained the lack of communication with the city over the details of the remodel. She was aware that a permit had been approved for a restaurant on the second floor, but along with the other vendors was against the plan. “We are trying to get our opinion heard that we don’t want the renovation to be too fancy. It should be as cheap as possible... Hakaniemi Hall should stay rough around the edges” (Interview 3). She pointed to a monochrome photo of her grandmother in the same stall during the Second World War, noting the lack of merchandise on the shelves behind her. She was bundled in furs because there was no heating at the time. The vendors in the hall had seen hard times before, and the photo was on display as a reminder, to give them courage. “We hope to return to the same location, but it depends on the city” (Interview 3).

On May 5, about 2 months after the initial interviews, a book was placed by the traders’ association in the upstairs cafe area for customers and visitors to sign. An accompanying website laid out the mission of the petition: “This is an appeal to preserve the Hakaniemi Market Hall, a traditional market hall, residents’ diverse shopping destination, even after the forthcoming renovation!” The group calls into question the City of Helsinki’s “cuisine strategy”, suggests a less expensive renovation, and rejects the idea that another restaurant is needed in area, let alone in the upstairs of the hall. By early June, 190 names were in the book, with nearly 3500 additional names added to an online petition. Nearly 250 comments from those who signed the petition revolve around these topics as well, revealing the views of both satisfied customers and those who simply don’t want the hall to change.

Reason for Signing Petition	n (N=205)	%
Financial concerns	13	6
Nostalgia	17	8
Product/service	47	23
Community preservation	128	62

Figure 5. Reasons given for signing petition

Eliminating duplicate or sub-posts, a sample of 205 comments could be categorized according to the petition signer’s main concern (Figure 5). Take note that some comments addressed issues that could fall into multiple topics, so the most prominent points were used. All comments in the sample fell into at least one of these categories. The main reasons for signing the petition were expressed as financial concerns, nostalgia for a past Hakaniemi Market Hall, the value of the products and services currently available in the hall, and a diversely expressed desire for the

preservation of the hall and surrounding area as it is.

A small portion, 6%, of responses fell into the category of financial concerns. Comments suggested a less expensive renovation, the better use of 'taxpayer money' rather than on such an expensive project, or alternative uses of funds to help the hall in some other way.

"This appeal/petition is a good thing. It will save taxpayers money if a cheaper option is carried out."
(Comment #66)

Several others (8%) expressed memories of the hall as children, or as part of traditional Kallio life in years gone by.

"I moved a little while ago from Helsinki and Hakaniemi Hall is the place that I yearn for most. Not the Market Square tourist hall, which of course works for the purpose. Hakaniemi is for the townspeople. And of course there is still room for tourists" (Comment 164).

The products and service to be found at the hall were also cited as a main reason (23%) for opposition to the renovation:

"Where else can I get fish whose freshness I trust?" (Comment 182)

"Hakaniemi Market Hall is a gem, with a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere, good service and a variety of selections" (Comment 127)

A majority (62%) of responses pointed to the hall as part of the community, intrinsically valuable and in no need of improvement. Since the main focus of the petition revolved around the addition of a restaurant to the second floor of the hall, it followed that many of the comments in this category mention restaurants:

"Hakaniemi Market Hall is a culturally and historically significant and invaluable market hall, not a potential restaurant complex. It must be protected and cherished" (Comment 2).

"Helsinki, there are restaurants galore but the trade halls are only three. At least Hakaniemi should remain traditional with all its delicious scent." (Comment 122)

Some of the responses in this category compare Hakaniemi to the recent renovations at Helsinki's other market halls, usually with reference to the 'traditional' nature of Hakaniemi hall versus the other halls:

"Hakaniemi Market Hall is the last traditional market hall in Helsinki." (Comment 195),

“We must maintain at least one market hall in this city, because the other halls have been ruined”(Comment 12)

These reactions to the planned renovation, along with the history of these two market halls in Helsinki, will be interpreted through the current debates on market halls in the next section. We will find that the case of Helsinki supports and contributes to the current understanding of market hall renovation.

Analysis

Among the vendors in Hakaniemi, the biggest concern was not just the potential loss of their business, but of the nature of the entire hall and its associated social role in the neighborhood and city. Along with the addition of a restaurant upstairs, vendors worried about being relocated to temporary facilities during construction, the overall appearance of the hall post-renovation, the addition of a supermarket in the square, and the lack of communication and influence with the city throughout the process. All of these factors have been mentioned in studies of other market halls as potential conflicts during and after renovations (Jones et al 2007, Morales 2009). The renovations of Helsinki's market halls fit into the existing narrative of the decline of market halls and the accompanying logic that leads to their renovation. Figure 3 tracks problems associated with market halls and their accompanying 'solutions' offered from the articles cited here, along with conflicts that arise as a result of their implementation. The City of Helsinki's insistence on attaching the renovations to part of a larger development demonstrates how perceived underperformance of market halls is addressed as part of larger issues of retail performance, with intervention related to neighborhood regeneration opportunities. In the case of Hakaniemi's planned renovation, then, there emerges a narrative of the last frontier of a traditional food market at its 'critical juncture', with interest from local authorities in using the hall as part of a wider renaissance scheme. While this is in line with Gonzalez and Waley's (2012) argument about the future of market halls as sites vulnerable to state-led gentrification, the case of Helsinki diverges, agreeing with Smith et al (2014) that "there is no generic change across all food markets". When we consider the differences between the Old Market Hall and Hakaniemi Hall, including the support for Hakaniemi Hall from the community at large, the Helsinki case supports Smith et al (2014) in their assertion that

“the place of each traditional food market is unique and geography is part of each market's identity; location matters including how the contemporary marketplace is understood through commercial pressures and cultures of the surrounding food retail landscape” (Smith et al 2014).

	Problems	Solutions	Conflicts
<i>Physical</i>	Facade in disrepair	Restoration of traditional features	'Malling' of the market hall Temporary relocation of vendors Communication with stakeholders during planning process and construction Loss of entire market, potential alternative use of structure
	Site constraints preventing efficient logistics	Construction of underground facilities Relocation/closure of market hall	
	Poor location relative to city growth	Increased transit links Improved marketing by management group(s) Relocation/closure of market hall	
	Hygeine and facility issues	Upgrades to facilities, especially floors, drainage and toilets	
	Poor access for pedestrians	Improvements to immediate site surroundings and entrances	
	Limited parking, transportation links	Increased transit links Addition of parking	
	Poor customer circulation in hall	Adjusted layout of stalls Strategic placement of key businesses (i.e. second-floor restaurant)	
<i>Social</i>	Low visibility or awareness of market	Improved signage Improvements to immediate site surroundings and entrances Improved marketing by management group(s) Addition of outdoor stalls to draw attention	Sanitization of sense of place Asset for city, tourism revenue versus public space of customers and vendors Cynicism toward city from vendors and local groups
	Public does not perceive change following upgrades	Promotion of community events, art installations to showcase improvements	
	Perceived lack of safety	Improved lighting Addition of CCTV	
<i>Economic</i>	Competition from newer shopping centers, supermarkets	Introduction of specialty foods, branded items, product diversity	Displacement of existing vendors Corporatization of retail mix Loss of products for vulnerable customer groups
	Poor performance of tenants, high vacancies	Improve tenant mix	

Figure 6. Problems, solutions and the resulting conflicts involved in market hall renovation. **Hakaniemi case in bold.**

Along with hygiene and facility issues (Taulavuori 2015), the decline of retail and lack of parking in Hakaniemi Square area was cited as a top reason for the hall's renovation (Helsinki City Council 2013). This specific geography of Hakaniemi Hall, including the social history of the area, has led to a different and specific renovation plan. The campaigning of vendors and the subsequent support from the community shows how the market hall is valued as a community resource beyond its physical and economic functions, even by people who don't frequent the halls. In addition to informing our understanding of the functions of market halls, the opinions of residents about the renovation may have an effect on the renovation as well.

As of May 2015, the Helsinki Real Estate Board voted to proceed with the project, but only if the traders were consulted in better detail. Key to this initial agreement is the provision that the current tenants of the hall are offered a chance to return to their original stalls, the number of which shall remain unchanged after the remodel. The cost of repairs was also lowered from an early estimate of 15 million to 12.5 million Euros (Helsingin Sanomat 13 May 2015). While negotiations are ongoing, it is clear that what is being celebrated in another part of the city has met resistance on the other side of the Long Bridge.

Conclusion

Market halls are unique features of cities, not just physically but socially as well. Increasingly, they face competition and decline as part of larger retail systems, while changing consumer tastes emphasize their potential as sites where a growing urban middle classes can practice foodie cultures. Thus, market halls are subject to attention from city officials as opportunities for urban regeneration, both as part of localized improvement schemes and as part of larger trends in city management towards commodification of the urban landscape to extract rent and attract tourists. The case in Helsinki supports recent findings that market halls are at a 'critical juncture' (Gonzalez and Waley 2012), but also demonstrates that location matters, and changes are not uniform (Smith et al 2014). Discussions with vendors in Helsinki's Hakaniemi Market Hall to planned renovations confirms other researchers' findings that many market hall vendors are business-savvy and well connected to their client base, and are also able to mobilize community for the future of the halls that are their place of business. The public reaction to the vendors' campaign further underscores the role of market halls as public space, as indicated by the majority of petition commenters who expressed a desire to preserve the hall as part of the community, regardless of other factors. The reaction of petition signers also showed a strong disagreement with the city's desire to diversify the hall's retail environment with an additional restaurant, citing the abundance of food options in the area and the sanitized feel of the city's other market halls after their

renovations. However, the City of Helsinki has agreed to reconsider its plans and negotiate with the vendors' association, and has lowered the estimated cost of its renovation project.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the literature on market hall renovation and the case of Helsinki, this paper makes the following recommendations to policy-makers and city managers involved with the future of market halls:

- 1. Maintain halls at shorter intervals*

Replacing basic hygienic facilities, accessibility features, and flooring at shorter intervals will prevent excessive disrepair. With less extensive work needed during times of repair, issues of long-term vendor displacement can be avoided.

- 2. Don't attach renovation plans to other projects*

As projects and budgets grow, the number of stakeholders increases as well. This presents challenges to addressing issues directly related to the market hall. Additionally, the associated projects themselves may be at odds with the future vitality of the market hall.

- 3. What works in one place won't necessarily work somewhere else*

Renovations should respect the needs and desires of the diverse communities in which they operate. Wider city agendas should consider long-term neighborhood vitality over short-term gain from lease and development contracts. Pre-project surveys should be conducted over a wide area, as market halls are valued by residents beyond their immediate retail catchment areas.

Urban citizens value their market halls as more than simply a place to shop. As public spaces, city policies should respect the diverse functions that market halls offer to residents, and should approach renovations with attention to the unique history of the halls themselves and the communities that they serve.

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