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Placemaking in Arab Cities

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THE JOURNAL OF PUBLIC SPACE

Placemaking in Arab Cities

Guest Editor
Mona Helmy

Managing Editor
Luisa Bravo

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S P E C I A L I S S U E

Cover image: *The Egg, Beirut. Protests 2019, day #6.* Picture by Louay Kabalan.

(Caption by Louay Kabalan). This shot was taken on the 6th day of the protests; I was roaming around Al-Amin mosque in Al-Balad, Beirut and noticed that people were trying to reach the roof of the egg. People were dancing, painting, singing and protesting on it. I decided to take the shot this way so I could depict the shape of the building and the human scale on it. While editing I tried to shed light on the red in my pictures, and everything else in a monotone Black. It's one of my favourite shots.

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EDITORIAL

Placemaking in Arab Cities. Realities, Challenges, and Prospects

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Placemaking is an inclusive approach to the planning, design, and management of public places by which people create and/or recreate places. In the context of the Arab cities, placemaking projects are often envisaged to transform communities' spaces into lively and attractive places; to enhance quality of life and opportunity for existing residents. It also aims to (re)create a distinct sense of place or place branding at large. Exploring how contemporary Arab cities have framed placemaking processes within the contemporary urban conditions, and sometimes the threats to the quality of the city, are helping in creating healthier, equitable, and humane public places. Such challenges and opportunities of these processes is a core component of this special edition of The Journal of Public Space, which discusses various aspects of placemaking in Arab Cities, ranges from creating, enhancing, adapting and developing attractive and efficient public places in Arab Cities. In this context, academic papers and viewpoints have manifested a variety of perspectives, theories and practices of placemaking concepts, methods, recent challenges and possible solutions. They portrayed several tools on establishing and revitalizing public places starting from governmental toolkits, reaching unplanned activities fostering community engagement in placemaking.

Following a very selective reviewing process, this themed issue has been enriched by twelve distinguished papers discussing placemaking in terms of space, society, and system. It also exhibits five viewpoints that are demonstrating innovative approaches in placemaking practices. Consequently, the themed issue was divided into four main chapters to reflect the various focuses of the included papers and viewpoints.

Several papers (Amir and Kondolf; Marzbani, Awad, and Rezaei; Ramírez and El Habashi; Rashid and Obeidat) critically examined the *Space* as a theoretical concept and a dominant aspect of foundational domains of placemaking. Other papers (Alabdullah; Kulkul; Khemri, Melis and Caputo) focused on the *Society* as the main driven of placemaking in Arab Cities. While others (Keleg; El-Atrash; Hegazy) explored the *System* as an important factor of placemaking.

Viewpoints demonstrate a variety of practical experiences in different contexts, to showcase of various innovative solutions of placemaking in a variety of Arab Cities.

Chapter one "Space" starts with a paper titled as "Bridges Over the Nile: Transportation Corridors Transformed into Public Spaces" by Amir Gohar and G. Mathias Kondolf. The paper debates the need for open space for people from lower income who cannot afford the expensive options along the Nile banks in Cairo, Egypt. It explores the spontaneous use of the sidewalks of the main bridges along the Nile banks as a new typology of public spaces. The paper recommends that making the riverbanks more accessible to average Cairenes could greatly improve their daily lives by providing badly needed open space. It also highlights some

recommendations on various levels, such as policy, planning, and design for innovative placemaking in Cairo.

Maryam Marzbani, Jihad Awad, and Mahmud Rezaei address the question “which of the “physical”, “social” or “perceptual” aspects of a place has had a more significant impact on walkability? in their paper with the title of “The Sense of Place Components and Walkability”. The paper analyses the case study of old and new developments in Dubai, UAE with a main goal of identifying, quantifying, and comparing the tangible (physical) and less tangible (perceptual, social) aspects of urban walkability in the new versus traditional developments in Dubai. The paper “Translation of civic pedagogical tactics to critically produce public spaces in Amman” by Amro Yaghi investigates the possibilities and the opportunities of producing alternative ‘public’ spaces through translating forms of civic pedagogical tactics in Amman. His contribution summarizes an innovative approach in exploring pedagogical forms of potential resistance that produces alternative spaces that deems public.

Natalia Ramírez and Alaa El Habashi critically address two main questions in their paper “reGREENeration of Historic Cairo: Hara al-Nabawiya and Bayt Madkour in al-Darb Al-Ahmar”. They raise a question on “How to re-signify courtyards as part of an ecological system within historical contexts with rapid informal growth?”. In addition, they explore the role that private and public open spaces can play for the development of communities living in historical areas. The paper concludes that “ReGREENerate” is to re-signify the link between the inside (courtyards) and outside (Haras) through a formula that creates appropriation of open spaces. It offers means to rethink the traditional role of privacy into a more communal oriented. The Space chapter ends with the paper “Students’ Static Activities in relation to Campus Quad Design and Layout: Exploring Gender-based Differences” by Mahbub Rashid and Bushra Obeidat. Their paper focuses on the relationships of various design and layout features of campus quads with students’ static activities focusing on male and female differences. The study reaches solid results indicating that different design and layout features had different relationships with different static activities. Also, male students’ and female students’ static activities were affected differently by different design and layout features.

The second chapter of this themed issue focuses on “Society” in placemaking. It starts with a paper by Weaam Alabdullah about “Incorporating Practices of Publicness in Kuwaiti Parks: Chai Ithahha, Cricket, Diwaniya, and Malls”. This paper focuses on practices of publicness in Kuwait that do not necessarily fall under accepted discourses of public space. These practices include culturally used spaces to respond to the needs of society with all its complexity, such as women’s morning tea space, and predominantly men’s gathering spaces. This paper also found that public parks which embrace such practices, becoming a terrain for fostering both community engagement and placemaking.

In her paper “Public Space and Social Polarization: A case study of the New Wave Turkish Migrants with a comparative analysis of Berlin, İstanbul & Ankara”, Ceren Kulkul investigates the definition of public spaces. The paper traces the various uses of public spaces according to the local culture and the needs of the society. It specifically addresses the group of young Turkish migrants who moved from their cities to Germany. The paper examines various ways to cope with living with one another. In order to rethink the social production of urban space, Kulkul, analysed public spaces of Ankara and Istanbul in Turkey and the public spaces of Berlin in Germany.

The paper “Sustaining the liveliness of public spaces in El Houma through placemaking: The Case of Algiers” by Mohamed Yazid Khemri, Alessandro Melis, Silvio Caputo studies the social use of urban spaces in El Houma, in the Algerian capital. The paper presents an extensive study of the urban spaces as a form of placemaking, focusing on people-centred approach as an

improvement tool within a neighbourhood. It promotes for the design of socio-culturally appropriate urban spaces.

The third chapter of this edition of the Journal of Public Spaces focuses on the “System” that guides the placemaking and the development of public spaces in Arab Cities.

In this context, the paper “Prospects of placemaking progression in Arab cities” by Merham M. Keleg aims at investigating the different set ups in the Arab region in relation to placemaking philosophy. It critically discusses different bottom-up and top-down approaches in placemaking. The paper concludes that placemaking is being interrupted by the systems in the Arab region that are highly centralized and rigid. It requires further reconfiguration of the power structures and relations between the different stakeholders and also a more inclusive and democratic process.

Ahmad El-Atrash discusses public spaces policies in his paper “Placemaking Interventions in Palestine as Demonstration Effects on the Ground”. The paper focuses on placemaking processes and ways of doing within the planning context of the West Bank. The paper identifies the role and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders in developing and identifying methods to challenge the existing situation of placemaking in the West Bank.

The paper “The (No-)Public Space: Reviewing the Transformation of Al-Qaed Ibrahim's Urban Image” by Iman Hegazy argues that public spaces are intangible expressions of democracy. The paper reviews the development of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square throughout the Egyptian socio-political changes, with a focus on the square’s urban and emotional contextual transformations. It analyzes the impact of the socio-political events on the image of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square, and how those political events have transformed it into a revolutionary urban symbol and yet into a no-public space.

The last chapter of this themed issue is dedicated to five “Viewpoints” that showcase of real experiences in placemaking in a variety of Arab Cities with their processes, challenges and expected prospects.

In his contribution entitled as “How People Reclaimed Public Spaces in Beirut during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising”, Wael Sinno discusses four main issues in placemaking within the context of the uprising places in the Middle East. With a special focus on public places in Beirut, Lebanon that was a theatre to many political events, the paper questions how public spaces in Central Beirut District have been reclaimed during the uprising; the benefits of this transformation; what is the potential future of these reconfigured places and; and what might be the role of local actors. Within the papers, the modern history of Beirut is being contextually presented.

Joana Dabaj and Riccardo Luca Conti showcase of the work developed through their design studio and charity “CatalyticAction”. Their article entitled as “Placemaking in Lebanese cities hosting displaced communities” exhibits their work to empower communities through strategic and innovative community-led spatial interventions, where the built environment and wellbeing are being constantly negotiated. Often, their projects benefit the most vulnerable groups including children, elderly and persons with disabilities. With this process of thinking and doing architecture, refugee and host communities co-design together and shape their shared built environment at this specific time of displacement, but also work towards a sustainable longer-term use of the spaces.

In her viewpoint “The Double P! Public Spaces in Dubai: A paranoiac panopticon!”, Therese Chidiac sees that the public spaces of Dubai are not reflecting an authentic identity, rather a collage of regulated western modernist spaces that have failed to create pockets of interaction and communication. The viewpoint questions: how to demystify the panopticon effect and make Dubai more liveable?

The article concludes that the presented design qualities of Dubai in the guidelines are worth to be put into action. It promotes the social responsibility of the architects in charge, and

recommends that they have the tools to integrate smooth design guidelines for public spaces and negotiate the regulations of the developers to end up with a win-win situation.

“Pedestrianization as a strategy for placemaking: the case of the Wakalat Street in Amman” by Kamila Ashour and Wael Al-Shamali critically discusses the issue of borrowing western strategies for organizing public spaces in Arab countries that may have negative impacts. This viewpoint discusses the development of the Wakalat Street in Amman as a public space. The article concludes that the experiences at the Wakalat Street development prove that public seats and social mixing cannot be achieved at a location where services and products are designated for a specific class of high level income. It recommends that analysis of economic, social and physical characteristics of the local context and culture is essential to determine the right strategy for placemaking.

In their viewpoint “Placemaking for Coexistence: Child and community friendly space HOUCH YGAMAANA Project, New Damietta – Egypt”, Insaf Ben Othmane Hamrouni and Omar Wanas narrate their project implemented in the Central Public Park of New Damietta, Egypt. The project aims to create age and gender inclusive child-friendly spaces that foster their imagination and enhance their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. The project is centred around a socially engaging mobile installation with the purpose of bringing the users of the park together and socially integrating them. The project is a manifestation of the socio-spatial dimension to placemaking where the produced public space is “both a product and producer of change”.

And finally, this themed issue did not only focus on presenting successful processes and experiences of placemaking in the Arab cities. It didn't hesitate from exposing the problematics of public places in the Arab cities, aiming to find out new planning and design solutions for a better placemaking in the Arab World.

Although the papers and viewpoints included in this issue are themed, they are covering wide areas in the field on different levels, within aims that ensure the capability, viability and creativity of placemaking in Arab cities. They fill a gap in the literature on the “Arab Placemaking” by their focus on the progressive aspects of public places. This issue does not aim to be exhaustive, rather to spell out strategies and mechanisms that aim to revisit, re-recognize, and re-mobilize public places in Arab cities. It is hoped that this work will stimulate further discussions of this fundamental subject.

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Bridges Over the Nile.

Transportation Corridors Transformed into Public Spaces

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Abstract

Cairo is a congested city with high rate of urbanization and very limited public space. Cairo has one of the lowest rates of parkland per capita of any major city. Moreover, the banks of the Nile, formerly alive with activities such as washing, fishing, and felucca landings, were by the end of the twentieth century largely cutoff from free public access by a wall of busy roads, private clubs, luxury hotels, restaurants, nurseries, and police/military stations, roads. The need for open space for people from lower income who could not afford the expensive options along the Nile banks, has resulted in use of the sidewalks of the main bridges as public spaces. Families, couples, and friends tolerate the noise and fumes of traffic to enjoy the expansive views and breezes over the Nile. As a result of this extraordinary re-purposing of the bridges, new small businesses have formed to cater to the uses, and a new interaction with the river has emerged. We studied the patterns of use, characteristics of the user population, and stated preferences of users. We identify a set of characteristics contributing to the popularity of the bridges as public space, including affordability, accessibility, openness to the river and visual connection with the other bank. We propose that these characteristics be taken into account when developing future projects along the river water front to address the need for public space and access to the Nile.

Keywords: public space, social connectivity, sustainable cities, river interactions, Nile, Cairo

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1. Introduction

With Cairo's rapid growth since the mid-20th century had been accommodated by extensive areas of informal housing poorly served by utilities and public transport, resulting in highly congested traffic routes and nearly constant traffic jams (AlSaiyad, 2011). Poor enforcement of zoning and building codes have resulted in a vast urban area with few open spaces for ordinary residents (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2011; Sims 2003). The recently constructed Al-Azhar Park on a former garbage dump near the Citadel now provides much-needed open space, but is exceptional in the city (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2011; Robert Mantho et al., 2015). Cairo has one of the lowest rates of parkland per capita of any major city, at 0.33m²/inhabitant (Bartels and Prinz, 2016; Aga Khan Trust for Culture, 2005).

Cairo has very few public open spaces accessible to the general public. Many parks charge entrance fees that seem modest by western standards but pose a real barrier to locals. Typical fees are 20 LE (e.g., for Aquarium Grotto Garden on Gablaha Street, El Andalus Park on Zamalek Island, Orman Botanical Garden in Giza, and Giza Zoo), so admission is over 100 LE (\$5 USD) for the typical family of five or more, especially lower-income workers who may earn only 3000 LE/month. In addition, there are aquatic parks and golf courses on the urban periphery within gated communities, not accessible to the general public and extremely expensive. The Nile water front was formerly accessible along its length, especially within the zone that was seasonally inundated. However, since the Aswan High Dam eliminated the river's seasonal fluctuations, this zone has been developed for uses that prevent public access, such as private clubs, restaurants, and military and police installations. By contrast, shopping malls are accessible by the public, and are usually a destination for families to spend time in a climate-controlled environment. Aside from a few points of public access along the river banks, the remaining free public space with views to the Nile is bridges across the Nile.

Rivers provide important open space in many major cities, and river banks have become loci of urban redevelopment efforts in recent years in cities across Europe, North America, and Asia. The *social connectivity* of urban rivers can be key to understanding the role of large rivers in the identity of cities and how the urban population experiences the river visually (and can move along, across, and down to the water) (G. M. Kondolf and Pinto, 2017). Historically, the banks of the Nile in Cairo were heavily used by local residents for fishing, felucca moorings, washing clothes, and fetching water, with free access to a seasonally-inundated zone of river bank. However, since closure of the Aswan High Dam, seasonal fluctuations have been muted and floods essentially eliminated. By the end of the 20th century, the formerly seasonally inundated zone of bank was occupied by uses such as nurseries, private clubs, restaurants, military and police stations, all of which block access to the banks for ordinary Cairenes (Gabr, 2004; G. M. Kondolf et al., 2011).

Parks along the river banks are rare in Cairo, and in the absence of riverbank access, and of sites with explicitly designated, programmed uses along the river, ordinary people have begun using bridges over the Nile as informal public spaces. Similar *spontaneous uses* have been observed along waterways elsewhere: in effect, these are spontaneous appropriation of spaces for recreation and leisure (M. Kondolf and Yang, 2008). In this study, we sought to document how Cairenes used the bridges, and to understand how users travel to the bridges, their distance traveled, their preferred

activities, and what alternatives they had for such outings. We examined use patterns on two bridges in different settings, documenting the patterns and demographics of how the bridges are used as public space: Qasr El-Nil Bridge in the city center and El-Moneeb Bridge on the southern ring road (Figure 1).

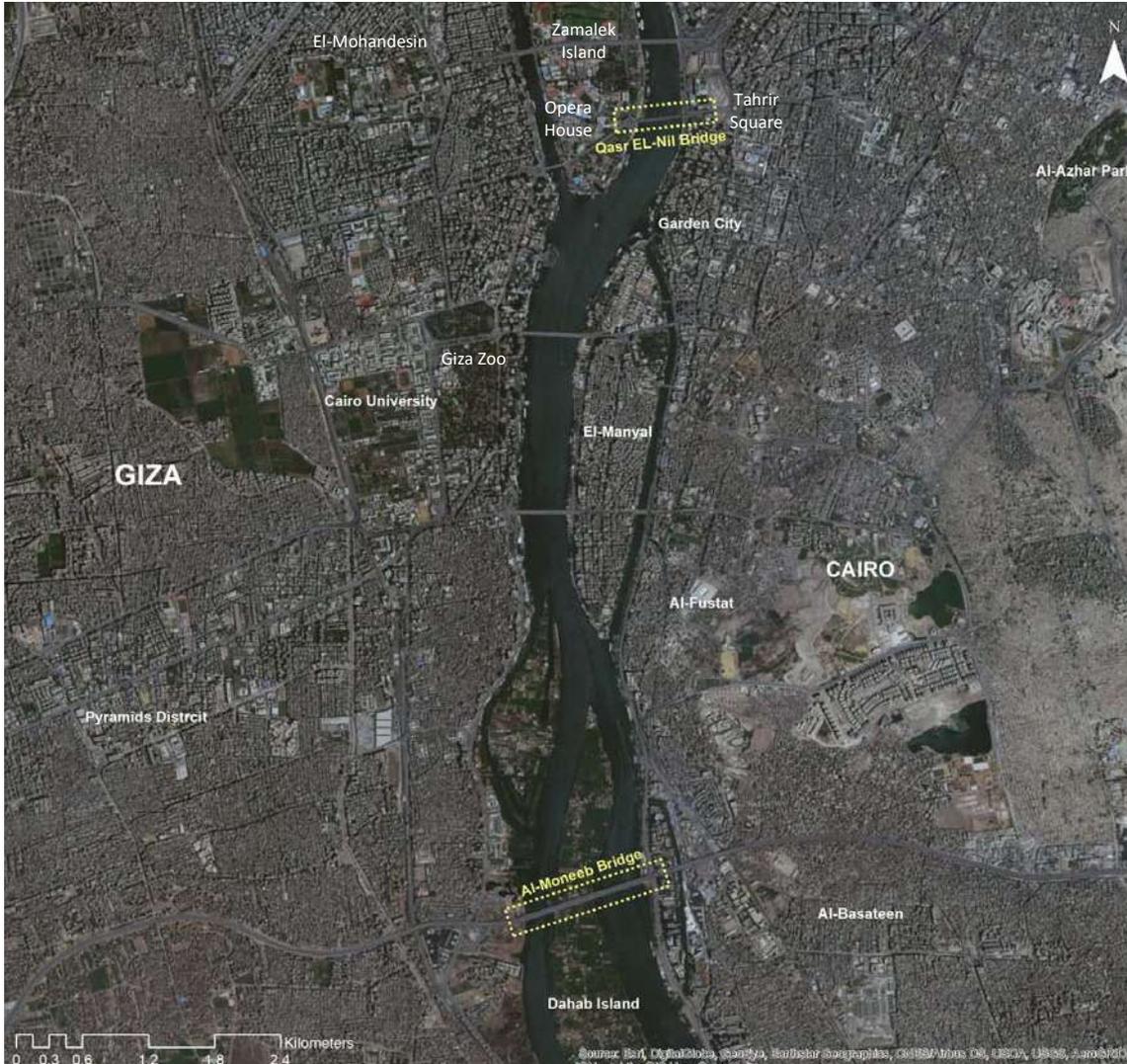


Figure 1. Map showing the location & context of the two bridges – Source: ESRI Digital Globe

2. Methods

Cresswell (2003) and Neuman (2010) confirm that this inquiry can use a combination of empirical research, observations, interviews and documentation of movement patterns across the bridges. These mixed methods would capture and document the use of sidewalk of bridges as alternative public space in the city. We selected two bridges where the phenomena of pedestrian use are present. The 1st is Kasr El Nil Bridge, which is a historic structure dating from 1931 and replaced the first bridge to span the Nile River in central Cairo, Egypt. It connects Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo to the modern Cairo Opera complex toward the southern end of Gezira Island, it has two

lanes each way with a 3 meters sidewalk. The 2nd is El-Moneeb Bridge, which connect Cairo with Giza over the Dahab Island. It constitutes an important segment of Cairo's ring road and connects East Cairo to the Giza area including the Pyramids area as well as the regional road going south to upper Egypt, it has 3 lanes each way with a sidewalk of 4.75 meters. The sidewalks have two concrete staircases that connect sidewalk users to the Dahab Island, but the northern one is currently blocked. Standing, sitting, and fishing are activities that occur on the edge of the rail without obstruction of the movement of people walking up and down the bridge's sidewalk. Figure 2 shows a diagram of the research steps from selection of bridges to the results.

We observed density and distributions of users on the Qasr-El-Nil Bridge and the El-Moneeb Bridge, both over the right (east) branches of the Nile from 18 May – 28 May 2018. We measured air temperatures at midafternoon (1500-1600 hours) and again in the evening (2100-2200 hours), and noted wind and traffic patterns. We recorded general patterns of use, conducting our observations discreetly, and limited them because of heightened security concerns. We counted numbers of users, recorded gender, approximate ages, and activity.

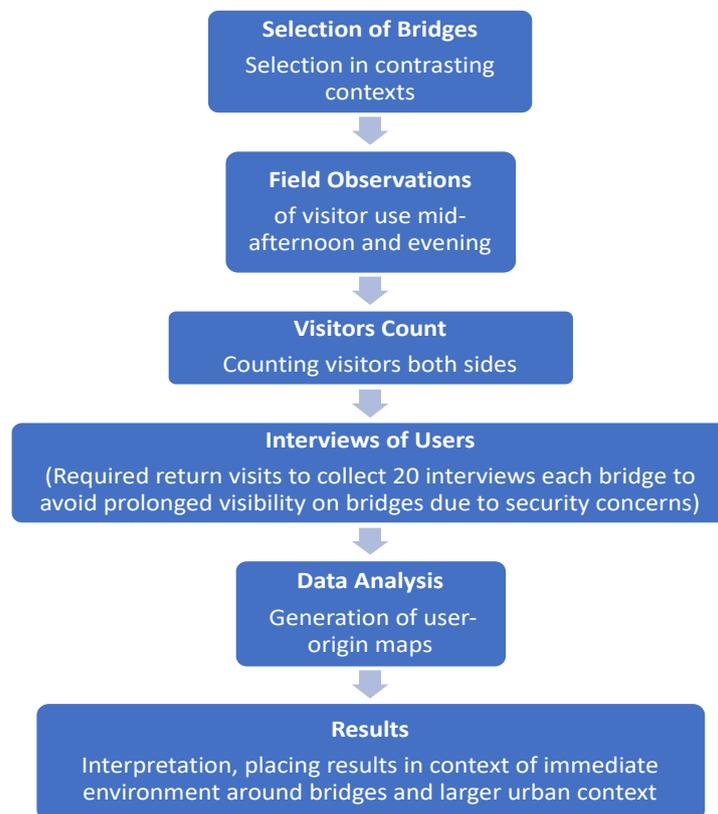


Figure 2. The research steps from selection of bridges to arriving at results

We randomly approached people spending time on the bridge (individuals, couples, and larger groups) and asked if they would answer a few questions about their use of the bridge. We did not approach those moving quickly across the bridge or otherwise using the bridge only as a thoroughfare, but rather targeted people clearly using the

bridge as a public space. We approached essentially everyone we encountered as we crossed the bridge, but once we were engaged in conversation with one person or group, we could not interact with others who passed by us during the conversation. Thus, there was no selection in terms of demographics or other such factors, only whether the people were using the bridge to move rapidly from one side to the other versus whether they appeared to be enjoying the bridge as a space. We conducted 40 interviews on each of bridges (80 interviews in total) over a period of 5 days. We recorded user characteristics such as age and gender, place of residence (from which we calculated distance travelled to reach the bridge), mode of travel, activities pursued on the bridge (contemplation, conversation, sitting, eating/drinking, fishing, etc). We conducted our interviews under conditions of heightened security, so we deliberately limited our time spent on the bridge talking with people and did not flourish clipboards or otherwise act in ways to draw attention to ourselves. In light of this limitation, we did not attempt a larger, more comprehensive study. Rather, we attempted to provide an initial examination of the pattern of public use of the bridges as open space, to provide initial insights that could potentially be developed further under better circumstances.

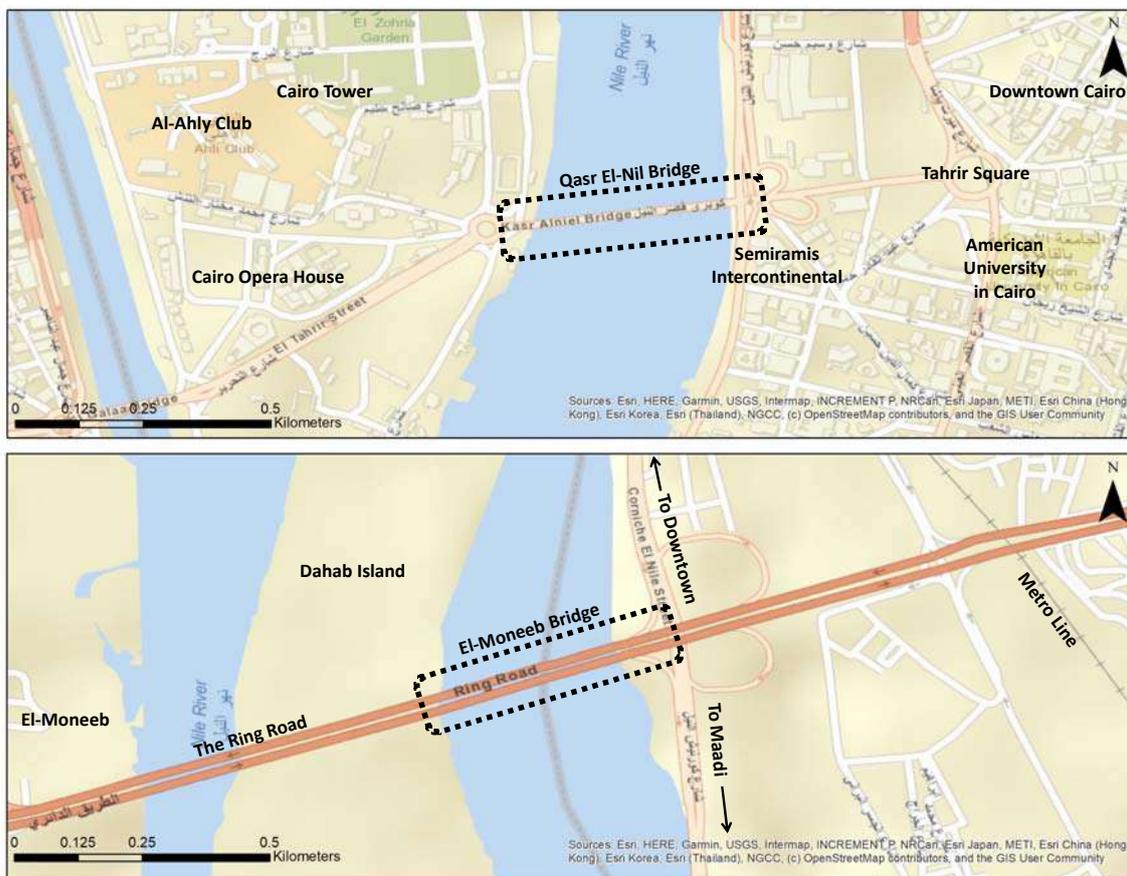


Figure 3. Bridges location and context. Source: ESRI Open Street Map (2019)

3. Results

3.1. Characteristics of Qasr-EL-Nil and El-Moneeb Bridges

The Qasr-El-Nil Bridge is located in the city center, is 400m long and traverses the right (east) branch of the Nile, linking Tahrir Square (east bank) with the residences, office buildings, and monuments of Zamalek Island, including the Cairo Opera House and Al-Ahly Club (Figure 3). The central Sadat Metro Station is located 270m east of the east end of the bridge, and the Opera Metro Station is located on Zamalek Island 260m west of the west end of the bridge, which make the bridge relatively accessible to pedestrians. Because of its proximity to Tahrir Square, other monuments, major hotels, and more generally its central location, the Qasr-El-Nil Bridge has a symbolic importance to the city.

By contrast, El-Moneeb Bridge is located 6.3km south (upstream), thus distant from the city center, and is part of the Cairo Ring Road, which supports longer-distance transport and (traffic permitting) higher speeds. El-Moneeb connects south Cairo with Giza (Faisal), traversing Dahab Island, a low-lying, mostly agricultural island that formerly flooded annually, but which has attracted more permanent settlement since river flows were stabilized by the High Dam. The El-Moneeb Bridge is a single, continuously elevated structure over Dahab Island and both branches of the Nile. The bridge section across the right (east) branch that we studied is about 400m in length.

While there are traffic circles at either end of the Qasr-El-Nil bridge, there are no such turnaround opportunities at either end of El-Moneeb, and it lacks the pedestrian destinations that are found at the two ends of Qasr-El-Nil. As a result, El-Moneeb is dominated more by through traffic. The faster and heavier traffic on El-Moneeb Bridge, along with a traffic separator between the two directions of travel, make it dangerous and difficult to cross the road on foot, isolating the two sides of the bridge from each other. While there are stairs to give pedestrians access to Dahab Island from the south side of the bridge, the parallel set of stairs on the north side have been blocked off by chain-link fencing. This barrier can be surmounted with some effort, as is done routinely by local residents, but nonetheless, the north and south sides of the bridges are more isolated and accessed primarily by cars traveling in one direction or the other. The center of Cairo is visible in the distance from the north side of El-Moneeb, making this a more interesting view than that to the south.

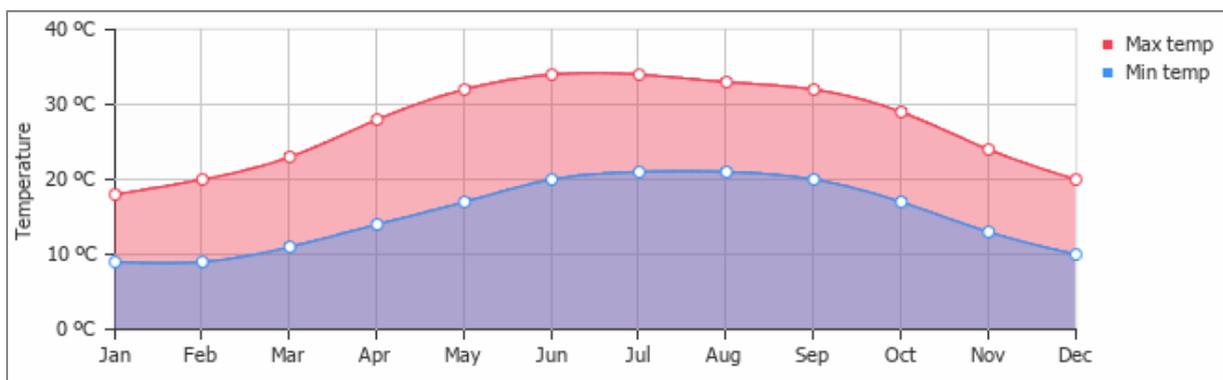


Figure 4. Average temperature in Cairo. (Source: weather-and-climate.com)

We measured 38°C on both bridges midafternoon, but by evening, temperatures had cooled down to 26°C, as both bridges experienced a fresh Nile breeze blowing from north to south, making the north sides of the bridges the prime spot for enjoying fresh air. These observed temperatures were warmer than the long-term average values for the warmer months of the year in Cairo, as reflected in long-term average monthly maximum and minimum air temperatures (Figure 4).

Because Qasr-El-Nil Bridge is adjacent to the city center (Tahrir Square, government buildings, etc), for reasons of security, vehicles are not permitted to park on the bridge. We observed a repeated ‘dance’ between cars parking along the sidewalk and a police tow truck with flashing blue lights: one car would stop along the side of the bridge, its occupants enjoying the view or talking with people on the sidewalk, immediately followed by another 4-5 cars parking directly behind it for some minutes until the tow truck arrived at the end of the line with its lights flashing and horn blowing, and the cars would all immediately clear out. We observed the tow truck continually cruising the bridge (turning around at each end to cross the bridge again and again), clearing out congregations of cars as they collected.

By contrast, on El-Moneeb Bridge, cars can park unmolested for long periods. Fishermen extract their gear from adjacent cars, and hummus merchants unload plastic chairs for their customers on the sidewalk. However, because there are no simple turnarounds at the ends of the bridge, many of those parked are stopping *en route* from one part of the city to another.

3.2. User Patterns

As both bridges are unpleasantly hot and unshaded in the afternoon, we encountered few users, aside from those in transit from one end to the other (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Bridges devoid of pedestrians during heat and sun of mid-afternoon. a) Qasr el-Nil bridge southern edge, looking west. b) El-Moneeb Bridge southern edge looking west (photos by Kondolf, May 2018).

However, in the evening as temperatures drop and the Nile breeze develops, the conditions are far more comfortable, and people appear on the sidewalks (Figure 6).



Figure 6. The popular north side of Qasr El-Nil Bridge at night. Users walking along bridge sidewalk (left), and users staying in one place with views of Nile river boats arriving and departing (right).
(Photos by Gohar, May 2018)

Qasr-El-Nil Bridge had more users on its north side than the south side, many drawn to watch the Nile cruise boats (with brightly-colored lights) leaving and returning from their docks on Zamalek Island at the west end of the bridge. Male users outnumbered female users by about 3:1 on the north side and about 4:1 on the south side. Most women and girls were observed either with families or in couples. El-Moneeb Bridge also had more users on its north side than south side with similar but wider gender gap (Table 1). During the hot midday hours, Qasr El Nil had only 10 users, all male and walking across; El-Moneeb had none when we were onsite for our count.

Table 1. Number of bridge users stationed or walking, by time of the day and by gender

			Walking	Stationed	TOTAL	Male	Female
Qasr El- Nil Bridge	Midday	North	6	0	6	6	0
		South	4	0	4	4	0
	Evening	North	87	96	183	131	31
		South	32	44	76	58	18
El- Moneeb Bridge	Midday	North	0	0	0	0	0
		South	0	0	0	0	0
	Evening	North	13	55	68	54	14
		South	3	3	6	5	1

From our semi-structured interviews, we found that Qasr El-Nil bridge serves as an attraction for people coming from as far west as the 6th of October City and from Al-Obour City to the north east, traveling distances of up to 33 km to enjoy the breeze, view, and accessible open space. Figure 7 shows the spatial distribution of the origins of visitors of the bridge, with concentric circles spaced at an interval of 5 km. The various activities on the bridges are distributed such that users avoid conflicting with each other. Users on Qasr-El-Nil Bridge included many couples slowly walking along the sidewalk or stopping to enjoy the view from the bridge, and groups of people sitting on plastic chairs.

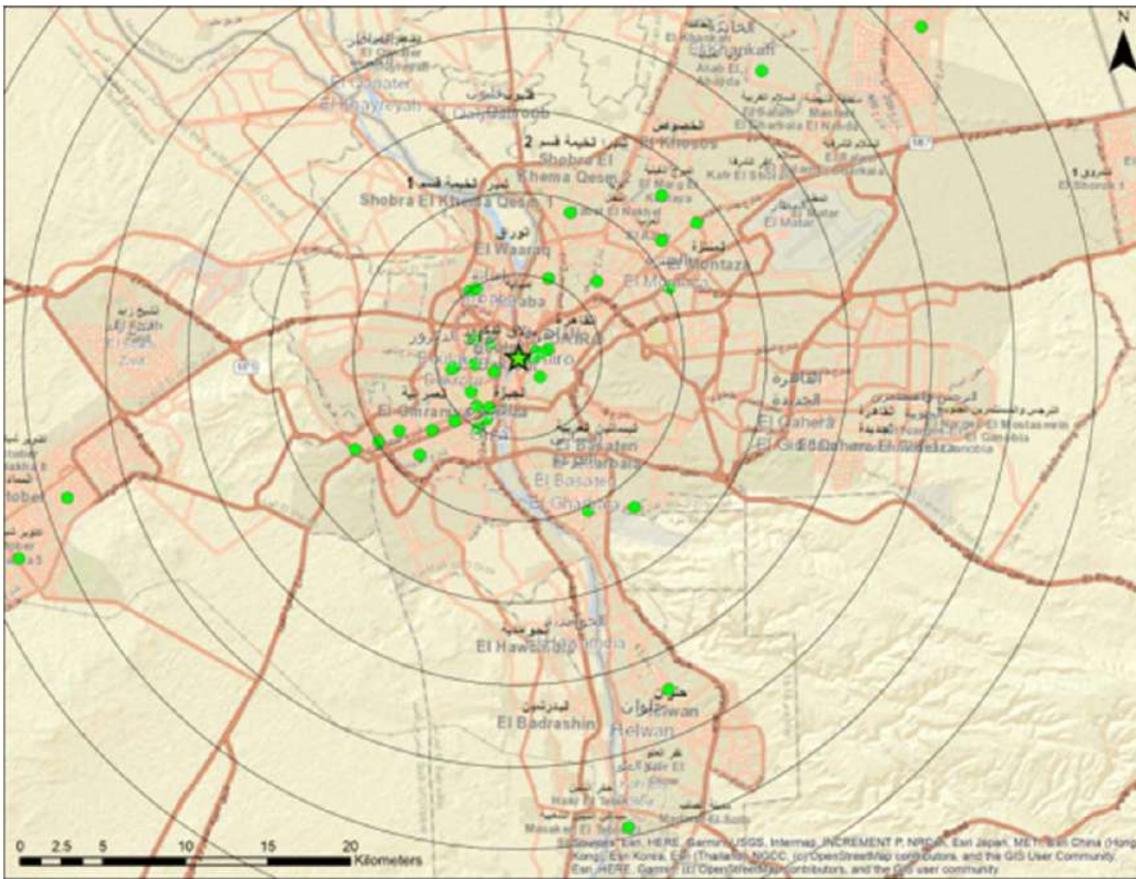


Figure 7. Origins of travel trajectories for Qasr El-Nil Bridge visitors. Concentric circles are at intervals of 5 km. The most distant person came from a point 33 km away. Source: ESRI Open Street Map (2019)

When asked about the features and activities that attract them to come to the bridge (in some cases from a relatively long distance), all 40 interviewees mentioned the view as a primary attraction, not surprising given bridge’s location within a very scenic part of Cairo; 37 identified fresh air as a second reason they visit the bridge; 11 visitors enjoyed walking; and 3 came to fish (Table 2).

Table 2. Activities mapped and extracted from the visitors’ interview

Bridge	Enjoying View	Enjoying Fresh Air	Fishing	Walking
Qasr El-Nil (40)	40	37	3	11
El-Moneeb (40)	31	30	10	8
Total (80)	71	67	13	19

The users on El-Moneeb Bridge (also mostly using the north side) cited the views (31 of 40), fresh air (30), fishing (10), and taking a walk (8) (Table 2). Fishing is better

established on El-Moneeb, probably because the bridge is less heavily used overall, and the convenience of parking next to the sidewalk is important for bringing large fishing poles (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Fishing along the Northside of El-Moneeb Bridge (photo by Gohar May 2018)

Hummus merchants were set up on both sides of El Moneeb, with plastic chairs arranged to encourage people to stop and enjoy something to eat or drink (Figure 9). Commercially available refreshments on the sidewalk (hummus, tea, coffee, ice cream) tend to be cheaper on El-Moneeb than on Qasr El-Nil).



Figure 9. A street trader selling Hummus on the southside of El-Moneeb Bridge (Photo by Ahmed Onsi 2019)

Our interviewees on El-Moneeb bridge mostly from within 5 km distance, with three visitors from 10-15 km radius, and the most distant being one who traveled 12.5 km from northeast Cairo (Figure 10). This space attracts people from a wide range of socio-economic classes, as it gives them the opportunity to enjoy an open public space, which they lack in the neighborhoods they come from.

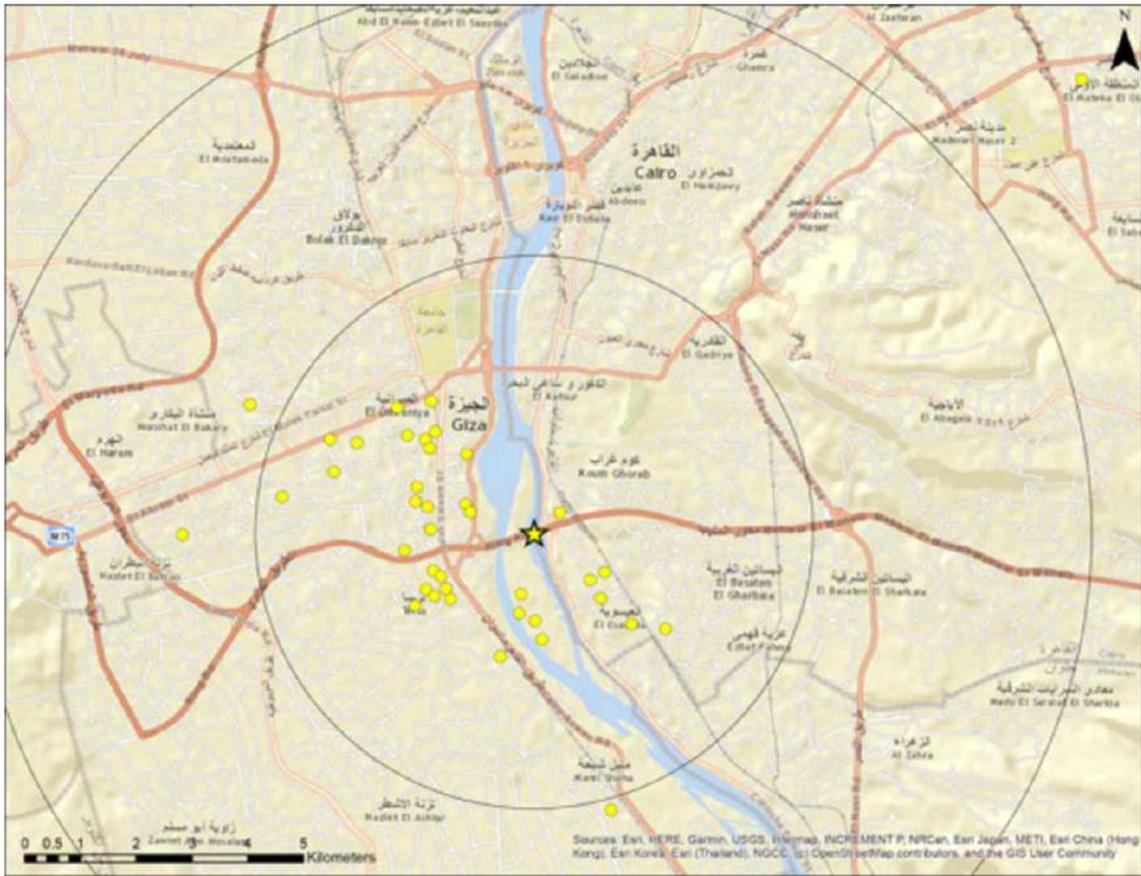


Figure 10. Origins of travel trajectories for El-Moneeb Bridge visitors. Concentric circles are at intervals of 4 km. The most distant person came from a point 12.5 km away Source: ESRI Open Street Map (2019)

Comparing travel distances for interviewees on the two bridges, Qasr El-Nil interviewees had traveled an average of 8.9km, while those on EL-Moneeb averaged only 2.7km. The 40 visitors interviewed on Qasr El-Nil travelled a sum of 354 Km to reach to the bridge, on the other hand, while the 40 interviewees on El-Moneeb bridge had travelled a total of 109km.

Users of both bridges cited alternative options for outings, including cafes, clubs, and cinemas, but they preferred the bridge sidewalk to enjoy the open space with the fresh air. Table 3 shows the alternative outings cited by the interviewees. Among all alternative outings, shopping malls, cafes and gardens are the most visited alternative destinations. Private clubs and cinemas were less popular presumably because they involve entry fees.

Table 3. Alternative Outing

Bridge	Cafe	Club	Cinema	Down-town	Mall	Home/Family	Garden
Qasr El-Nil (40)	6	6	9	6	13	4	13
El-Moneeb (40)	11	4	7	1	2	6	9
Total (80)	17	10	16	7	15	10	22

4. Discussion

The use of bridges as public open space has a long history, but the modern context in Cairo is very different. Going back to medieval times in Europe, bridges commonly supported structures such as shops, markets, and chapels, and given their central urban locations, were in high demand. The chapel surviving on the ancient Pont d’Avignon in Avignon, or the many shops still active on the Rialto Bridge in Florence (dating from 1591) are modern reminders of the former extent of such established public use of bridges. The Charles Bridge over the Moldau in Prague (dating from the 15th century) was long the only bridge in the city, but in 1965 it was closed to vehicles as repairs were made, and it has since been pedestrian-only, and is now a heavily-used public space.

The 490-m-long Galata Bridge over the Golden Horn in Istanbul was completed in the 1990s, with two levels: the top level with vehicular lanes flanking tram tracks, with generously dimensioned pedestrian walkways on both sides of the bridge, and the lower level of restaurants, cafés, and shops (opened since 2003) flanked by a walkway, creating a modern version of the medieval bridge as commercial center. The top-level pedestrian walkways are extremely popular not only with families, couples, and tourists, but also with recreational fishermen. An average of over 200 fisherman fish from the bridge year-round, catching an estimated 64 tonnes of fish annually of 20 species, including *Trachurus* spp., *Spicara* spp. and *Mugil* spp. (Iwano and Öztürk 2012) The fishermen themselves have become a tourist attraction, and fishing rods, tackle, and bait are for sale at multiple points on the bridge. Considering its large visitorship, the different uses of the bridge have co-existed remarkably well, although fishing weights and hooks have landed in restaurants and cafes below, and there are conflicts on the bridge between fishermen casting their lines and nearby pedestrians (Iwano and Öztürk, 2012).

A further example of using bridges as public space is the Continental Avenue Bridge over the Trinity River in Dallas, Texas, whose role in carrying vehicular traffic was displaced by a new bridge in 2012, after which it became pedestrian and bicycle only. The former transportation artery was transformed into a linear park, with chess boards, bocce courts, etc., all part of an overall strategy to transform the river corridor from a neglected no-mans-land (separating the wealthier north from the poor south) into a vibrant public space for the city (Parrish et al., 2010). The Tilikum crossing over the Willamette River represents a further advance in this direction, as a newly constructed bridge designed to accommodate tram, bicycles, and pedestrians, but no cars, as a green

corridor that can transform the user experience in the city (Libby, 2014; Jafee, 2015; Burke, 2015). Similarly, just south of the Pont Pasteur (vehicular bridge) over the Rhone River in Lyon, the new Pont Raymond Barre was constructed for the tram, bicycles, and pedestrians, connecting the Gerland District with the newly developing Confluence areas (with a new museum, shopping area, and riverside cafés and restaurants on the Rhone and the Soane) (AFGC - L'Association Francaise de Genie Civil Délégation Rhône-Alps, 2013).

While the examples above all involve some intent on the part of public authorities for the bridges to serve as public space, the use of bridges in Cairo as public space was entirely unplanned and spontaneous. As reflected in the comments of our interviewees, the bridges of Cairo have become open-space alternatives to expensive shopping malls and restaurants for Cairenes from a wide range of economic backgrounds and parts of the city. Couples find it a romantic and affordable outing. Fishermen enjoy fishing from the bridge evidently more as a pastime than for the economic value of the fish they might catch. During especially popular times, such as weekends, festivals and feasts like the Ramadan holiday, large numbers of people may occupy city streets and especially the bridges at the same time.

It is notable that the bridges were designed primarily for vehicle movement, but the spaces have been repurposed by the urban population that has few viable alternatives for open space. The use of the bridges as open space is not anticipated or addressed in the official documents on planning and use of the bridges in Cairo. The Cairo master plan report by the General Organization of Physical Planning (1982) and the Traffic Report by the World Bank (2013) address only vehicular traffic patterns, connectivity, and relation to adjacent land use. Their use as public spaces has gone unreported in official documents.

Our research suggests these characteristics of the Nile bridges that make them suitable as public spaces, and which may provide insights to inform design of public spaces on rivers elsewhere. First, the bridges experience a distinctly cooler evening microclimate in hot months in Cairo. When exposed to full sun of the afternoon, the bridges are empty of all except those rapidly crossing, but with the evening breeze, the bridges provide a delightful respite from the heat of the city. This suggests the importance of assessing microclimates along riverfronts and bridges elsewhere to inform riverfront development plans, identifying sites that enjoy cool breezes, especially when working in hot climates. Second, usage patterns will be influenced by access options, and sites that are accessible from public transit will attract a wider range of visitors from a wider range of origins than bridges that are accessible primarily by car. Third, the existence of attractions at either ends of the bridge and directly under or adjacent to the bridges encourages public use. For example, the fact that the Kasr El Nil bridge connects important destinations at Tahrir Square and Zamalak Island makes it a natural part of many pedestrian outings, and once on the bridge, people are attracted to the docks for tourist boats, with their brightly-colored lights, directly downstream along the Zamalak island bank. Being located near mass transit and en route between popular destinations contributes to use of the bridges, but is not prerequisite, as El-Moneeb is neither easily accessible from public transit nor linking popular pedestrian destinations, yet it still hosts many users in the evenings. Fourth, the sidewalks on both Kasr El-Nil and El Moneeb bridges are generously dimensioned (4.5 and 3 m-wide respectively), providing

sufficient space for walking as well as stationary uses such as contemplation, fishing, and enjoying hummus or tea from merchant stands. This suggests that adequate sidewalk width is essential for people to feel comfortable using bridges as public space, and greater widths than 4.5 m would probably be better when designing new structures, as seen on Pont Raymond Barre in Lyon and the Tilikum Crossing in Portland. Fifth, in the context of Cairo with its large population of poor people, the fact that the bridges are freely accessible, at no cost, is an important factor in their popularity, with implications for planning and design of such public spaces in other cities of the Global South.

5. Conclusion

Cairo is a crowded city with inadequate public space for its population. As officially designated public spaces have proved insufficient, Cairenes have repurposed the bridges over the river as public spaces. The bridges are especially popular at night, when the Nile breezes create a delightfully cool environment, especially along the north (windward) sides of the bridges (the north side of El-Moneeb bridge also has better views of the city). Bridge users come from a wide range of income levels and areas of the city.

Unlike examples of bridges as public space documented in many other cities, the bridges of Cairo were not intended as public spaces. The intensive use of the bridges by the local population is a reminder of the serious lack of open space to serve the population of Cairo, and an indication of the potential to provide open space elsewhere along the river if some of the existing land uses along the banks can be changed to allow public access in the future. The Nile remains the geographical and cultural focal point of the city. Making the river banks more accessible to average Cairenes could greatly improve their daily lives by providing badly needed open space. In the meantime, the Nile bridges, repurposed as public space, offer a cool, refreshing setting and a unique perspective on the river and surrounding city.

Cities throughout the Global North and South are rediscovering their waterfronts, and bridges over rivers offer excellent opportunities to connect cities across and with their rivers. The Cairo experience has many commonalities, as well as differences, with examples in the Global North. How can the experience of Cairo inform other cities as they endeavor to reconnect their residents with urban waters? The popularity of Cairo's bridges can be attributed both to the attractions of the bridges (pleasant evening breezes, panoramic views of the city) and the severe lack of alternative open spaces suitable for outings (commercial centers being among the most often cited). Having sufficiently wide sidewalks to accommodate multiple uses (walking, leaning on the railing contemplating the view, fishing, and enjoying snacks from the hummus merchants) is essential, and being located near transit and *en route* between popular destinations contributes to public use. The fact that average Cairenes have repurposed these transportation infrastructures as public space provides a wonderful example of human resourcefulness, as well as the enduring attraction of water in the urban environment.

6. Recommendations

Through the empirical studies of the public use of Kasr El Nil bridge, and El-Moneeb bridge this research can highly inform practice on the following levels:

6.1. Policy

Observations and interviews show that the local Cairenes are lacking places where they can enjoy time and spend time with family and friends. This demand is recommended to be heard by both the local authorities as well as the central government. Cairo Governorate and the Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities should incorporate a number of techniques that enable ordinary people to play an active and influential part in planning decisions which affect their lives. This means that people are not just listened to, but also heard; and that their voices shape the urban designs and plans. Techniques such as civic engagement, public hearing, participatory planning and many more are the only way to develop new urban schemes that fulfil basic needs and rights of having open public space.

6.2. Planning

The paper confirms that, to date, there is no sufficient public space in the city and that the future planning needs to take into account the importance of increasing park spaces across the entire city. Not only adding city parks but making sure they are accessible for the public. The use of bridges for multipole activities suggests the need for more park areas, extended access to the river's water front, areas for fishing, trails for juggling, sitting areas across the Nile banks, and multiple viewing points.

6.3. Design

The existing use of the bridges suggests not only architecture and urban program for public space but how people use these sidewalks in harmony. There are no conflicts between the sitting and moving pedestrians on the bridge's side walk. This suggests that local architects and landscape designers must take into account the existing patterns and continue to seek detailed users' patterns to understand how to accommodate these uses in newly introduced public spaces.

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The Sense of Place: Components and Walkability. Old and New Developments in Dubai, UAE

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Abstract

This research attempts to address the question “which of the “physical”, “social” or “perceptual” aspects of a place has had a more significant impact on walkability?” The main goals were to identify, quantify, and compare the tangible (physical) and less tangible (perceptual, social) aspects of urban walkability as well as how they impact urban walkability in the new versus traditional developments in Dubai. The significance of this research lies in higher weight it places on the quantitative rather than merely the qualitative features of walkability, in order to provide more practical guidelines and measurements. This emphasis reflects a gap in the literature on walkability which is focused more on the latter than the former. Planners, public and city officials can use these findings in their decisions. The findings indicate that the sense of place in the historical fabric of Bastakiyah (old part of Dubai) is totally higher than the new development of Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR). But it has more been the physical aspect, rather than less-tangible factors of the place, in both cases, that normally has improved the whole sense of the place felt by visitors, inhabitants and users. Yet, the behavioural and perceptual criteria need to be improved, in comparison with the mere physical attractions, in order to create a more balanced place for walkability in Dubai. In this study, the combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods have been used. Urban dimensions and their effects on walkability have been qualitatively identified and categorized through administering a survey questionnaire. These dimensions were then measured in Dubai. Lastly, the collected data have been statistically analysed and described with the SPSS program.

Keywords: walkability, sense of place, urban design, Dubai

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Introduction

In the wake of the industrial revolution, urban population exploded and cities expanded. The rush of new developments in urban areas, the auto industry, and the priority given to cars rather than human forced a pattern shift from walking to driving. The standards of the built environment transformed in a way that cities became un-walkable for people from all walks of life.

It goes without saying that the promotion of walking behaviour would reduce the individual, social, environmental, and economic problems related to physical and mental illnesses, traffic congestion, environmental injustice, social isolation and rising health care costs (Forsyth, 2015) (Speck, 2012) (Lehman, 2007) (Lee, 2008) (Pucher, 2003). Several studies and research have distinguished level of walkability relates to a wide range of influences such as the physical condition of the place, social behaviour, socio-economic factors, and sense of a place. However, from the viewpoint of architects and planners, walkability holds a meaningful relationship with the conditions of the built environment and the sense of place (Forsyth, 2015) (Joh, 2011) (Rezaei, 2014) (Adkins, 2017). The sense of place has three main components namely “physical”, “perceptual” and “behavioural” (Lynch, 1960) (Montgomery, 1998) (Carmona, 2006). Over the past few decades, a wide range of walkability definitions and frameworks have been introduced in the literature. While some concentrate on the physical conditions of the road, others link it to the individual characteristics. There are also a few proposed frameworks that have a holistic approach while considering more effective factors (Forsyth, 2015) (Yang, 2016) (Marzbani, 2014).

Although, in recent years, enhancing the walkability of communities has become a key concern in many fields such as urban planning, geography, and psychology, still our knowledge of what makes walking a zero-pollution means of travel, a preference for residents is quite limited. Most of the related studies are qualitative rather than quantitative. Besides, one barely sees an integrated walkability research based on every aspect of a place. The two paths compared in this study are located in Dubai, which is a sample of a modern sprawl development and heavily car-dependent city. Recently, the UAE’s government has made considerable efforts to make Dubai a walkable city so as in order to reduce the range of issues affecting its residents including diabetes, obesity, unhappiness, traffic congestion and the like.

Qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to review the role of each element of sense of a place in increasing walkability. The first stage was based on observation, data collection and the qualitative analysis of the data, and conducting a survey using Delphi method. In the second phase, the collected data were analysed by a software called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The significance of this study is in quantifying the aspects of “sense of place”, measuring and comparing the level of their influence on walkability from the viewpoint of the various professionals. The conclusions could be applied by master planners, municipalities, urban planning councils, and consulting firms for future projects.

The findings of this research indicated that the walkability of the two studied paths, one in historical fabric and one in new development of Dubai, is approximately in the same level. Additionally, it showed that of the three main components of a place, the physical aspects have the major role in enhancing walkability. The perceptual aspects come in

second place followed by the behavioural aspects. The research highlights the necessity to pay more attention to the social and perceptual aspects of design in Dubai. In the following, the different aspects of sense of place and their relationship with walkability in the existing literature will be reviewed which is followed by the case studies. Lastly, the findings will be discussed and determined the role of each component of urban dimension in order to increase the walkability in Dubai.

Walkability and Sense of Place

The history of modern cities developments demonstrates two major trends or 'movements' that have emerged since the time of the industrial revolution. The first, industrial revolution itself and the second trend in urban design took full hold in the post-war era, with the rise of the suburbs. In a sense, the suburbs represent a continuation and intensification of the compartmentalization movement, as the living areas of the upper classes were separated-off still further from the other areas of the city—out into sprawling districts miles away (as automobiles made it possible for certain city dwellers to escape to an idealized haven away from the hustle and bustle) (Montgomery, 2013). The seductive power of suburbanization accelerated in the late nineteenth century as the industrial revolution made cities larger and more machine-like. At the same time, the growing middle class could now afford to move from older urban neighbourhoods to new homes in naturalistic settings on the outskirts. From the industrial city arose not just a desire to escape but a desire to experience a convivial "village life" with its image of a more human scale and tightly knit sense of community (Fulton, 1997). For example, the City Beautiful movement borrowed heavily from France's Beaux Arts school of architecture. With its emphasis on civic buildings, plazas and landscaped parks, this movement sought, in the words of Todd Bressi, to "impose a sense of order, civility and purpose on chaotic industrial cities (Bressi, 1994). The Garden City movement is another movement emerging out of the new profession of city planning at the turn of the century also sought to create a "sense of place" and restore the notion of village life to modern urban development. But this Garden City movement was less formalistic, more oriented toward "green" natural areas, parks and walkways that safely isolated neighbourhood activity from the street (Fulton, 1997). Walkability studies and observation of different built environment demonstrate a strong relationship between "sense of place" and "walkability". However, in various fields of study, both concepts have been defined in different ways.

Some discussions of walkability focus on the means or conditions by which walking is enabled, including areas being traversable, compact, physically-enticing, or safe. Others propose that walkability is about the outcomes or performance of such walkable environments, such as making places lively and sociable, enhancing transportation options, or inducing exercise. A final set of discussions uses the term walkability as a proxy for better urban places—with some paying attention to walkability being multidimensional and measurable and others proposing that enhancing walkability provides a holistic solution to a variety of urban problems (Speck, 2012) (Rezaei, 2014). Furthermore, of all the built environment theories, the holistic module is the most complete one. It argues that any given place cannot be recognized unless all three of its main aspects, namely "physical", "social", and "perceptual", have been well-defined.

“An environmental image may be analysed into three components: identity, structure, and meaning” (Carmona, 2006). “We should remember what make a city is not just physical, social aspects, but a perceptual aspect of place and the relation of these three aspects of place together” (Carmona, 2006).

The following by Punter and Montgomery (Carmona, 2006) illustrate the relationships between a place with its components.

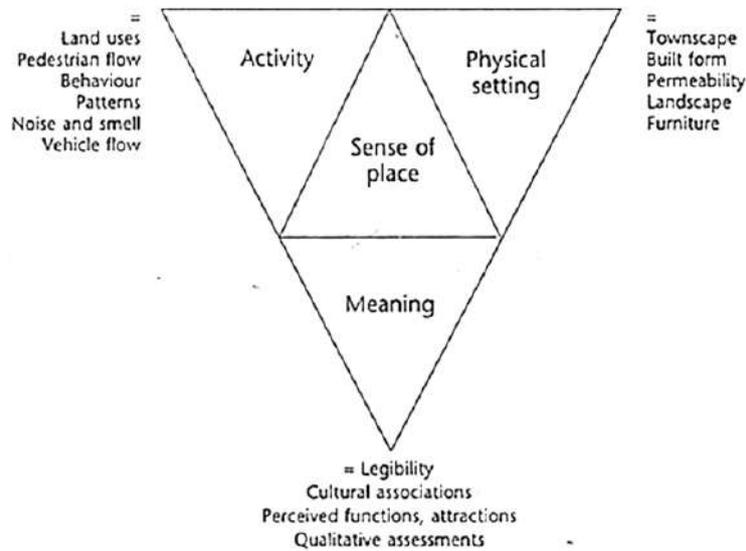


Figure 1. Diagram of Sense of Place by Punter and Montgomery. Source: Carmona, 2006, p. 99.

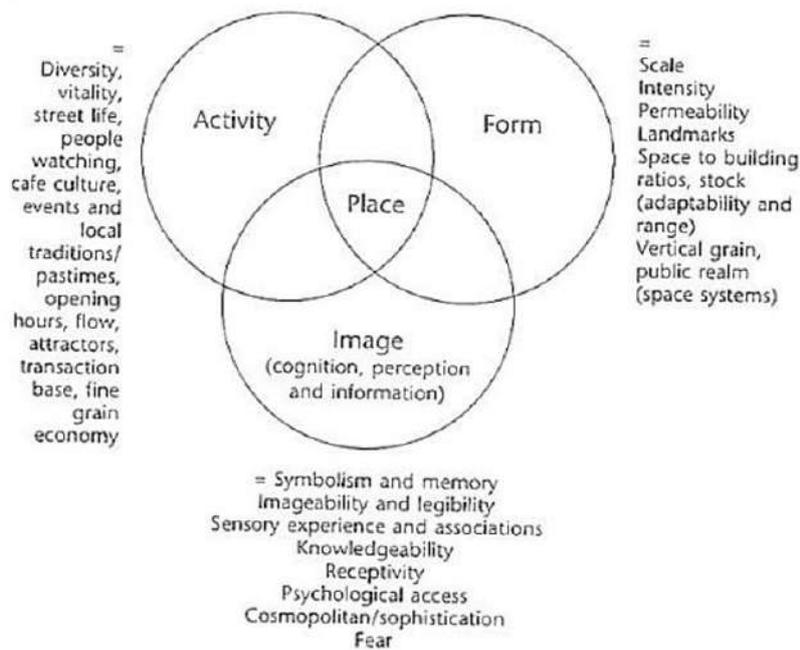


Figure 2. The Components of Place. Source: Montgomery, 1998.

Although, there are many different methods and approaches to decide whether a place is walkable or not, this study follows the models suggested by Lynch, Punter and Montgomery, and includes “Physical Features”, “Social Activities”, and “Perceptual Dimensions”.

Physical Features

Over the course of time, physical characteristics of a place were the main concern of architects and designers. Therefore, the major urban theories of walkability include some features of the built environment in certain levels. In this respect, the five physical dimension of a place has been derived from Carmona module of eight subcategories namely: ecological, spatial, morphology, contextual, and visual. The Carmona module includes three more urban dimension of social, functional, and perceptual which are not under physical subcategory of a place (Carmona, 2001). In the next few paragraphs the key concepts of each physical aspect associated with walkability will be presented.

The Ecological Aspects of a place that are in accordance with walkability in the urban literature are sustainable design, ecology, energy efficiency, orientation, sunlight, green areas and trees, microclimate, natural specifications, waterfronts, shade and shadow, and topography (Rogers, 1977) (Coupland, 1996) (Bacon, 1967) (Blowers, 1993).

The Spatial Aspects are the dimensions of a place that highly affect the human behaviour which are compact or sprawl form of built environment, mixed-used, open spaces, road hierarchy, settlement pattern, neighbourhoods, mobility, hierarchy level of public and private, permeability of the space, scales, range of vehicle-users, availability of public transportations, structure of the space, accessibility and built up density (Garreau, 1991) (Calthorpe, 1993) (Fery, 1999) (Lynch K. , 1980) (Hough, 1990).

The Morphology Aspects are one of those important factors that have major impacts on the human behaviour. Historically, architects have sought to understand and identify patterns of built environment, housing, crosswalk, side parking, building lines, density (figure and ground), layout, public spaces, street pattern, plazas and squares, block size, connectivity, edges, grain, design, nodes, landmarks, network, proportion, and building materials (Sitte, 1889) (Alexander, 1977).

The Contextual Aspects of any place have a strong influence on its identity. Surrounding context, harmony, building arrangements, building functions, connectivity, corners, conservation, height, neighbourhood impact, landscape, views, vistas, religious contexts, traditional design, outlook, boundaries, and building groups are some components of the contextual aspects affecting the level of walkability (Tibbalds, 1992) (Worskett, 1969) (Nairn, 1956).

The Visual Aspects link to walkability of a place are the art of giving coherence, organization, views to and from, visual amenities, transparency, mass, colour, styles, materials, scale, texture, detailed, balance, corners, focal points, forms, harmony, land marks, proportion, rhythm, roofs cape, skyline, solid v. bulk void, vertical v. horizontal, visibility and hide of the urban utilities, parking areas, night visions, and visual connectivity for the pedestrians (Cullen, 1961) (Gibberd, 1967) (Unwin, 1909).

Social Activities

“Towns and cities are more than just collections of buildings crisscrossed by roads and augmented by the occasional park. They are essentially for and about people. They accommodate their activities. The more well-used and varied they are, the more they are likely to have the quality of people friendliness” (Tibbalds, 1992).

Outdoor activities are influenced by a number of physical and perceptual factors. On this subject, Jan Gehl categorized these activities into three types. According to her the three categories of outdoor activities are:” Necessary”, “Optional”, and “Social”.

“Outdoor activities in public spaces can be divided into three categories, each of which places very different demand on physical environment: necessary activities, optional activities and social activities. When outdoor areas are of poor quality, only strictly necessary activities occur” (Gehl, 1987).

The Necessary Activities include those that are more or less mandatory, such as going to work or waiting for a bus. The frequency of these activities is influenced only slightly by the physical conditions. However, infrastructures, access, active frontages, crime, disable access, patterns of movement, public realm, public health, public space, social equality, social cohesion, minority needs, personalization, security, gender, age and race possibly increase or decrease the level of necessary activities (Jacobs, 1961) (Bently, 1985) (Whyte, 1980) (Newman, 1973).

The Optional Activities are willingly-done behaviours. This category includes such activities as taking a walk to breath in fresh air or standing around and enjoying life. These activities take place only when physical and perceptual situations are suitable. Physical conditions are highly important in forming this category of behaviour. The elements that greatly affect the optional activities are greater efficiency of space, freedom for walking, facilities for eat, seat, stand, pedestrians, crossing, feel safe at night, third place, play space, comfort, security, safety, vitality, number and variety of people, cleanliness, privacy, and personalization, to name a few (Buchanan, 1988) (Lang, 1994).

The Social Activities are those events that depend on the presence of others in the public spaces such as greetings and conversations or even passive contacts that is, simply seeing and overhearing other people. Social activities are ultimately formed when necessary and optional activities are given better conditions. They also depend on the presence of physical and perceptual aspects. Providing entertaining amenities and facilities, safety, mixed-used, green area, lighting, traffic calming, crossways, public services, and shadows can be mentioned under this heading (Buchanan, 1988) (Lang, 1994) (Cooper, 1988).

Perceptual Dimensions

The diverse and sometimes conflicting responses of people to certain environments point out the importance of consideration of perceptual aspects in planning and design of the built environment.

“*Environment* perception is the human awareness and understanding of environment in general sense”
(Kopec, 2012).

According to Kopec (2012) the process of understanding environment or our sense of place is formed in two main phases, namely “Perception” and “Cognition”.

The Perception Phase or the temporal dimension of a place mainly refers to the processing of understanding the sensual experience. Sensation refers to the simple biological experience elicited by the environment, includes sounds, smells, touches, views, the sights and aesthetic perceptions, image ability, cultural background of people, flexibility of the place, development and renewal, visual reminder of past use, form and expression of current change are the terms in relations with the temporal aspects (Bacon, 1967) (Kopec, 2012) (Hough, 1990) (Xu, 1995). “Perception, the first phase in overall thought process, involves in interpretation of sensations” (Kopec, 2012).

The Cognition Phase or mental dimension of a place is the understanding that derives out from process of perception phase, and then leads to cognitive thought, which is based on reminder (Banich, 2004).

Cognition, the second phase, is the way that information and knowledge comes to be known, through the actions of perception, reasoning or intuition. Cognition is the way in which we think, learn, from memories, and make decisions.

Lynch’s five elements (paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks), civic pride, distinctiveness, enclosure, sense of belonging, variety, human scale, identity and uniqueness, image, memorial perception, legibility, finding the way, are other terms related to mental dimension of a place (Kopec, 2012) (Appleyard, 1981) (Rapoport, 1982) (Shahcheraghi, 2015).

Above is a list of different elements identifying a place and its relationship with walkability. It is possible to create a hierarchy list as the physical aspects are the precondition for the social activities, and the two as tangible elements of a place enhance or ruin the perception of people about a place over time.

Is Dubai a Walkable City?

Even though the vision for the UAE is to reduce auto dependency, “Dubai ranks among the highest car-oriented cities with 550 vehicles per 1000 residence” (Happy City, 2017). As of today, this city is not walkable due to the following reasons: urban sprawl, lack of public transportation, the roads which are being designed in favour of cars, lack of shadows, harsh weather, lack of sidewalks in many places, and the socio-economic factors.

“One of the first impressions of the city is its fragmentary nature and the reliance on cars as the primary means of circulation. Dubai is composed of multiple, disconnected centres, which are separated by multi-line highways”
(Elsheshtawy, 2013).

“We are carrying out both strategic and detailed measures to reduce auto dependency and alleviate traffic volume. On the strategic level, Dubai 2020’s master plan promotes a transit-oriented development policy aimed at concentrating business and population around Dubai metro stations to increase ridership”
(Serkal, 2016).



Figure 3. Jumairah Beach Residence (JBR), Source: Authors.



Figure 4. Souq al Kabeer in Bastakiyah, Source: Authors.

Dubai is becoming more walkable, several well designed successful recent projects like “Jumairah Beach Residence (JBR)”, “The Sustainable City”, “The City Walk”, “The Box Park”, “La Mer”, provided more space for people to walk. Some physical conditions like hot and humid weather of Dubai is a challenge and hits the level of comfort during summer, it has ease temperature during at least more than half of the year. While the historical fabric of Dubai has been formed with respect to the human scale and the local culture and climate, the new developments have been designed in a rush to accommodate population explosions and car requirements. Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR) is the first place in the new development of Dubai which can be termed as walkable. Dubai’s actual downtown and historical fabrics (Bur Dubai and Deira) are easy to walk. In this research, the walkability of a historical part of Dubai, called Bastakia and the new development of Jumeirah Beach Residence will be reviewed and compared.

Methodology

According to Speck (2012) generally downtowns are more capable for walking compared to the new developments. Hypothesis of this study was the sense of historical fabric in Dubai has a significant impact on enhancing walkability. To compare the level of the walkability of paths, a number of studies have been done; however, most of them were merely qualitative studies. Also, how different aspects of the sense of place influence the walkability has been under quantified. In this research, a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches (mixed method) has been used to find out the role of each urban element in boosting the walkability in Dubai.

Initially, observations acknowledge that the number of walkers in historical fabrics of Dubai is not more than that of new developments. By reviewing several mainstream urban theories and frameworks including new urbanism, sustainable developments, smart growth, TOD, and so on the literature of sense of place and walkability has been documented and categorized (Marzbani, 2014). Then, an integrated questionnaire¹ was administered in order to measure the role of each aspect of the sense of place on walkability from the viewpoint of 23 architects and urban planners (all professionals who live or used to live in the UAE, and were very familiar with both paths). Analysing the questionnaire required statistical analysing; therefore, its outcomes have been analysed with “Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program².”

Although prior researches aimed to recognize the most important factors affecting the level of walkability of a place, it remains unclear why some places are more walkable than others. Indeed, a holistic measurable study is required to understand the roles of all tangible and intangible factors.

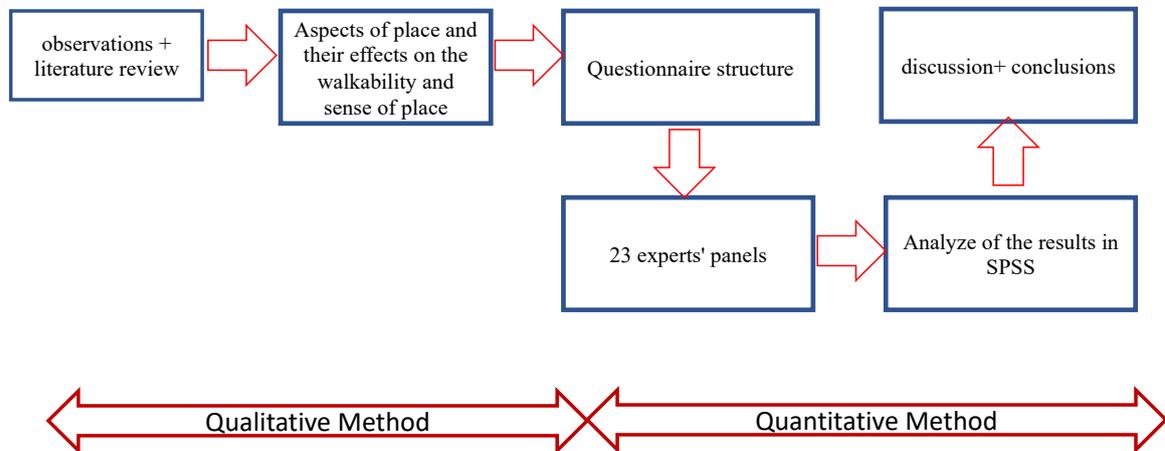


Diagram 1. Illustration of Methodology

¹ This research and the related questionnaire have been designed to focus on place, thus other factors like economic or political influences on walkability have not been highlighted.

² SPSS is a data management and analysis product.

Results and Findings

Tables 1 to 6 demonstrate the valuation of the physical, social, and perceptual aspects in the historical fabric of Bastakiyah and the new development of JBR based on outcomes derived from the questionnaire. Table 1 shows that the physical aspects of historical fabric are on an average level. About 9.5 % of interviewees evaluated this aspect at a low level, 61% at a normal level and the remaining 28.6% evaluated at a high level. In mean time, Table 2 indicates in the new development, 4.5% percent believed it to be in poor conditions, 52.2% in fair conditions, and 39.1% evaluated it as good. Indeed, the overall physical condition in the JBR is higher to that of the historical fabric.

Physical Bastakiyah	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Poor	2	8.7	9.5
Fair	13	56.6	61
Good	6	26.1	28.6
Total	21	100.0	99.1

Table 1. Valuation of Physical Aspects in Bastakiyah

Physical JBR	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Poor	1	4.3	4.5
Fair	12	52.2	52.3
Good	9	39.1	40.9
Total	22	100.0	97.7

Table 2. Valuation of Physical Aspects in JBR

Behavioral Bastakiyah	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Poor	6	26.1	26.1
Fair	11	47.8	47.8
Good	6	26.1	26.1
Total	23	100.0	100.0

Table 3. Valuation of Behavioral Aspects in Bastakiyah

Behavioral JBR	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Poor	1	4.3	4.3
Fair	8	34.8	34.8
Good	14	60.9	60.9
Total	23	100.0	100.0

Table 4. Valuation of Behavioral Aspects in JBR

Perceptual Bastakiyah	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
Poor	1	4.3	4.5
Fair	10	39.1	40.9
Good	11	47.8	50.0
Total	22	100.0	95.4

Table 5. Valuation of Perceptual Aspects in Bastakiyah

Perceptual JBR	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Poor	1	4.3	4.3
Fair	13	56.5	56.5
Good	9	39.1	39.1
Total	23	100.0	99.9

Table 6. Valuation of Perceptual Aspects in JBR

Data from the Table 3 depicts that 26.1 percent of the interviewees believed the role of the behavioural aspects in the studied historical fabric was in a low level, 47.8 percent see them fair and 26.1 percent evaluated them as good. Table 4 indicates behavioural aspect of new development; 4.3 percent in poor, 34.8 percent fair, and 60.9 percent good. Accordingly, Tables 3 and 4 illustrate that behavioural aspects have the better situation in JBR.

Table 5 represents the percentage of the perceptual indicator in the historical fabric. Based on that about 4.5 % of the interviewees have been on the belief that perceptual aspects are poor, 40.9% evaluated it as fair, and half of them saw it as good. Finally, the data in Table 6 shows the index of perceptual aspects in the path in the new development of JBR; 4.3% of the interviewees believed they are poor, 56.5 % rated them as fair and 39.1% marked them good. So the indicators of the perceptual aspects in the historical fabric of Bastakiyah are stronger than the new development path of JBR. Table 7 demonstrates the relationship between independent and dependent variables and displays the correlation rate. The Coefficient Pearson of physical aspects is 0.412, for the behavioural is 0.189 and for perceptual aspects is 0.312 out of full amount (i.e. one). The most powerful relation between any indicator and walkability occurs between physical aspects of the sense of place and walkability. Followed by perceptual aspects and finally the behavioural aspects have the weakest relation with walkability in the two paths in Dubai.

The Amount of Correlation Variables		Perceptual Aspects	Behavioural Aspects	Physical Aspects
Sense of Place and Walkability	The coefficient Pearson	0.312	0.189	0.412
	Significantly (double-sided)	0.002	0.003	0.000
	N	22	23	21

Table 7. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables

All aspects of sense of place have direct effect on the walkability; moreover each component which includes physical, behavioural and perceptual features indirectly influences one other element. The relationship has been illustrated in diagram 2. The physical aspects as most significant feature can improve both the behavioural and perceptual aspects by 11 and 19 percent respectively. The perceptual aspects can improve behavioural aspects with 10 percent, however it cannot change the physical conditions. The behavioural aspects do not influence neither physical nor perceptual aspects but influence by the other two characteristics.

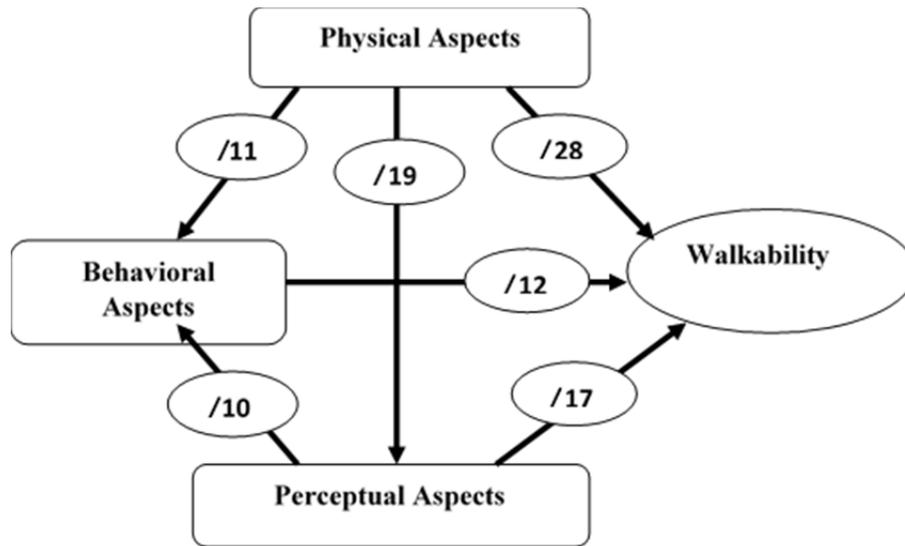


Diagram 2. Impact level of each aspect on walkability and on other aspects.

Discussion

A questionnaire has been conducted in 13 Pages for evaluating the “existing pedestrian sidewalks of Dubai”. Furthermore, it was designed to compare the level of walkability in “Historical Fabric of the old Souk” (which is located in Bur Dubai between historical area of Bastakiyah and Shandaghah) with the new developments of “Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR)” of Dubai in respect to the viewpoint of professions. In all questions the passage and sidewalks would be evaluated from 1 to 5 (1 Very Good, 2 Good, 3 Fair, 4 Poor, and 5 Very Poor).

According to the questionnaire, 97% of the interviewed experts have confirmed that there is a relationship between the sense of the place and walkability. In Dubai, the physical aspects with a total of 58% are the most significant factors that influence the level of walkability. Perceptual aspects are the second most important factors with the total of 27 percent, and finally the behavioural aspects with 12% indicate a weak relationship between the behavioural aspects and walkability.

Direct influences happened when the presence of some elements, like shadow or sidewalks, directly increase or decrease the number of walking individuals. Indirect impacts happened when changes in the conditions of some aspects affect in other aspects which in turn affect the level of walkability. For instance, sense of belonging, which is under perceptual category, leads to more social activities, which is under behavioural classification, which finally impact the level of walkability.

With respect to the direct influences of different aspects on walkability, physical aspects with 28% are the main factors, while the perceptual aspects have 17%, and the social activities have 12% which have the least influences on the level of walkability. Regarding the indirect impacts, again the physical aspects are the most important factors with the 19% influence on perceptual aspects and 11% on the social aspects, then perceptual dimensions with 10% influence on the perceptual aspects are in the second place. Based on the outcomes, social aspects do not have any impact on the other two aspects.

Diagram 3 illustrates the direct and indirect role of each element on walkability and sense of place.

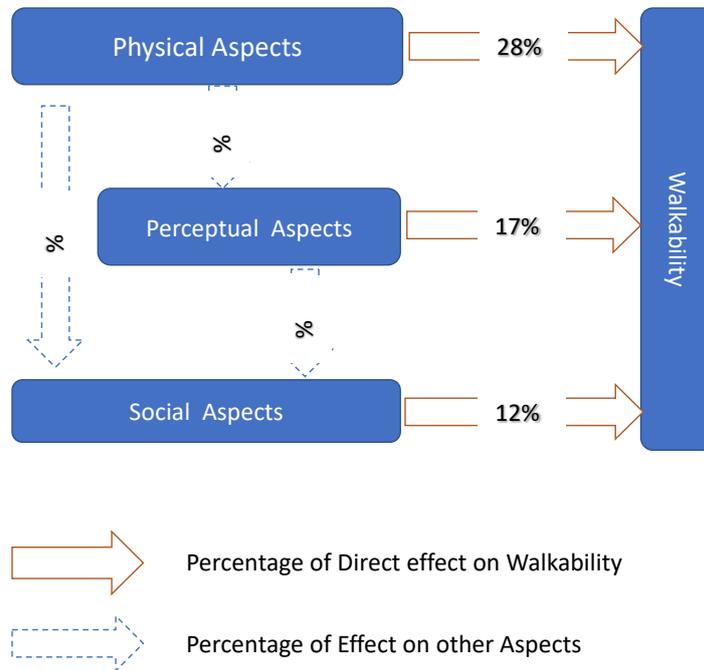


Diagram 3. Direct and Indirect influence on Walkability.

The results of this research demonstrate that the physical elements of planning in Dubai have been given more attention and have been successful in achieving concrete requirements of walkability, while the social activities and the perceptual aspects have not been noticed as much. This study argues that the physical aspects of place are crucial for a place to be walkable, yet, they are not enough. The social and perceptual aspects need to be considered more in planning walkable neighbourhoods for the reason that walkability is a dynamic quality of a place and highly affects the tangible and less tangible dimensions of a place.

This research is a place-based study; indeed, other affective factors impact on level of walkability such as economy and culture, have not been included in this research.

Conclusion

Recently, automobile dominance has been a pain to individuals and social life worldwide. Getting out of cars for a walk adds to sense of a place and quality of life. Therefore, recognition, quantification, and examination of different aspects of urban dimensions and their roles in improving urban walkability is an essential requirement for creating healthy, happy communities.

Adopting a mixed-method methodology in this research was an advantage. Qualitative method used to identify the most important factors of the place which influence human

behaviour in paths then based on outcome from a questionnaire, qualitative method eased measuring and analysing the outcomes of the survey. The framework used here and outcomes can assist architects, urban planners and decision makers to provide paths which can fulfil pedestrian needs.

Based on interviewees' evaluations, the number of pedestrians in Dubai's downtown is not more than number of walkers in the new developments. Professionals and experts who responded to this survey assert the lack of sufficient attention to social and perceptual aspects of the paths in Dubai. While the historical fabric of Bastakiah lost its original residents and its function changed, the highly physically designed JBR became an attractive place for both residents and tourists.

The finding emphasizes the importance of holistic approach in enhancing walking behaviour. In that, improving physical conditions of paths in historical areas, beside more attention to social and perceptual dimensions of place, will encourage more individuals to opt for more walk. Generally speaking, a balanced quality between physical, behavioural and perceptual conditions of any place will deliver more satisfaction and richness to the community and will invite more people to take part in the public spaces.

The method, framework and results of this research are applicable for other paths and can be beneficial for policymakers and urban planners. It might be further tested and generalized to other streets by counting and computing urban quality factors affecting walking behaviour. This research studied the role of different dimensions of sense of place from the viewpoint of professionals using Delphi method³. Further studies are still required to examine other areas and passages. Furthermore, the questionnaire can be used amongst common residents rather than professionals. The method posed in this research can be completed by taking in more local and socio-economic factors into account for different cities and places. Moreover, future researchers may establish more diverse panels for Delphi method in accordance with the objectives of their research.

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Translation of Civic Pedagogical Tactics to Critically Produce Public Spaces in Amman

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Abstract

This paper asks how can we re-think and critically produce alternative 'public' spaces through translating forms of civic pedagogical tactics in Amman? Our neoliberal contemporary cities and political agendas, with its Arabic versions, have produced socially, spatially polarised and de-politicised spaces. In fact, what we inhabit today are spaces that are pseudo public. Those spaces prompt critiquing the role of the architects, practitioners and architecture educators to intervene, mediate and response collectively. Trying to form a resistance to this problem, the responding approach is informed by reviewing and critiquing how architectural pedagogies are performed in Jordan, focusing on evaluating their civic engagement and the political and neoliberal influence. The paper then moves to focus on key relevant pedagogical models with envisioning the action plan that are adopted and tailored to the specific cultural, political and social context of Amman.

This paper framework will start reflections from some critical pedagogical theories to evaluate and critique the current architectural pedagogical approaches in Amman-Jordan contexts and analysing the various actants such as political policies, civic interventions and processes that affect architecture education. Furthermore, it generates some important lessons and reflections from practices, such as the interventions used by Romanian architects in the 1980s, Pseudo Public Space Studio-UK, live projects-UK, triggering and resisting the challenges on civic practices. The study will conclude by proposing methodological framework for translating civic pedagogical tactics that prompt to provoke and draw the public attention towards the right to the city and its space, while resisting the challenges that are facing the context of Amman-Jordan. The process of translation is adopted and tailored to Amman-Jordan context, rather than imported and colonised. These tactics opened up possibilities and generated a new and alternative form of publicness, as well as a resilient and resistant community.

Keywords: public space, pseudo-public, alternative publicness, performativity, right to the city, civic pedagogy, tactics

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Introduction

'Public' spaces are suffering from neoliberal policies and practices which control and regulate the meaning of public space by whom can use it and how. Metropolitan cities in the Arabic region, including Amman, are taking Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar as role model. Yaghi et al (2019) argued convincingly how neoliberal practices and political policies and agendas in the Arabic region are echoed in shifting the meaning of public space from open to all to pseudo public.

Therefore, there is an urgent necessity, especially in the Arabic region, for exploring pedagogical forms of potential resistance that produces alternatives spaces that deems public. "We cannot make our claim as seekers after justice if we advocate knowledge only of and about ourselves. Our model for academic freedom should therefore be the migrant or the traveller: for if, in the real world outside the academy, we must be ourselves and only ourselves, inside the academy we should be able to discover and travel among other selves, other identities, other varieties of the human adventure." (Said, 1994). This paper focuses on drawing such potential through identifying key resistance 'tactics'. The study borrows the term tactics from De Certeau (1988), which can be defined as the tools for the powerless (ordinary people) in challenging situations. This study would argue that tactics can be in different forms including performative and civic pedagogic practice. Tactics here focuses on what Lefebvrian 'lived space'; where the dialectic relationship between the spatial and the social produces this re-appropriation within the lived space. De Certeau (1988) describes such processes as "form of resistance to capitalist consumption", whereas envisioning the desired alternatives can occur through the questioning and imagining processes.

The notion of resistance that are inherited within our everyday life experienced mirrors Soja's socio-spatial dialectic, which considers spaces as active rather than statics and constantly constructing social and spatial relations. Such arguments open up possibilities for alternative practices to catalyse social and political change (Massey, 2007; Rendell 2006). These alternative practices manifest shifting the focus from physical objects to focus on the everyday experiences as forms of resistance to the dominant powers (de Cauter et al, 2011; Massy, 2005). This has been manifested in different forms of resistance from Artists and architects during revelations, social and political protests and movements, such as the Arab spring and Occupy.

Based on practice-led research at Sheffield School of Architecture, which included performative intervening and mediating processes, it found out that higher educational institutions have the civic potential and desire to become the bridge and platform for alternative forms of resistance and spaces that deems public. Ideally, pedagogy can be the tool for social change. However, it is important to consider that such processes should always be an on-going process that should continuously evolve according to inhabitants' needs and other challenges.

Drawing from De Certeau's (1988) possibilities and Lefebvre's (1991) notion of the social production of space, this paper puts forward visions towards civic pedagogic and performative spatial practice which is political. It performs and provokes the civic rights to question, speak out, re-claim and perhaps co-produce alternative spaces in their city. The desire of putting forward such practice, however, needs tactics, actors, agencies and activators.

This paper puts forward a vision in the way which architectural academics can become the activators bridging and mediating between the society and the other potential civic

actors. However, in order not to be too ambitious when speaking of the context of Jordan in particular or the Arab context, this vision requires negotiations between the 'rigid' already existed institutions in different aspects. Therefore, the action plan or the envisioning processes responses to the current status quo that we are facing: the existing gap between architectural pedagogies and the civic society, and the current rigid policies that govern and police those educational and civic institutions in Amman. "One of the more serious failings of some so-called public art has been... to produce public spaces and objects that provide solutions – answers rather than questions" (Rendell, 2006: 1). Therefore, it is important here to clarify that catalysing change within the highly political and neoliberal practices dominations context is about empowering to critique and questions rather than finding actual solutions. In pedagogical terms too, this means instead of the 'banking concept', telling others what to do, it is about enabling and empowering communities to question and re-think their spaces, needs, democratic and participation processes.

This study proposes potential civic pedagogical tactics that are strongly related to Arabic academics. The proposed tactics draws civic possibilities: provoking questioning of spaces, expand to work with the wider civic society and different social bodies and advocate and raise awareness about members of the public right to the city. In this way, This study could argue that critical pedagogy have the potential to become tactical to catalyse change, going beyond the banking concept to enabling and empowering models that acknowledges the role of what Darder et al. (2003) define it as 'a nexus of power relations' in translating and constructing knowledge.

How architectural pedagogy is performed in Jordan?

This section illustrates the ways in which architectural pedagogy is performed in Jordan and how civic they are. It also focuses on the specific opportunities and limitations that are presented in Jordan in particular and in the Arabic region context in general.

Generally, with no exception to the Arab world, educational systems are the essential responsibility of the state. BBC News has reported in 2008 that "The Arab education system is falling and needs urgent reforming", based on the World Bank report which manifested the lack of reforming within the educational sector which led to unprepared graduates for professions. Although Jordan and Kuwait were not identified as other countries in the region are actually suffering, there are regional challenges that Jordanian educational system is suffering from.

Jordan, the refugee heaven, has been hosting multiple waves of refugees for the past few decades. According to the Red Cross, 100,000 Palestinian refugees, as result from the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948, have moved to settle in Jordan (Ababsa, 2010; Zureik, 1996). The second waves of Palestinian refugees to Jordan figure was around 300,000, which was as a result of the Second Arab-Israeli war in 1967 (Daher, 2011). The third wave of Palestinian refugees was in 1991 from the gulf which was around 350,000. Iraqi refugees also started to arrive since the 1991 till 2007, which estimated around 300,000 (ibid). Recently, 1.265 million Syrian refugees have been displaced to Jordan since 2011 (Jordan Times, 2016).

This in turn increases the demand on multiple resources including education. While the Jordanian governments accompanied with various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are busy safeguarding access for all (nationals and refugees) to education. The

quality of this education lacks its critical and civic content “the quality of education remains uneven and not competitive by international standards, particularly in poorer urban and rural areas” (USAID.gov, 2016). The USAID (2016) report further labelled the Jordanian educational system as ‘rigidly national’ and highlighted the lack of well-trained teachers in ‘public’ schools in Jordan. Public schools here refer to schools under the public realm; which is funded and managed by the Jordanian governments. It is a well-known phenomenon that private schools in the Arabic region including Jordan offers a better-quality education, in comparison to the state public schools (Jordan Times, 2014), leading to better opportunities in the future. Quarter of the Jordanians can afford and attends private schools (ibid). In other words, social inequalities are reproduced in our neoliberal region.

Architectural pedagogy in Jordan has an interesting history and geo-political Arabic regional relations. Spatial practitioners in Jordan used to travel to Egypt during the Ottoman Empire (1516- 1918). The first emerged schools of Architecture since 1820 ‘Mohandeskhana’ in Cairo affiliated with Public Works followed the system of Paris Polytechnic (Abdel-Gawad, 1950). Following a westernised system illustrates the strong relations and ties between pedagogy and political agendas and events between Egypt and France (Sakr, 1993). This in turn has been manifested in the architectural educations and profession. Further Architectural French system schools emerged; such as Cairo University in 1935 followed by Alexandria University 1941 (Salama and Amir, 2005). In the Levant region, only until the mid-1940s and 1960s Schools of Architecture started to emerge.

In terms of tracing the history of the Arabic architectural education, Salama and Amir (2005) highlighted how Architectural schools in the Arab world have been enforced, by official policy makers, to meet the international westernised criteria, norms and standards. They also emphasised how the economic boom in the gulf during the 1970s transformed architecture education practices within the whole Arabic region, shifting them towards American models (ibid). Replicating the westernised and the American models and specific ways, without critically engaging with our own issues with the specificity of our social, cultural and political context is a problem that still endures today. Furthermore, they outlined clearly that Arabic architectural education is based around three paradigmatic themes or trends during the past few decades: environmental-behaviour studies; a focus on sustainability and environmental consciousness; and digital and virtual practices.

This supports some of the findings of this research when explored and evaluated architectural curricula at nine public and private Architecture Schools during 2018 in Jordan. Although the nine curricula had a compulsory module called ‘National Education’, none of them had modules or programmes where students seem to work with the wider civic society participatory mechanisms. Five different academics from both public and private schools of architecture in Amman-Jordan were interviewed. The core discussions of the interviews focused on tracing any civic interventions towards spatial justice, collaborations with the wider society and exploring possibilities and opportunities for civic pedagogies.

Unfortunately, the majority, four out of five, focused on physical spatial practices rather than participatory mechanisms or civic responsibilities. An academic at a public university specified:

“we try to tackle neo-liberalism in Amman city by assigning students to an urban project located near a gated community or business centre, such as the Abdali project, where the students can develop their skills to observe and analyse the impact on morphological layers of that area, focusing on the historical character of Amman city and whether the new developments are integrated within the existing fabric of the city. Here, students can develop some principles and recommendations to maintain the historical fabric of the city such as local brick and stone material instead of glass and steel structures” (Formal Interview 1, 17/06/2017).

However, these prompt questioning the role of future spatial practitioners’ educators and architects: whether to produce forms and objects to be photographed or to work in human relations within the space and our everyday experiences. One academic, coming from an international university, who focused on the human dimensions: “we try to tackle social and spatial inequality through assigning students to design civic centres in the area between the East (poor) and the West (rich) of Amman. Students can therefore become aware of these inequalities in our society. They have to engage and speak with people in the area prior to their design proposal” (Formal Interview 4, 21/06/2017).

Moreover, none of the nine Architecture curriculums nor the five academics indicated any relations to political relations modules and how does it impact directly the spatial production in our cities and our everyday experiences. Additionally, Hoteit (2016) states that these phenomena are regional in the Arab World, where architectural curricula are based on traditional approaches. However, separating architectural pedagogy from everyday life experiences could be an outcome of what Friere (1996) called it as ‘the banking model of education’, which represents students as passive and being told, from the teacher, the institutions or the state. Such knowledge transfer in Architectural terms focuses in good images and forms rather than critical approaches and civic relations. This study could response to argue that the more critical architectural pedagogies and practices are the less spatial.

It is fundamental to emphasise on my position as a researcher at the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA). As the subsequent section discusses three cases wherein civic pedagogical tactics were utilised. As this study intentions to explore, how such practices can become a vehicle which can be translated to the specific context of Amman. Translation processes here does not mean replicating or importing Western approaches to the context of Amman. Some notions and practices cannot be transferred directly, for instance, Western notions about democracy. As an alternative, such processes of translations require adopting and nesting to the specific social, political and cultural fabric. Although Salama and Amir (2005) highlighted the lack of regional-centric references and materials which they named this phenomena as unavoidable, it is important to adopt and nest this international knowledge in a way that becomes decolonising, avoiding the superior image of Westernised materials and knowledge, instead it should be considered as mutual and two-way of learning.

Civic pedagogic tactics

“Most Arab countries have suffered from the control of tyrannical totalitarian regimes, a far cry from democracy and freedom of expression. They also suffered from the dependency on Western countries and their guardianship. Most of the current political

systems have flaws such as corruption and bureaucracy, which were either destroyed by the recent revolutions, or are on the verge of collapse. The entire Arab world is witnessing very complex developments... Architecture in the Arab society has reached a critical point which requires reconsideration of the way that it is approached” (Hoteit, 2016: 3).

Throughout critiquing the way which architecture pedagogy are performed in the Arabic region, and in particular in Jordan, revealed the urgency and need for more critical forms that are capable to bridge between academia and the society. The current existing architectural curricula in Jordan, after looking at nine different curricula (from both private and public universities, lacks participatory mechanisms and tends to be focused on westernised theories and practice. Furthermore, those curricula are not adjusted nor tailored to the political, social and economic specificity of the particular context of Amman and the Arab context.

This lead to address the main questions of this study: how can civic pedagogic tactics be introduced to the context of Amman? This study translates civic actions that have been drawn from intervening and mediating practices conducted by the researcher, as well as some practices that are capable of drawing some important and relevant lessons. As a result, a series of propositions and visions can be extracted for the future, advocating for the role of pedagogy in sustaining public space dynamics.

‘A school within the school’ - how to negotiate with (to survive in?) ‘rigid’ institutions

Civic involvement can be a challenge in some contexts, whether on institutional levels or individuals. Thus, tactics needs to have poetic and indirect characteristics to resist those challenges and limitations. Such tactics can be traced back within performative spatial practices in other geographical region and time frame; however, it can be extremely relevant to what we are facing today in the Arab world. For instance, the civic and performative tactics used by the young Romanian architects in the 1980s, Form-Trans-Inform, resisting the Ceausescu regime. The control of the regime went beyond the social structure of Romania towards political and educational institutions (Stratford et al., 2008). This in turn, has impacted Romanians’ everyday experiences. The group, however, as a response, deployed performative and civic pedagogic tactics using poetic and indirect actions. One of the members explained:

“We were not engaged in a direct political critique – as protest or political demonstrations [...] but indirect, embedded in internal codes and hidden meanings shared by those that were able to read them. It was a resistance through alternative discourse, through alternative ways of thinking and doing, alternative life style”
(Stratford et al., 2008: 115).

However, it is important to highlight the ways in which they tried to overcome and survive the challenges through fragmented and smaller ‘pockets of resistance’ (ibid). Together students and architects, at the Bucharest School of Architecture, the “Institutul de Arhitectura Ion Mincu (IAIM)”, have deployed a number of tactics collectively which has a deep solidarity between individuals within the group. Although the group had never been granted permissions officially by the school, academics, architects and students have managed to create a ‘school within the school’ in various

forms such collective events, exhibitions, resistance art activities such as film screening (ibid).

It is important to look in-depth they ways of which they have managed to practice and deploy those activities. For instance, the series of exhibitions started with only twenty participants, from different backgrounds, 'the Space-Object' exhibition (ibid). Their next exhibition 'Space-Mirror' has been arranged four years after the first one, which had seventy participants from various backgrounds (ibid). Although the group has been terminated by the officials, it was visible and recognised by different individuals and groups.

The ways which the groups dealt with challenging context poetically makes the model very useful for rigid architectural educational institutions in the Jordanian context. The poetic civic tactics are able to offer powerful social tools in such contexts, enabling the various collective activities such as exhibitions, events, collective actions and film screenings that bridge people from different disciplines such as academics, artists, students and other individuals.

Therefore, such model has offered alternative knowledge in shaping an otherwise, alternative curriculum which responds the rigid institutions and its formal pedagogy challenges. These tactics can potentially be tailored and translated to other contexts. An example for such translations is the Atelier d'architecture autogérée (aaa), which was launched by Petrescu and Petcou in Paris since 2006, whom were members of Form-Trans-Inform. The aaa has deployed urban tactics challenging citizens' access and neglected spaces. As Petrescu (2013) states: "Tactics have been ways for us to transgress, even if only temporarily and locally, laws and regulations, roles, professional boundaries and so on". They have used the co-produced ECObox as a mobile tool which are able to be transferred over time to other locations. The mobility of the tool allowed resistance to their current limitations and challenges.

Initiating negotiations with the current rigid institutions in the context of Amman requires translations for such tactics. After conducting informal interviews and workshops with academics and different social bodies representatives. The envisioning negotiations processes can potentially be initiated as the following: Initially, finding alliances which share the same civic responsibilities and values both within and outside the institutions, in order to create collective body that are able to face the challenges. Within the higher educational institutions, this can begin through arranging a research group to encourage and provoke other members to evolve. Afterwards, the research group can arrange various pockets of civic interventions. Although recognitions and visibility of such practice is very important for expansions on the city scale, this requires time and formal and informal agencies to be involved. Deploying research groups which can arrange civic interventions tactics can potentially initiate negotiations processes to the current rigid curriculum.

Teaching Studios Otherwise: a week off the rigid curriculum

Many scholars consider design studios as the spine of architectural education (Dutton, 1987, Salma, 1995), for its capability of constructing the future of architects and urban designer in the city. However, the typical traditional methodology of design studios could be considered limited to sketching, presenting and critiquing phases (Sultan, 2018). Therefore, other scholars have been proposing alternatives such as the 'case

method', which is borrowed from schools of law. In this approach, academics with students are able to generate alternative reflections using open-ended narratives (ibid). Another alternative is Wright (2011) suggestion to provoke students to acquire knowledge and skills through identifying problems and trying to find solutions throughout the design processes. The notion of live projects went beyond and extended these alternatives, through connecting students with their real world (real clients and real projects). Therefore, and in intellectual terms, this is the real 'learning by doing', enabling students to gain various skills and experiences outside the studio and the university borders.

A noticeable practical example of such radical design studio approaches can be witnessed at the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA). This section illustrates one example of such studios and reflects on the modules and the lessons that can be translated to the context of Amman. With Helen Stratford, I co-led a design Studio for MA in Architectural Design Masters students entitled 'Pseudo-Public Space: Public Space Does Not Exist!' in 2017-2018. We have encouraged and provoked students to test/practice various performative methodologies as tactics to challenge and re-think public spaces in different cities.

Significantly, the studio explored how cities are performed through the everyday actions. Throughout the studio, critical seminars, practices and reflections were employed to co-produce 'constructed situations' which has revealed an un-spoken and un-written norms, policies and knowledge about the existing spatial practices. Out of this knowledge, students have developed wider strategy and propositions that deemed public. While the first semester focused on critical discussions that resulted in performative interventions, constructed situations, for the UK context only, students were encouraged to translate the methodology in their home city. This has provided opportunities for exploring and testing the ways in which spaces are performed in very different political, cultural and social contexts, as well as adopting methodologies to suit and response to the specific context.

Overall, these processes have enabled students to test/practice/envision performative methodologies in various contexts, for instance, one student explored the ways in which Tiananmen Square is performed. His constructed situation was 'sunflower seeds' including hidden questions, as an appropriate tactics to the highly political control square. Although such performative interventions were envisioning resistance acts, students were able to imagine and tailor tactics poetically and gain insights for the ability of alternative practices to connect with the community and co-produce alternative spaces.

This proves the key role and potentials of pedagogies in sustaining public spaces dynamic. This example has illustrated how using performative (direct actions) methodology can initially be used in teaching design studios otherwise, alternative ways that could be translated to different contexts including Amman. Using performative methodology can also catalyse change and bridge with the civic society. However, such translations need constant adoptions when traveling from context to another including the developments of performative interventions. Furthermore, such tactics in design studios can initiated within the context of Amman as "a week off" the studio. This can be the initial phase for going outside the university boundaries and connect with other civic bodies, providing opportunities for building alliances and mediate between the realm of academia, civic institutions and the wider society. The ultimate desire for such

propositions is to enable students to engage with the wider society and their everyday life experiences, in order to catalyse change.

Amman's Live project

Live engaged projects as studios have become more popular in the UK and other western countries (Butterworth., 2013; Harriss and Widder, 2014). Although live projects have various forms, organisations and length, they all share their aim in connecting students with the wider community. In other words, they provoke the school of architecture to open up for civic interventions. Stone and Woof (2015) described it as transformative learning tools which connect theories in the realm of academia with 'real' practice. Therefore, dealing and collaborating with different actors (wider society, real clients, real projects), can potentially be used as a tool for sustaining public space dynamics, constructing relations between the academia and the wider society.

Significantly, Rual Studio in the United State, which was launched by Mockbee and Ruth in 1992 was one of the earliest examples of live projects. The emphasis was on shifting the learning processes beyond the top-down structures of traditional learning, and from architect-client approaches:

“Live Projects develop the collaborative and participatory skills that are essential to future practice. Live Projects establish an awareness of the social responsibility of the architect and can empower students to produce work of exceptional quality that makes a difference to the communities they work with. Beyond the direct impact of the project on the communities involved, Live Projects also make a wider impact by enriching the student learning experience, developing design, management and enterprise skills and significantly increasing employability”
(Butterworth et al., 2013).

SSoA radical approaches and Butterworth's (2013) emphasised on the skills that goes beyond the realm of academia to focus on participatory and collaborative practices. Such skills and processes occur through steering up dialogue with other actors, which potentially allows empowering both students to engage, represents and response collaboratively with members of the public for the rethinking and the critical spatial production.

SSoA defines live project as:

“a relationship with an external client, a strong participatory nature and an emphasis on the processes of the project as well as its outcomes. It is a 'live' way of learning, practicing, and thinking about architecture... Working in response to the complexity of real-life situations enables students to experience the potential of research by design and to reflect simultaneously upon the processes, roles and effects of architecture... Live Projects give students the opportunity to explore an architecture that is both socially and environmentally sustainable... Through Live Projects, staff and students continually construct their own learning through action research and experience”
(Butterworth et al., 2013).

These projects have the ability to integrate research, community and academia together. Therefore they have got transformative, civic and critical pedagogy nature. Introducing and envisioning live projects in Amman's schools of Architecture can potentially build a community that have civic responsibilities, resist capital and build resilience in its processes of evolving and expanding. An initial effort has been developed by the researcher in discussing such project with different actors within the context of Amman, including four local academics, from public and private universities, and social bodies in Amman. However, introducing such project requires time, agencies, activators and most importantly negotiations with the university.

On the other hand, envisioning live project in Amman can be defined as 'Performative design Live' project as a series of performative, transformative and relational processes that connect students with the 'real' world as education in direct relation with (different actors of) the City of Amman. Through these processes, students can gain the opportunity to critically engage with everyday lived experiences and various actors of the City of Amman. During this module, students explore architecture otherwise, playing with the dialectic relations between theory and practice, art and architecture, the spatial and social. This project uses both 'performative' and 'live', civic pedagogic, tools as a way of preparing students to become future professionals who engage with different actors and creative methods to practice architecture otherwise. This in turn allows them to produce alternative and critical knowledges and spaces. This can be introduced as a core design studio module for fourth year Architecture students at Schools of Architecture in Amman.

For instance, students can collaborate with different actors within the city, such as the theatre, artists, art institutions and the wider civic society, using various participatory and performative mechanisms to critically produce alternative spaces of dialogue, and develop propositions for the wider society. In a way it provides possible solutions for the wider society that the state might not be able to engage with.

Discussion and Conclusion

Exploring the ways which architectural pedagogy is performed in Jordan proved its urgent needs to reform and negotiate their rigid structure. However, there is a great potential to open up possibilities for educational institutions to have civic responsibilities and become the medium between the wider society and other institutional bodies, which potentially goes beyond producing objects to constructing relations.

The significant findings to emerge are the importance to navigate the future and initiate mediating processes and tactics which includes recruiting civic alliances. The ultimate desire for such processes is to build a community with various actors, including academics, civic institutions, NGOs and members of the publics, in Amman with civic pedagogical responsibilities. The hope for constructing such community is to critically co-produce alternative spaces that deem public, and build resistance and resilience to the emerging challenges.

The other practical efforts in envisioning civic pedagogical tactics, is drawn from radical approaches that has been developed at the Sheffield School of Architecture. In particular teaching studios otherwise as 'Pseudo Public Space, Public Space Does Not Exist!', Live collaborative projects and workshops. Furthermore, learning how the young Romanian architects have used poetic tactics. The three cases have helped in navigating

the ways in which these methodologically can be tailored to Amman context to critique the spaces and produces alternative publicness.

The key themes that have emerged is that pedagogy within higher educational institutions have the potential to construct relations, situations and therefore can be the instrument to sustain the dynamic of public. Having argued that, such practice can be aligned with Rendell's (2006) critical practices which are associated with tactical interventional and transformative approaches to critique the social conditions and its boundaries. These proposed tactics should cross the rigid boundaries of physical architecture and includes collaborating with other institutional bodies and the wider society and take various forms such as live art, performative and site specific interventions and public participatory mechanisms.

Overall the study response to the ways in which architectural education is performed and proposes possibilities and opportunities for a set of poetic civic pedagogical tactics. These tactics are tailored to suit the specific context of Jordan to sustain public spaces dynamics. This research offers alternative visions that go beyond the objects towards inhabitants' right to the city and catalyse change. The current status quo of how architecture pedagogy is performed in Amman revealed the urgency to call for poetic forms of resistance to become performative and civic pedagogic tactics within the official rigid institutions. Therefore, 'a school within the school' by the young Romanian architects in the 1980s has been employed to draw flexible and poetic ways to negotiate with those rigid institutions. They have offered approaches to build a resistance community bridging student in the realm of academia with architects, artists and urban activists. Moreover, teaching design studios otherwise and live project offer pedagogical paradigm to construct relations and situations, provokes the critical "co"-production of alternative knowledge and spaces that have civic responsibilities.

Therefore, architects and architectural educators within the Arabic region in particular should have a wider mission and re-thinking their roles towards the right to the city and its spaces and the civic production and awareness for those future practitioners. Such proposes encourages and advocates for engaging with various actors and agencies including the wider society with socio-political and economic relations with spaces.

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reGREENeration of Historic Cairo. Hara al-Nabawiya and Bayt Madkour in al-Darb Al-Ahmar

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Abstract

In historical contexts like Cairo with rapid informal growth, the role of open spaces as Haras or courtyards are no longer seen as components of a very particular ecological system or centres of social encounters. The demand for housing and the relative cost-benefit has unleashed vast and illegal densification in height within neglected and dilapidated urban areas, where any available space represents an opportunity for investments and to accommodate the immediate needs.

The research explores the on-going disfiguration in the al-Darb al-Ahmar of Historic Cairo, and investigates the results along with the current international calls for the respect of the integrity of the environmental and socio-economic characteristics of tangible and intangible heritage in the World Heritage Site. The objective is to profit from the remaining courtyards of historic buildings and Haras spaces in Historic Cairo to propose urban strategies that would restore such historic attributes, reformulate an ecologically passive urban fabric and generate means for community development. This proactive approach is hopefully a necessary step for stopping the demolition, deterioration, and obsolescence of districts of high historical values.

Keywords: historic Cairo, green corridors, revitalization, public spaces, courtyards

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Introduction

Green open-spaces within dense cities play a vital role in sustainable urban development by their environmental, recreational, and socio-economic benefits. This fact is evident, in ancient districts, like those of Historic Cairo (the chosen case of study), where the initial urban fabric respected the local environment through a thoughtful pattern of open spaces. Indoor and outdoor spaces were carefully designed and positioned to fulfil that role. For instance, while narrow and non-aligned alleys remain in shade with lower temperatures during the day as an effective climate control tool, the orientation of courtyards that, with the association of wind-catchers, upper arcades sitting area (*maq'ad*) and private annexed gardens, allow the north breeze to flow and to create an internal natural cooling system. North-south public open axes are continuous within the city fabric to profit the most from that north breeze, while most of the east-west alleys are short, interrupted and usually with dead-ends limiting the possibility to hot and non-preferable winds that usually carry the desert sand. (El-Habashi & all, 2018) In that respect, the buildings' courtyards are environmental regulators at the micro levels, and are related to a city-scale ecological system set by its through fares, streets and alleys. The association between social activities, religious beliefs and the economic status defines the spatial organization of the open spaces in a neighbourhood. The same narrow streets that create an enjoyable environment together with attached houses and dead-end passages (*zuqaq*, or alley), facilitate social integrity, security, sense of belonging and collective defence system. Recognizing socio-economic differences from an interrupted street façade where each building appeared as an integral part, is almost impossible. In contrast, the size and quality of internal open spaces usually reflect the wealth and the status of the buildings' founders. In cities with Muslim communities, the dense and the organic nature of the urban fabric does not obstruct human flow and mobility, but instead it allows intimate interaction between relatives, friends, as well as making markets, and facilities in close proximities.

In historic Cairo, and due to the rapid unplanned growth, the historical fragile urban and social structures are being disfigured and are at risk of disappearing. The residential neighbourhoods are intruded with commercial activities and invaded with high-rise buildings, congested motorized vehicles, noise, pollution, and predominant lower-class population. The balance that characterized the historical social pattern is no longer respected. Each residential unit is now a self-sufficient bubble to accommodate basic needs in the minimum possible cost and quality. Natural ventilation or illumination are considered luxury and unnecessary. Although the urban morphology remains almost intact with the exception of few pockets, the exquisite medieval facades, wood-lattice windows (*masrabiyya*) are alienated within a jungle of unfinished red-brick and reinforced concrete towers.

In accordance with the World Heritage Convention a sustainable development perspective should integrate environmental, social and economic dimensions holistically, with none to predominate over the other. (UNESCO, 2015) It is thus necessary in the context of Historic Cairo to improve the living conditions while boosting local economies, preserving values and significant features, transforming fixed structures into resilient and flexible spaces which can be able to evolve and adapt to rapid urbanization and contemporary needs. These challenges require both bottom-up and top-down strategies to make remedies feasible and integral.

This research analyses the urban morphology chronologically to detect and indicate changes in the network of open spaces and to explore the possibilities to connect between the remaining ones, especially courtyards and Haras. It selects the area of Bayt Madkour and Hara Fatema al-Nabawiya in al-Darb al-Ahmar as a case study to formulate urban guidelines that would revitalize and activate the ecological system while improving and celebrating historical, social and environmental values. For that, this study poses two primary questions:

- How to re-signify courtyards as part of an ecological system within historical contexts with rapid informal growth?
- What is the role that private and public open spaces can play for the development of communities living in historical areas?

The hypothesis is that if courtyards are physically related to the public space, functionally articulated for the community needs and developed dependent on the character of the site, they can be catalysts for the possible resignification. If these spaces become a fundamental part of the life of locals, economic and social value can regenerate. Subsequently, the stopping of the densification and demolition of historic courtyard building typology trends would be a community mandate. The hypothesis also considers the proposed approach as means for setting organic green corridors within the urban fabric that can then restore the interrupted ecological structure.

The hypothesis profits from the Haras as being traditional and specific urban spaces that interrelate between public, semi-public and private domains. It is an urban and social system whereby the public open spaces become extensions of the interior private courtyards, and the thresholds become the ground for social and economic interactions.

New Approaches in Managing Historic Urban Landscape (HUL)

“...the city is not a static monument or group of buildings, but subject to dynamic forces in the economic, social and cultural spheres that shaped it and keep shaping it...”

Irina Bokova

Director-General of UNESCO at the World Urban Forum
(Naples, 2012)

In 2011 the proposal for a recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) was accepted by UNESCO as an innovative approach for preservation and management of historic cities. The new approach is based on both cultural and natural values, thus encountering beside historic buildings, contemporary architecture, open spaces and above all local communities. The HUL seeks to increase the sustainability of planning and design interventions, (UNESCO, 2013) and extends the concern directed exclusively to heritage sites to encounter tools and resources that tackle the profile of the city, its urbanized environment, topography, visual axes, traditional architectural typologies, open spaces, infrastructures, archaeology and contemporary architecture, in addition to cultural values, socio-economic processes and intangible aspects. (UNESCO, 2015) (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Built-Environment of Historic Cairo with the absence of green. Source: Photo taken by the authors.

The interest on sustainable development in historic districts has been extended during the XVII ICOMOS general assembly in 2011, which resulted in ‘*The Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns and Urban Areas*’. In parallel, the ONU-HABITAT created the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable development goals (SDGs) as a roadmap to make cities more inclusive, resilient and fight against poverty and inequality, and considered culture and heritage as the spine of the sustainable urban development. Those recent international concerns are of a particular interest to this research as they present, especially in the case of Valletta charter, principles and tools such as the implementation of networks of green corridors, and the respect of the balance between the natural values while transforming historic areas. Those principles and tools have been already conceptualized for the context of Historic Cairo. (El-Habashi & all, 2018).

Green Corridors for Historic Cairo

Green corridors are proposed to mitigate negative effects of the built environment while connecting fragmented green spaces with ecological systems to enhance biodiversity, human experience, and climate conditions within the urban landscapes. Due to the urban sprawl phenomenon, green areas are under threatened and the expansion of city structures left behind small green patches amongst buildings. (ADAPT, 2015). Green corridors proved to have positive effects on social, ecological and financial aspects as they guarantee decent environmental qualities, recreational activities, spaces for community gathering and interaction. They also have fundamental role in improving urban ventilation, reducing heat island effect, mitigating air pollution, and lessening the vulnerability to floods and animal species dispersal. They also contribute to restoring the original passivity of urban landscapes, which in the long term represent a substantial economical saving. (Rasidi, 2014)

Several success projects of green corridors can be cited here. The case of Bratislava in rehabilitating several parks and introducing roof gardens with capabilities to capture water from excess of irrigating systems is to be recognized. Another case is the

rehabilitation of the Highline of New York transforming an abandoned historic railway track into a public green space that includes several recreational activities enhancing the relations with the surrounded buildings and communities. ‘*Corredores verdes, conectando naturaleza y comunidades*’ in Medellin, Colombia, is a third example where integrating large green public spaces have promoted social reconciliation. (ADAPT, 2015).

In the case of Historic Cairo, open public spaces are scarce while the recent introduction of new gardens, such as al-Azhar Park and others is not part of a holistic environmental vision. In addition, managing the historic city through the HUL approach is still a long way to go, since the scale is now metropolitan where tangible and intangible heritage are not of a primary concern for local authorities.

“Hara” and “Courtyard” in Historic Cairo

Living in Cairo in the XVII-XVIII centuries was a completely different experience since houses and quarters were connected one to other, without affecting the hierarchy and level of privacy of each. The basic daily needs lacking in houses such as obtaining drinking water from public fountains, bathing in public baths, and cooking in their furnaces, mandated a constant interrelation between the households and the neighbourhood public facilities. Even if large houses of elite families of beys¹, emirs, major traders, and religious leaders of the time contain some of those facilities, which were of reduced sizes that mandated the users to still rely on public facilities.

Conversely, the houses of craftsmen, merchants and finally the unskilled workers were of reduced sizes that would not allow spaces for common facilities to be encountered. (Hanna, 1991)

Courtyard houses were those of the elite families. They were usually positioned within the centres of urban neighbourhoods blocks. The humble exteriors of such houses were of similar architectural characters of their surrounding fabric of lesser units, thus often not indicative of what lies behind them of open spaces and luxury. They are set within continuous streetscapes of attached buildings without major distinction. Since those houses are the centre of the activities of most of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, the central open spaces were availed to them at different occasions, frequencies and various levels of accessibility. The courtyard with its fountain in the middle, a main sitting area the *taktabush* and a *Maqa’ad* at the upper floor overlooking it was the centre of the house as well as of the entire neighbourhood. What appears to be a private central open space was in fact used at various capacities and different times as a space where all the neighbourhood interacts (Figure 2).

Availing such central space did not affect the privacy of the elite families. These large houses had special spatial organization for guests, and family men and women, the *Salamlik* and *Haramlik*. The function of these open spaces goes beyond the described social spheres. With their northern, or rather north eastern, orientation, they became an element of the climate control that allows north winds flood in and refresh the ambiance. (El-Habashi, 2019) The interaction within those large courtyards was certainly appreciated by the common public, whose houses entail only light wells (*manwar*) a

¹ The governor of a district or province in the Ottoman Empire.

vertical shaft-like space that provide slim light and limited ventilation to the interior of their apartments (Zaky, 2009).



Figure 2. Courtyard life in Cairo. Source: Watercolor by Walter Tyndale (1855-1943).

The permitted accessibilities to such luxurious spaces were complemented with the constant availability of the closed streets (*zuqaq*) and the semi-private spaces located outside the house, *haras*. Those semi-private spaces served for a specific neighbourhood whose inhabitants were usually of the same origin, the same religion and sometimes the same profession. Haras were often named after that common feature, and administered by the residents with little municipal infliction. In most cases, a secured gate towards the street would be the only entrance to hara. (Figure 3) The haras, had developed the collective life of the quarter and allowed the inhabitants to have close relationships, with a hierarchical organization of leaders to solve collective issues. (Hanna, 1991). They, therefore, played important complementary roles to the courtyard of the elite houses. They were characterized by being relatively small size open spaces consisting of dead-end streets with no fixed commercial activities. Their length varies from 40 to 80 meters long with 3 to 4 meters wide and usually served over a hundred families (Zaky, 2009).

This research explores the interconnected roles of the haras and the courtyards of the elite houses in the existing urban fabric of Historic Cairo after it has been utterly disfigured. It employs the concepts and principles of HUL as well as means of sustainable development for historic districts developed by ICOMOS in response to the SDGs. It

focuses on a selected case study to exemplify the needs to consider and respect the particularities, either historic or contemporary, in shaping approaches to remedy disfigurements. The analyses are divided in three categories: the urban grain, the current social morphology of the *Haras*, and the network of open spaces (haras/courtyards).



Figure 3. Hara gate in historic Cairo. Source: Hanna Nelly. *Habiter au Caire. Aux XVII et XVIII siècles*. p. 163.

These were based on a comparison between the current conditions and those of the 1930's as captured in the then cadastral maps of the city. Such analyses led to the formulation of physical, social, economic and political rehabilitation guidelines inspired and based on theoretical principles.²

The case study area was chosen for being a wide and diverse urban fabric that entails tangible and intangible values while meeting the following criteria:

- Preserves the historic urban morphology and the traditional spatial configuration of open spaces as (Hara, Darb, and Zuqaq).
- Encloses a large variety of valuable buildings including those of courtyards typology.
- Entails authentic intangible heritage (crafts, religious and social rituals, etc...)
- Represents the World Heritage outstanding value (based on the 214 UNESCO report), but subjected to threats of height densification and the rise of incompatible buildings.

² Specially the Valletta Charter adopted by ICOMOS in 2011

The selected case study shown above is crossed transversely by Bab-Elwazir street, where several outstanding monuments are standing, Al Maridani Mosque, Bayt Razzaz and many Mausoleums and Rab's (traditional duplex buildings). (Figure 4) This main axis is interlinked with secondary paths which consequently lead to dead-end alleys. The area is part of an urban fabric that exemplifies the hierarchy of open public spaces each with its own level of privacy. This rich context is unfortunately one of the most threatened areas in Historic Cairo due to the continuous demolition of historic structures and the construction of high rise isolated buildings instead rupturing the unity of the urban fabric.

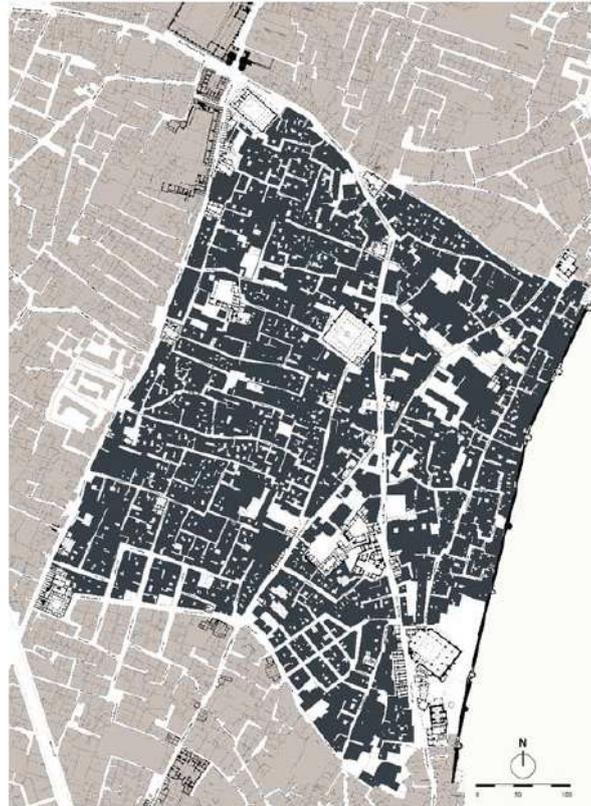


Figure 4. Study case area with building declared as monuments (by the authors in 2019 based on Warner, 2005).

The haras today

The comparison analyses between the 1930's map of the case study area and the conditions today, (figure 5) show that there were 26 Haras or quarters that remained almost unchanged. However, some of the main streets or semi-private spaces have been extended to connect between them disrupting the exclusiveness of the set fabric for each. The shape of the original streets is mainly organic and zigzagged, with one or maximum two entrances to the hara, a pattern that was modified with the connective branches that appear in the existing situation. Moreover, it is noticeable that in some specific pockets, encircled in the map below, new types of fabric replaced the historic ones. The most obvious recent juxtaposition is the one of Hara al-Yakaniya where a new grid of linear streets stands out from the rest.

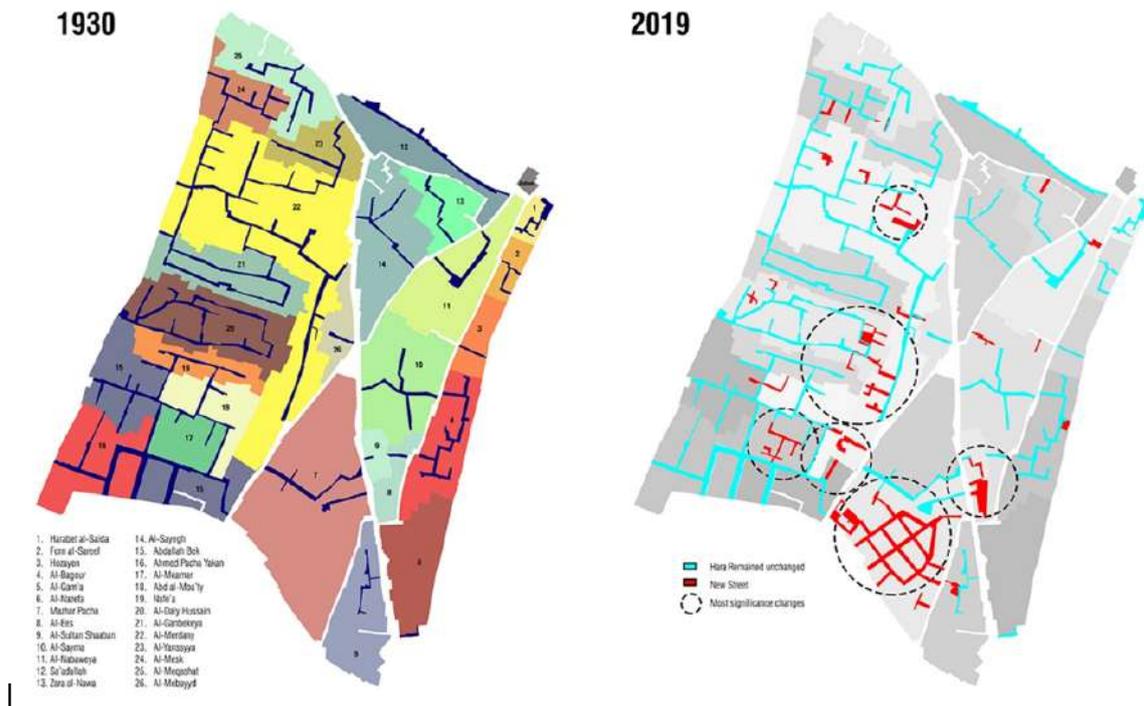


Figure 5. Social and spatial configuration of Haras (1930 and 2019), (the authors based on cadastral map).

The open space of the hara is defined by the width of the street, the length and the characteristics of the buildings that enclosed them. Three different types were identified. (Figure 6) The hara that remains original has the disposition of historic buildings creating a hierarchy for pedestrians to get to the entrance of the space, together with a gate or passage under a sabat (a traditional built fabric that crosses the public space on high levels). The opposite occurs in the new hara, where the space is straight and wide enough to accommodate cars and surrounded by 4 to 5 story buildings. An example is "Harat Mazhar" shown in middle photograph of figure 6. The last type is the one that preserved its original spatial urban configuration but whose built fabric was replaced with incompatible buildings (Figure 6 to the right). While the width of the street was preserved, the heights of the newly constructed buildings utterly make the environment unbalanced. It is noticeable that among the three types the last one provides the least amount of sunlight reaching the public spaces.

The second comparison is between the urban grains. Figure 7 illustrates the drastic changes in the built masses and voids. It indicates the locations of the most significant variations within the study area. In 1930's, the urban fabric had a balance relation between open spaces and built-up areas characterized by organic and irregular blocks with several inner courtyards, oriented to the northeast side. Conversely, by the year of 2019 the urban grain is utterly modified. Urban blocks were transformed onto dense units with the streets as the only open spaces. Areas with relatively large open spaces are mostly vacant or residual land that differs completely from the original urban composition.

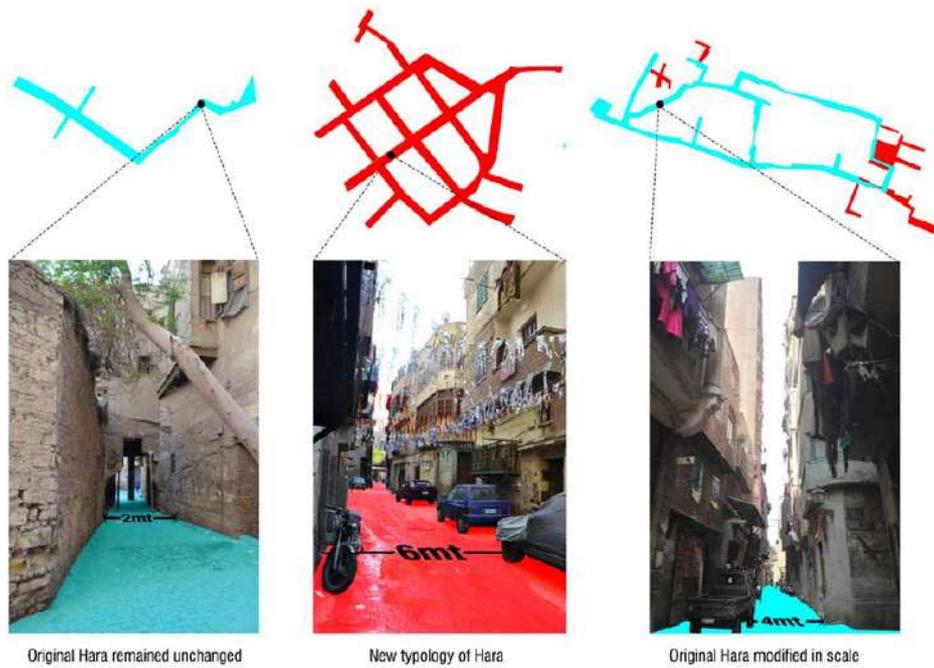


Figure 6: Haras typologies (the authors).



Figure 7. Urban grain (1930 and 2019) (the authors based on cadastral maps and field survey).

The three areas of dramatic changes are: Bayt Yakan area, Qaytbay palace surroundings and Bayt Madkour and Hara el Nabawiya. The first and the most remarkable variation of the urban fabric can be described as the completely or partially fill-up of the traditional courtyards, the demolition of important buildings, among which a Mosque in the North

West corner, and its replacement by different typologies of housing blocks. The second location is characterized by a longitudinal block where the inner open spaces have been filled in 2019 leaving only little open spaces for the access to the roofs. The third is the most complex one, because even when the relation between open and built is somewhat similar, the distribution of open spaces seems unbalanced and disorganized. The third also entails the variations explained in the first and second conditions. The three new typologies are not aligned to the original, and they left several residual spaces. (Figure 8).

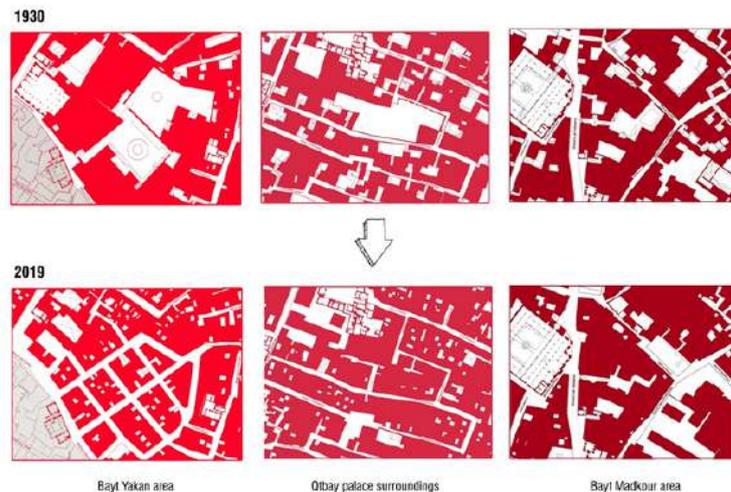


Figure 8. Significant morphological changes between 1930 and 2019 (the authors).

Open spaces network

As for the network of the open spaces, figure 9 shows the size of open areas that has been reduced considerably. It seems evident that open spaces and greeneries available within the area were found in the 1930's map within the buildings' courtyards. In 1930, these spaces constituted a pattern of a particular disposition repeated throughout the area. However, with the disappearance, modification or reduction of courtyard houses, this pattern disrupted with isolated open spaces spread amongst the site. The most significant difference between these two periods is the new green Al Azhar Park introduced in 2005. The Park, although atypical of the traditional form and configuration of open spaces, represents an ecological opportunity that can counterbalance the disappearance of the inner greeneries.

The courtyards that still exist can be categorized in three types as in figure 10. The first two are modified by either being partially built-up in the case of Bayt Madkour, or dramatically reduced in size as in Bayt Yakan. The one that preserves the original size is exemplified by Bayt al-Razzaz. In all cases the orientation of the spaces is north east and the shape is rectangular or trapezoidal. Figure 10 shows the state of condition of the buildings that enclosed these spaces. Those of Bayt al-Razzaz and Bayt Yakan are restored, and Bayt Madkour's is abandoned. Some traditional elements are preserved such as the taktabush, the mashrabiyyas, the fountains, vegetation and the balconies overlooking north (maq'ad).

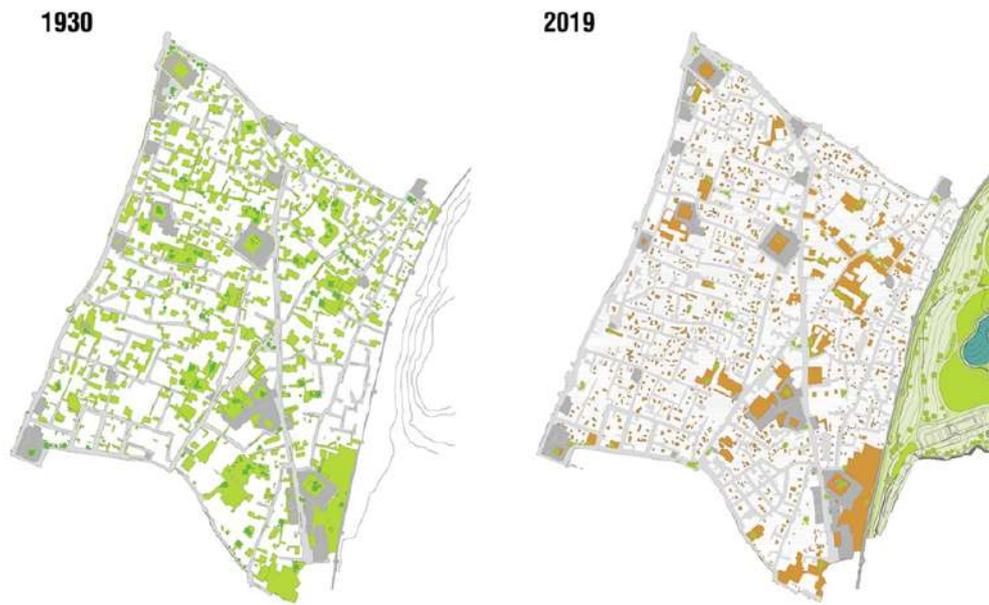


Figure 9. Open spaces network (1930 and 2019) (the authors based on cadastral maps and survey).

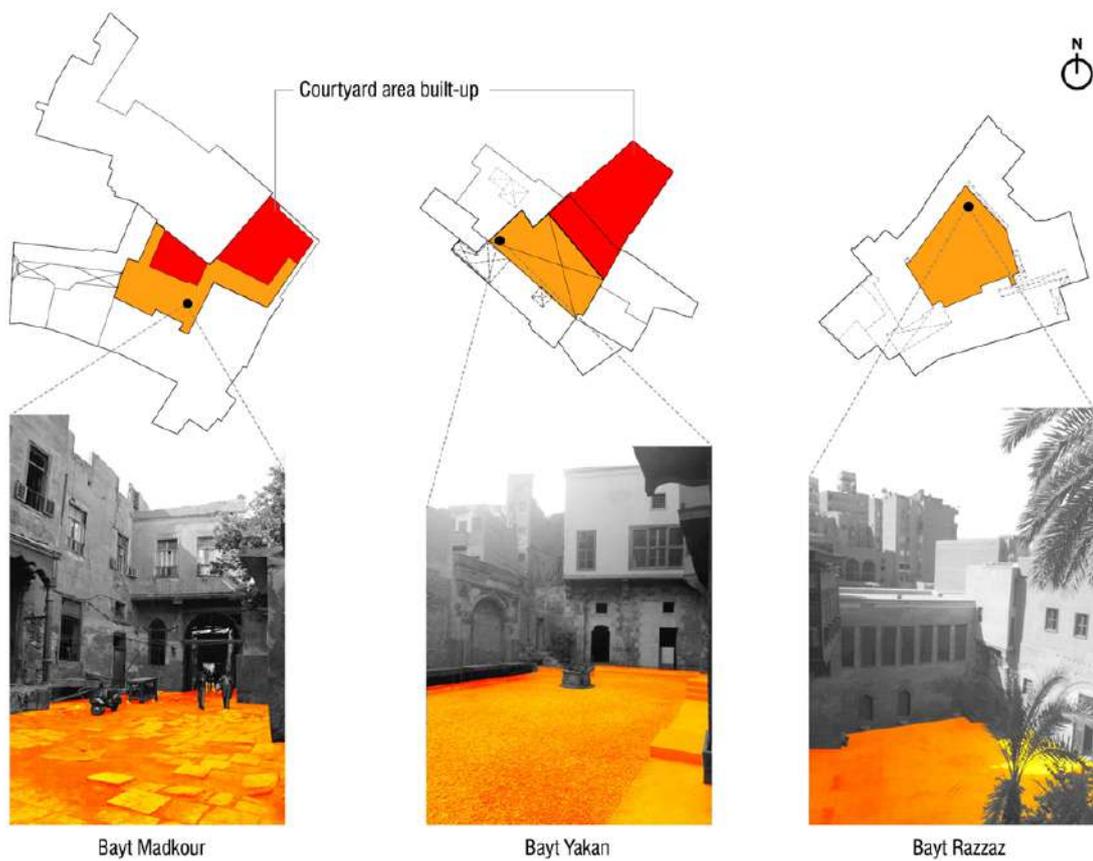


Figure 10. Courtyards existing types. (the authors).

Informal Growths

This section of the research is to illustrate the three identified typologies of the urban fabric in the case study area. The generated model is based on a comparing the historic setting deduced from historic maps, namely the one drawn by the French at the beginning of the 19th century, with the existing surveyed situation, and with a supposition of the future scenario if current rate of disfigurations is maintained (Figure 11).

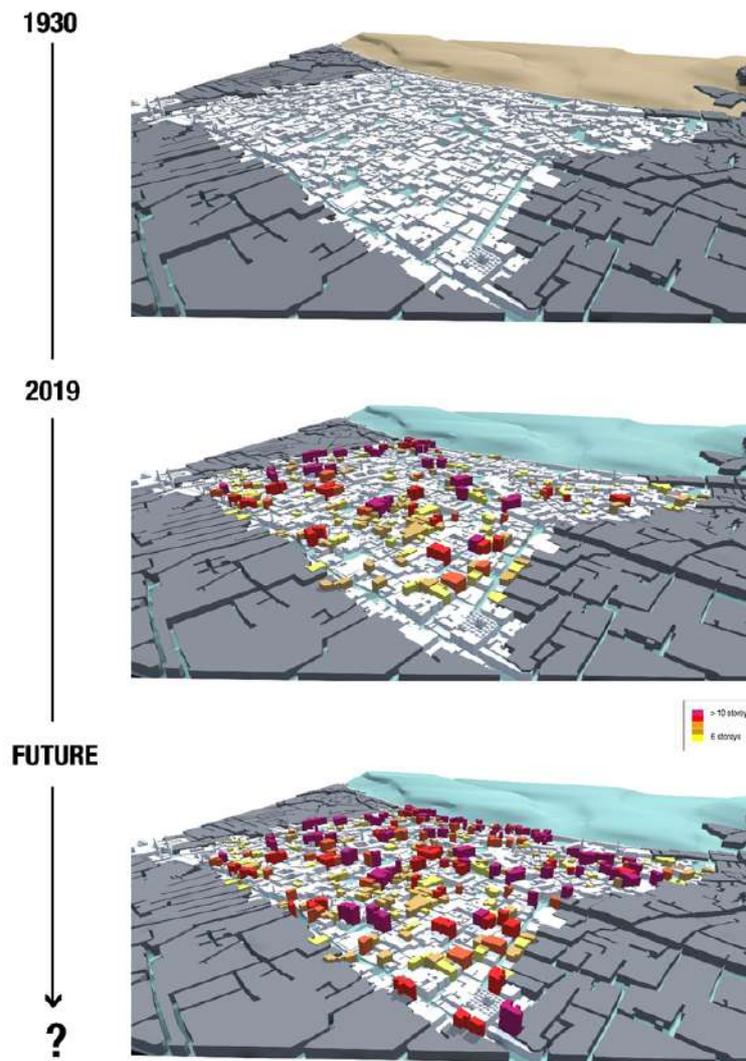


Figure 11. Heights of the study case: 1930, 2019, and future scenario. (the authors)

The urban landscape of the beginning of 20th century shows unity in terms of heights which does not exceed the 5 story buildings, except for the minarets and the Mosques' domes. Some eye-bird photos and cadastral plans show a visible deterioration of the area during this period, where many buildings are shown as ruins. The situation is modified in today's figure, where the densification in height by incompatible buildings is evident with volumes that exceed 10 floors. The insertion of a green element and the

abandoned buildings has stimulated the illegal development of the site. The analysis demonstrates that the disfiguration of the traditional skyline is clear since important landmarks are being hidden and losing its prominence. The provisioned future panorama of this area is alarming if the current trend continues without control and restriction from the Government. Most of the historic or contextual buildings of maximum 5 floors are going to be replaced by towers. The question is whether contemporary short-sighted needs would be loosely left to override thousands of years of history of humankind in this territory.

The crawling of high-rise concrete apartment blocks is an illegal real state trading in small patches of abandoned buildings or lands to offer affordable living units in an area well connected to transportation, business centres, job opportunities and markets of the city. The typology of this informal growth is characterized by one façade building with narrow and dark rooms that shape a unit of 60 to 100 square meters (Gamal, 2016).

Figure 12 shows the impact and magnitude of what this tendency is creating on the site. Ottoman and Mamluk structures are not any more outstanding landmarks in the urban skyline, but rather dwarfed elements surrounded by monsters. The new residential typology is considered a highest threat to the outstanding values of Historic Cairo because it disrupts the balance between human scale and the built environment, it creates unpleasant and dark open public spaces and it fills up open spaces. The result is a grey atmosphere not designed for the human experience, and certainly not sustainable. The dilapidation, abandonment, lack of maintenance of historic buildings and the informal high-rise growths are the main threat of the area and of Historic Cairo.



Figure 12. Informal growth pressure on the HUL. (the authors)

reGREENeration

The analyses show that the main strength of the site is the uniqueness in its fabric of organic configuration of streets. The presence of historic courtyard structures located in strategic locations is a great opportunity for linking them through corridors. Besides, and according to the field survey, current open spaces in the case study area entail a set of different values. The urban value is distinctive in urban morphology of irregular street disposition, open spaces with different levels of intimacy, richness and heterogeneity in its size, angles and perspectives; qualities that surely characterize a pedestrian oriented urban fabric. In addition, the original system of courtyards defines a balanced relation between the built-up environments and voids.

The architectural value is represented in a number of unique historic buildings (courtyard houses, mosques, Sabil Kutabs, mausoleums, etc), each with a different configuration of the interior spaces and their relation to the exterior to respect privacy and secure circulation for female. The scales of these buildings in relation to their functions are setting a harmonious relationship between the human and the landscape. Building elements such as wind-catchers, lanterns, fountains and others create favourable bioclimatic conditions in the open spaces. That last aspect introduces the environmental value formulated in the passive design of the sit. Courtyards and non-aligned streets have proved to have several bioclimatic benefits as they allow cross ventilation, shadow and natural illumination of open spaces. (El-Habashi, 2019) The northeast orientation of inner open spaces and the width of the main North-south axis create tunnels of wind flow that avoid heat islands. Vegetation in courtyards serves as habitat for local wildlife.

The historical value is represented in the urban and spatial distribution, with unique patterns and elements that represent different historical periods of urbanism of the city which remained over centuries and still legible. Differences in ground floor level indicating historical layers. The historical values are not only represented physically but also intangibly with the continuity of traditional arts, crafts, rituals and trades. Many of those were modified to meet contemporary mandates, but still rooted with accumulative local knowledge. They create the identity of the place.

Economic value is represented in local traditional crafts although without the well-known craft guilds. Those crafts links the urban dynamics with the rest of the city. Commercial activities are currently the backbone of the local economy, along with a limited presence of a touristic flow in the area that can be the seed of boosting a new economy if well managed and targeting cultural activities.

Social value is represented in the presence of haras with their social structures that define spatially and administrative open spaces are still preserved. Semi-private spaces allow community encountering, intimacy and sense of belonging. Culture and beliefs determine the use, the character and behaviours of the outside and indoor spaces. The morphology of narrow streets creates closer relationships between the members of the community.

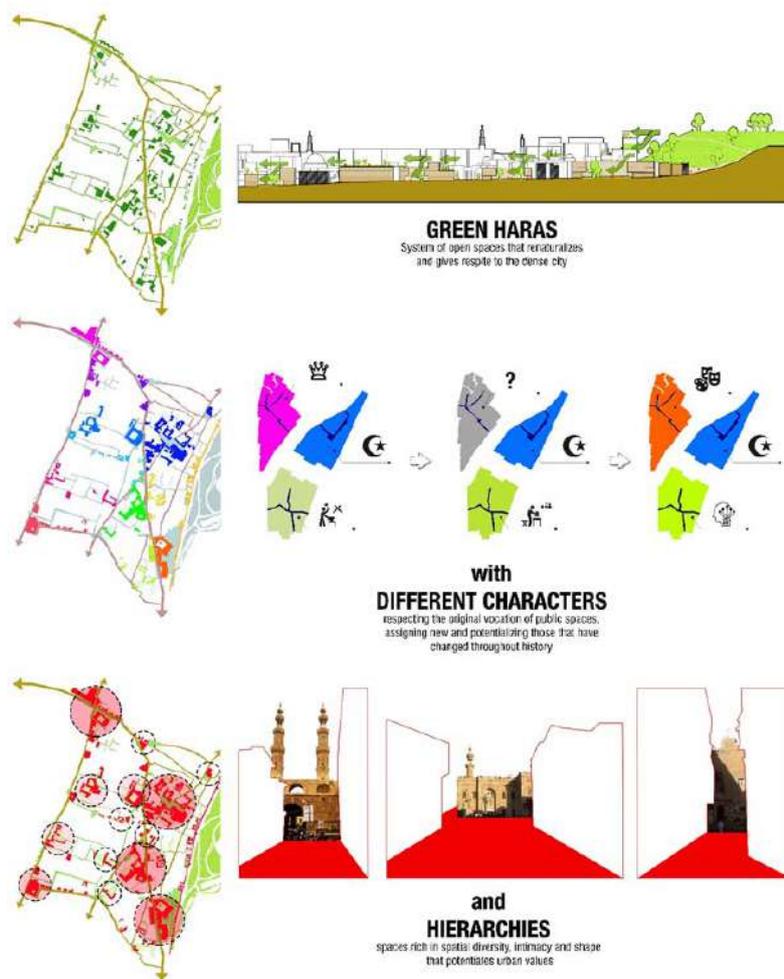


Figure 13. strategy diagrams of the reGREENeration of historic Cairo. (the authors)

The greeneration for historic Cairo is a concept we promote here that consists of a system of open and mostly green spaces with different characters and hierarchies. To re-naturalize and give respite to the dense urban fabric an urban acupuncture can be applied that by the 'green' activate the most valuable but neglected areas. These new corridors should respect the original vocation of the existing open spaces, assigning a new character to those that are not legible and recall those that have been modified throughout history. The configuration of new open spaces is grounded on spatial diversity, heterogeneity, and multiple scales. (Figure 13)

Hence, in accordance with the Valletta charter Principles (VCP) by ICOMOS specific actions are proposed to serve as bases for an urban project which seeks to revitalize the selected area in a holistic approach that includes tangible and intangible values (Figure 14).

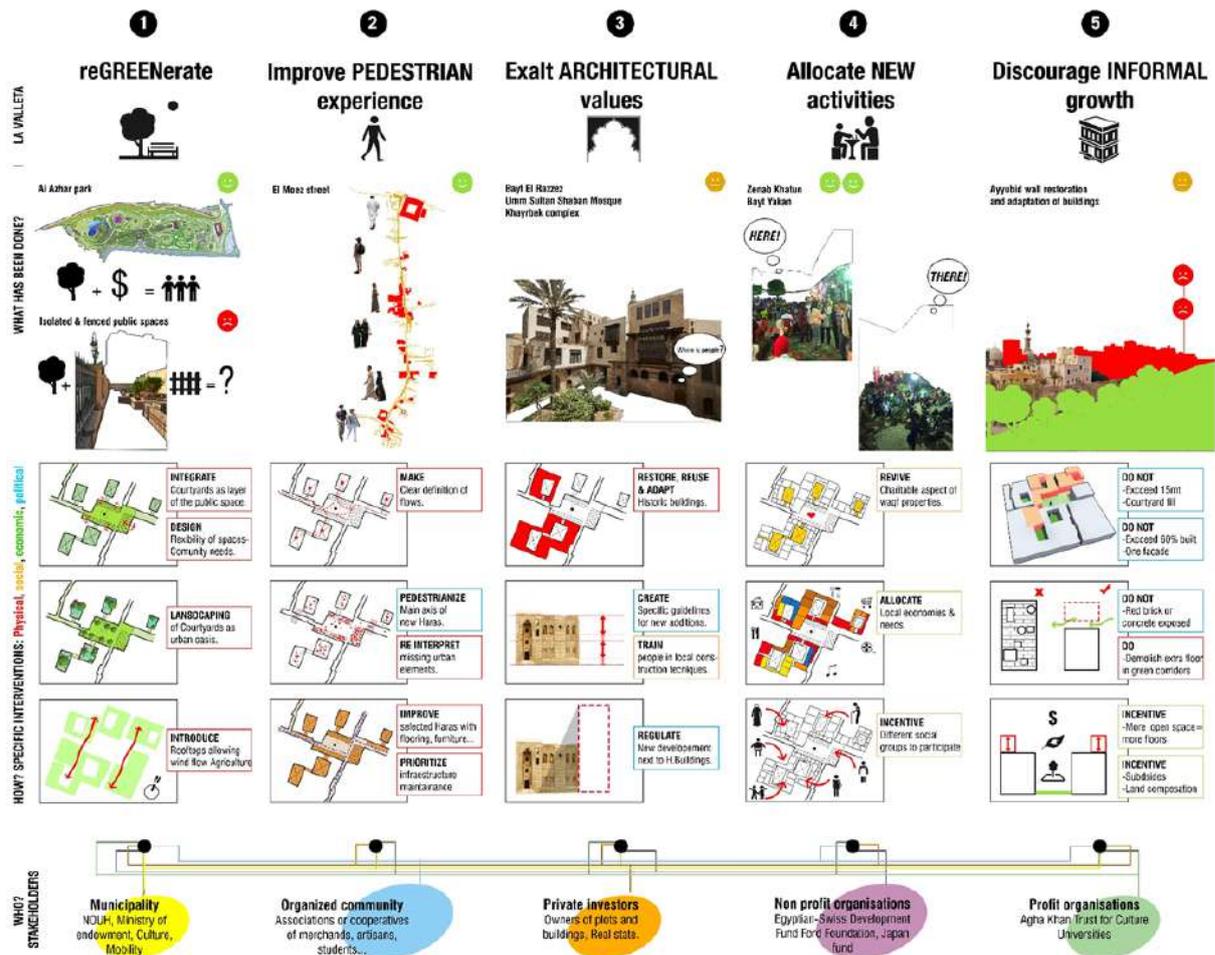


Figure 14. Matrix of guidelines for the area in accordance with the Valletta charter of ICOMOS (The authors).

A. To reGREENerate (VCP - Public space)

Activate, qualify and enlarge the existing open spaces (Public spaces, courtyards & Rooftops) interconnecting them into a system which restores the original environmental balance. The map 1 is an illustration of how this network of open spaces can work (in ground floor level) on the selected area thanks to the application of the following interventions:

- Integrate courtyards as one layer of the public space system. These spaces can provide green areas to the city which is currently unused while generating an income to the owners and has clear limits for a management plan.
- The design of new and rehabilitation of courtyards should be based on the reinterpretation of original landscaping elements, such as fountains, gardens and architectural elements as Maq'aads to create transitions between the private property and the public access. These elements should work as an oasis within the urban fabric.
- The design of the public space must be flexible to accommodate community needs and traditions, determined by functions of the ground floor that enclosed it.

– Introduce complementary and privately own rooftops which are part of the northeast green corridors to allow the wind flow. Urban agriculture, social gathering and renewable energy methods should be promoted and supported. The regeneration seeks to extend projects already developed in the area such as Al-Azhar park into the dense fabric, respecting the authenticity of the morphology. It is important to mention that due to the entry fees and access control, the maintenance and sustainability of this oasis within the city is possible, strategy that can be replicate into the courtyards.

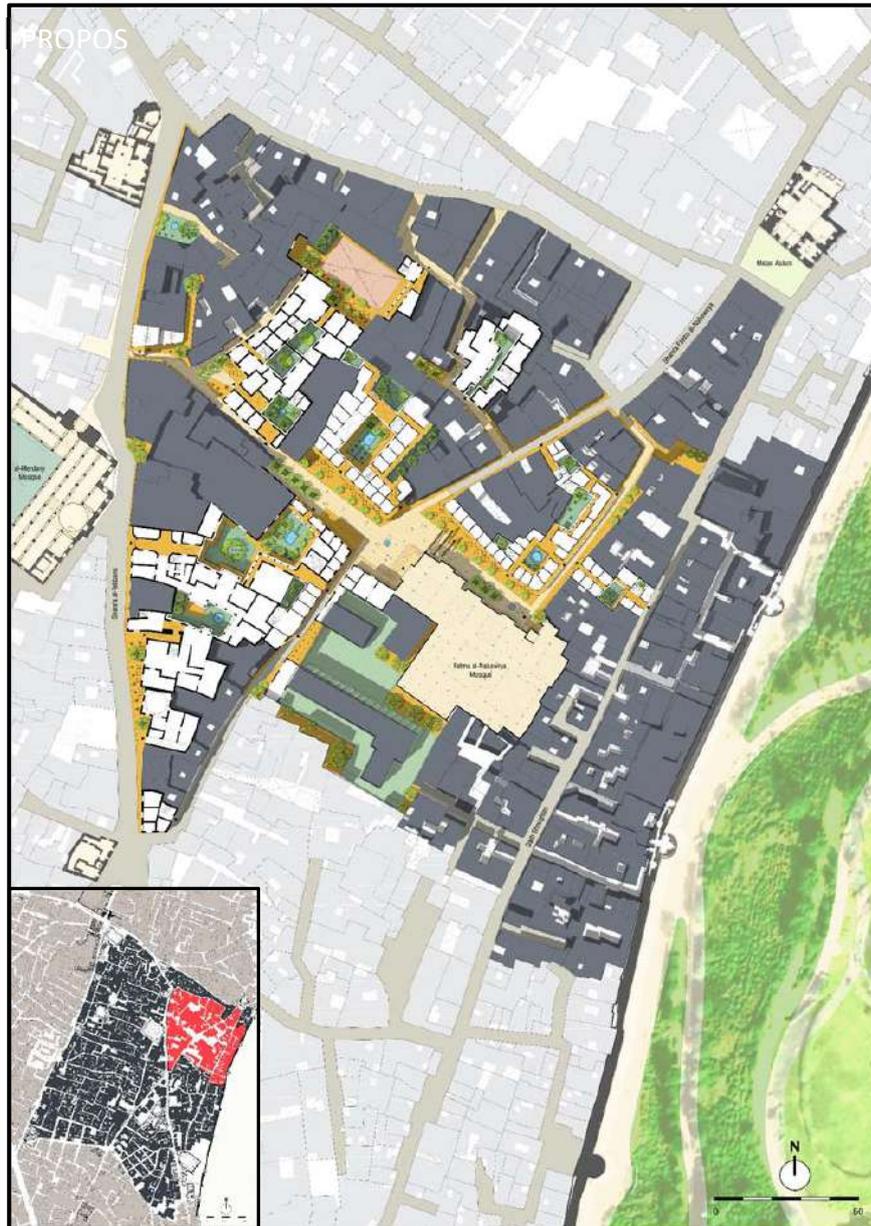


Figure 15. Regeneration of Hara el-Nabawiya and Bayt Madkour courtyard. (The authors)

B. Improve the PEDESTRIAN experience (VCP - Mobility)

Transform historic Haras into axis of pedestrians by allowing permeability in the ground floor of the courtyard buildings. The specific proposed interventions should be oriented to:

- Do a clear definition of pedestrian and car-oriented areas.
- Pedestrianize the main axis of selected Haras.
- Replace motorbike vehicles by bicycle ones and in specific loops.
- Create car flow restrictions.
- Improve selected Hara streets with specific floor design (local textures, geometries, and colours).
- Prioritize the infrastructure maintenance in the main axis of proposed Haras in terms of sewage network, water, public illumination, etc.
- Reinterpret missing urban and architectural features such as gates, cantilevers, Mashrabeias, rhythms, and distribution of facades, small squares, etc.

C. Exalt ARCHITETURAL values (VCP – Elements to be preserved)

Celebrate the form and appearance, interior and exterior of the courtyard and historic buildings that enclosed the new system of open spaces, highlighting their structure, volume, style, scale, materials, colours, and ornamentations. Some historic buildings such as Bayt El Razzaz, Umm Sultan Shaban Mosque and Khayrbek complex have been restored the last years. However, most of them are closed due to the lack of coordination between authorities. Thus, complementary actions should be implemented as following:

- Restore, Reuse and Adapt historic buildings with courtyard typologies with high architectural values located in new Haras.
- Create a set of specific guidelines for new additions on historic buildings to respect the scale, find its expression and keep a balanced relation with the total of the context.
- Train people from the area on local construction techniques. As well as, technical advice by experts or students in the field.
- Regulate new developments next to courtyard buildings with high architectural values in terms of permitted heights, coherence with the urban section, façade openings and rhythms and the balanced relation between built-up areas and open spaces.

D. Allocate NEW activities (VCP – New Functions)

Strengthen activities compatible with the historical values of courtyard buildings and promote new functions to the new ones that allow the sustainable development of the community. Zenab Khatun and Bayt Yakan can be considered as successful cases since after proper restoration of the two courtyard buildings, the introduction of uses compatible with the needs of the community, the activation and appropriation of open spaces is considered. Moreover, the property of these cases is private but with public access in some areas that creates an economic or social revenue for the owner while meets the needs of the community. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to:

- Revive the principles charitable endowment aspect of the property in *waqf*³ properties, by assigning functions that benefit the community on the ground floor, especially in those newly restored historic buildings. For a pilot project to empower local community and considers their benefits in development plan see (Yakan, 2010)
- Include local community needs as main uses in the ground floors spaces. (Yakan, 2010)
- Supplying new residential, workplaces and commercial spaces for the locals
- Introduce new functions that include and encourage other social groups to participate to re-balance the social structural in the area.

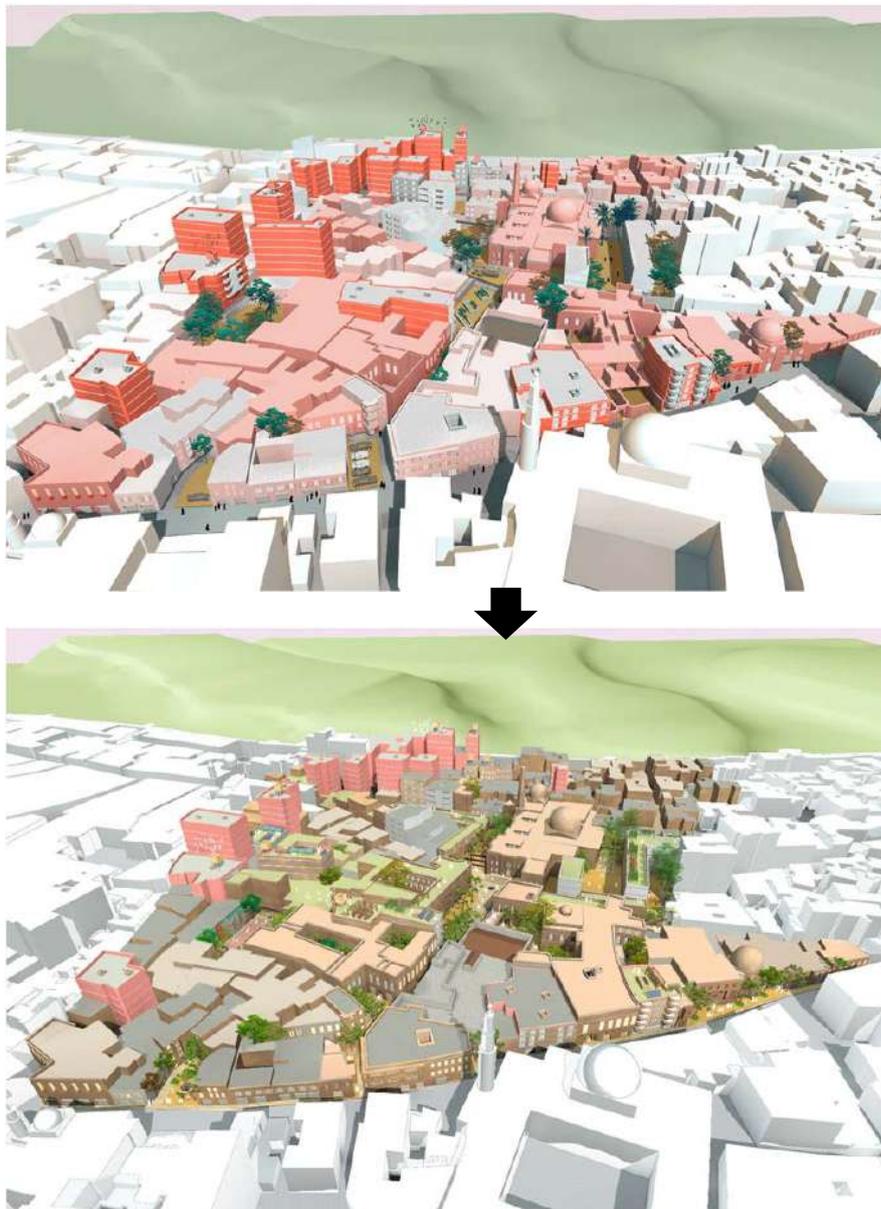


Figure 16: Guidelines applied to the Hara El Nabawiya & Bayt Madkour courtyard (the authors).

³ Waqf refers here to the charitable endowment system that was known throughout the History of Islam.

E. Discourage INFORMAL growth (VCP – Contemporary architecture):

Give socioeconomic and collective values to existing buildings and open spaces while creating a clear set of urban rules and incentives to those who comply with them. During the construction of Al-Azhar park the Ayyubid wall restoration and adaptation of buildings were realized. This project created a paradox since it achieved the opposite effect that has initially sought, since due to the lack of regulations, the garden promoted the residential towers to compete in heights to have a peak towards it. Urban regulations and incentives can control this phenomenon the following manner:

- The original area of courtyards is not buildable.
- New buildings cannot exceed 15meters high.
- Maximum 60% of the plot can be the built-up area
- New buildings should respect historic rhythms & openings or/and do not exceed half of the total surface.
- Redbrick and concrete cannot be exposed in the any façade of a new building.
- If informal buildings are located along proposed Hara's green axis, the extra floors above the fifth should be demolished and replace by green rooftops.
- Provide incentives for new compatible developments as following: If 40% of the plot is given to open space the height of additional 2 to 3 floors are allowed if they recess at least 5 meters from the main façade; Subsidies for maintenance of courtyards and Eco-friendly energy (by the municipality); Land compensation in other areas of Cairo as part of an APP (Association of public and private) if stakeholders restore courtyard buildings in historic Cairo.
-

CATEGORY OF INTERVENTION	PRIOR INTERVENTION	AFTER INTERVENTION	GROWTH RATE %
OPEN AREA	9823.64m2	12570.24m2	27.95
-Public space (Haras)	6848.19m2	8157.72m2	19.12
-Courtyards	2975.45m2	4412.52m2	48.29
BUILT-UP AREA	35975.25m2	33228.65m2	-7.63
# OF PROPERTIES INTEGRATED IN SEMI-PUBLIC ACTIVITIES	2	20	900
SURFACE AREA OF PRIVATE PROPERTIES INTEGRATED IN PUBLIC DOMAIN	3028.18m2	9300.65m2	207.13
TOTAL AREA (PILOT PROJECT)	45798.89m2		

Table 1: prior and after proposed interventions in Hara El Nabawiya & Bayt Madkour (the authors)

Applying the guidelines of the reGreenation approach in the Hara Al-Nabawiya and the courtyard of Bayt Madkour, (figures 15-16) the results are summarized in the table above and show that the increment of open areas is considerably high represented in a growth rate of almost 28%. Moreover, the HUL can be read again as a unity, the informal growth can be mitigated and the balance between open and built-up areas is harmonious. As well as, the vegetation became a connector or continuation of Al-Azhar Park as a green element to theoretically re-activate the passivity of the urban fabric. An environmental simulation assessment is envisioned to confirm the ecological benefits. It is also visible, how the concentration of activity is not only along the main streets and its propagation to inner courtyards and roofs.

Discussions

The research introduces three concepts that are currently being promoted by international institutions concerned with regeneration of historic cities: HUL approach, Sustainable Development, and Green Corridors. It proposes practical means for applicability in Historic Cairo to support the State 2030 Vision that calls for “inclusive sustainable development” and “balanced regional development.” (Egypt, 2016) A Historic Urban landscape is not a static set of ancient buildings but a living organism constrained by interdependent layers, ranging from socio-economic, environmental and cultural spheres. Through the main charters related with the safeguarding of world heritage, together with the Valletta principles that are offering practical remedies to achieve sustainable developments in historic contexts, tangible and intangible values shall be preserved and respected while improving quality of life, adapting to the contemporary needs and creating a harmonious relationship with the local ecosystem. This research adopts green corridors strategy as an efficient tool to combine all of the above factors into a balanced ground in al-Darb al-Ahmar in Historic Cairo. In order to shape those green corridors in al-Darb al-Ahmar, the contemporary setting was studied and analysed. The challenge was to identify the morphological changes in the urban fabric and how the social structure has an important role in the configuration of open spaces. The specific concept of Haras takes vital importance to understand the relation between the inside and outside open spaces. Courtyards are the last stage within a hierarchical organization of public, semi-private and private spaces. Connected open spaces and working as a unity is what shape the territory and contributes to its urban uniqueness. Unfortunately, the conclusions of the analysis showed that this strength is being dramatically disfigured by the main identified threat: the informal high-rise growths.

The hypotheses came up as a possible approach to tackle the decadent panorama and strengthen the founded values. This statement is based on giving an economic and social value to the existing open spaces and the historic buildings that enclosed them to create a ripple effect in the activation of other levels as the environmental. The main idea is to test a series of interconnected actions that not only aim to beautify the site but also to mitigate the negative effects of the densification phenomenon as well as contributing to the development of the local community.

This paper concludes that “ReGREENerate” is to re-signify the link between the inside (courtyards) and outside (Haras) through a formula that creates appropriation of open spaces. It offers means to rethink the traditional role of privacy in contexts with lack of

open space evolving into a more communal oriented that revive the charitable or public vocation of some properties. It then offers practical set of urban guidelines that aim at connecting, qualifying and enlarging open spaces and creating green corridors to enhance the human experience in the territory as well as restore pleasant spaces through urban environmental passivity.

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Students' Static Activities in relation to Campus Quad Design and Layout. Exploring Gender-based Differences

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Abstract

This study explores the relationships of campus quad design and layout with students' static activities focusing on gender differences. Students' static activities were observed at 8914 locations during 390 rounds of observation in six campus quads of a Middle Eastern university. The design and layout data of the quads were collected in the field, and using various techniques of "space syntax". The relationships of static activities' with the design and layout features of the quads were investigated using descriptive and correlational statistics. The results of the study indicate that different design and layout features had different relationships with different static activities; that students' static activities had stronger relationships with natural design features than manmade design features; and that male students' and female students' static activities were affected differently by different design and layout features. The significance of these findings and the future directions of research are discussed.

Keywords: campus quads, design and layout features, natural and manmade features, gender, static activities, space syntax

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Introduction

Most college campuses provide settings for lively small-scale public spaces. Some of these public spaces are well-built *campus quads*, while others are kept more natural. Despite some similarities, campus quads generally lack the diverse mix of functions, forms, and users that characterize lively urban spaces. Often, campus quads have better physical definition than most urban spaces, but lack the intensity and mix of traffic commonly found in urban spaces. Campus quads are also programmatically more rigid than urban spaces. As a result, environmental behaviors in campus quads and urban spaces may show differences.

Studies involving small-scale urban public spaces are plentiful covering many physical, affective, and behavioral issues (Galindo and Corraliza, 2000, Herzog et al., 2003, Lau et al., 2014, Lo et al., 2003, Shi et al., 2014, Woolley, 2003, Whyte, 1980, Francis, 2003, Stamps, 2005, Stamps and Smith, 2002, Gehl, 2011). In contrast, studies on campus quads are fewer, and they do not cover as many issues (Abu-Ghazze, 1999, Rached and Elsharkawy, 2012, Salama, 2008, Al-Homoud and Abu-Obeid, 2003, Aydin and Ter, 2008, McFarland et al., 2008, Unlu et al., 2009, Yaylali-Yildiz et al., 2014). For example, studies involving public spaces have already shown that women are more sensitive to where they sit in these spaces; and that they tend to seclude themselves in these spaces (Mozingo, 1989, Whyte, 1980). These studies have also shown that in some cultures women experience more controlled than men in public spaces in terms of audience, spatial opportunities, and spatial organization (Abbas and van Heur, 2014, Al-Bishawi and Ghabban, 2011). However, similar studies on campus quads are missing.

In order to fill in the gap, this study focuses on the relationships of various design and layout features of campus quads with students' static activities focusing on male and female differences. Following a brief review of the effects of campus quad design and layout features on behaviors reported in the literature, the conceptual framework and the questions of this study are presented. After this, the study sites and the methods of data collection and analyses are discussed in the methodology section of the paper. Then, the findings of the analyses are reported indicating whether they answer the study questions. In the final section of the paper, the significance of the findings and some future directions of research are discussed.

The Conceptual Model of the Research

Previous studies already highlight the importance of many design and layout features for students' behaviors in campus spaces. They explore how natural elements affect students' behaviors in campus spaces. For example, the presence of natural elements increases space use (Salama, 2008, Unlu et al., 2009); among various design elements, the effects of landscape on students' distribution in campus public spaces are more significant (Ding and Guaralda, 2013); campus spaces with less greenery or lawns are used less (Ding and Guaralda, 2013); and campus spaces featuring a natural ground element (e.g., lawns) become popular destinations (Ding and Guaralda, 2013).

They also explore how manmade design and layout features affect students' behaviors in campus spaces. For example, location, accessibility, seating spaces, and visual qualities are important elements affecting students' experience (Abu-Ghazze, 1999, Aydin and Ter, 2008, Yaylali-Yildiz et al., 2014); visually accessible spaces support more student interactions and use of spaces (Unlu et al., 2009); and vertical elements (e.g., walls) have

more impacts on students' perception on enclosure than horizontal elements (ground or floor) (Al-Homoud and Abu-Obeid, 2003, Abu-Obeid and Al-Homoud, 2000). Additionally, they explore how students' behaviours and perception may affect one another in campus spaces. For example, higher pedestrian volume creates more social interactions (Abu-Ghazze, 1999); movements in campus spaces affects how and where students position themselves (Ding and Guaralda, 2013, Greene and Penn, 1997); the perception of seclusion may decrease with increasing pedestrian flow, and may increase with increasing spatial enclosure (Al-Homoud and Abu-Obeid, 2003); the perception of interaction may increase with increasing pedestrian flow (Al-Homoud and Abu-Obeid, 2003); and the vitality of campus spaces may be affected by the location of individual subjects (Al-Homoud and Abu-Obeid, 2003).

Yet, none of these studies explores the relationships of campus quad design and layout with students' static activities focusing on gender differences. Therefore, developed based on the evidence presented here, the conceptual model of this research, presented in Figure 1, highlights the significance of gender as an intervening variable for the relationship between environmental design and behaviour in campus quads.

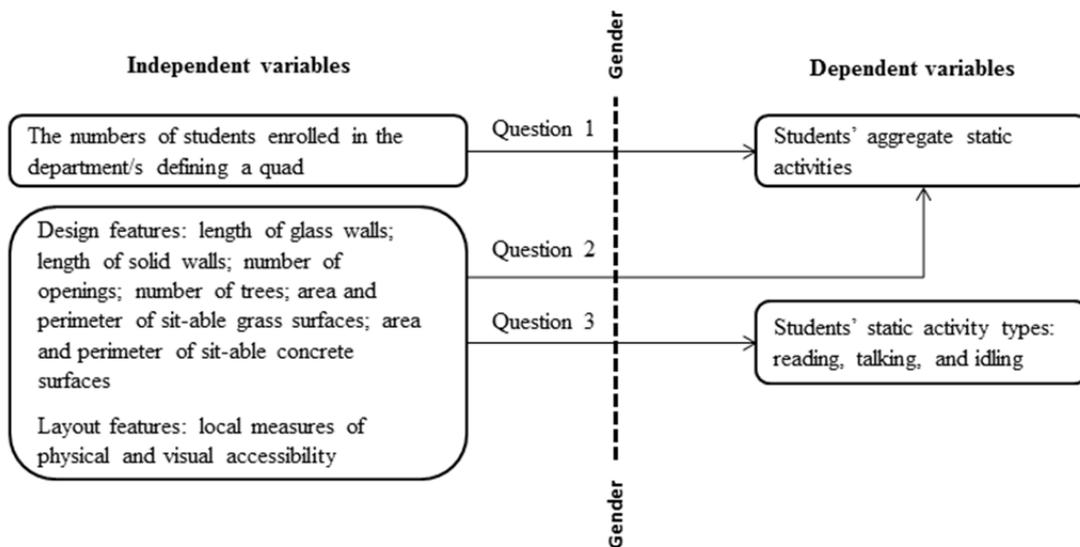


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of the study.

The independent variables of the model are the number of students enrolled in the department/s defining a campus quad, and the design and layout features of a campus quad. The manmade and natural design features of a campus quad in the conceptual framework are the length of glass walls; the number of openings on the walls; the length of solid walls; the area and perimeter of sit-able concrete surfaces; the number of trees; and the area and perimeter of sit-able grass surfaces. The layout features in the conceptual framework are the local measures of physical and visual accessibility within campus quads measured using “space syntax” techniques (see below). The dependent variables of the model are students' static activities – reading, talking, and idling. As shown in the model, this study explores the following three questions:

1. Do the numbers of enrolled students in the department/s defining a campus quad show correlations with students' aggregate static activities in the quad, and do the correlations vary for male and female students?
2. Do different design and layout features of campus quads show correlations with students' aggregate static activities, with natural elements having stronger correlations, and do these correlations vary for male and female students?
3. Do different design and layout features of campus quads show correlations with students' different static activities, with natural elements having stronger correlations, and do these correlations vary for male and female students?

Methodologies

The study was completed in three phases. In the first phase, data on static activities were collected using pre-established observation protocols in six campus quads. In the second phase, design and layout data were collected on-site and using the spatial analysis techniques of "space syntax". In the third phase, statistical analyses were performed exploring the associations of design and layout data with static activities data. Each of these phases and the study sites are described below.

The Study Sites

The study was conducted at the Jordan University of Science and Technology in Jordan in the Middle East, because genders are generally divided between public and private spaces in this region (Reininger, 2004). Here, in public spaces, interactions among peers of different sexes are discouraged and interactions among same-sex peers are encouraged. With the exceptions of a few individual communities and family groups, women in Jordan are invisible in public spaces. Social restrictions discourage their participation in social life and define the space to which they belong. Thus, women may be seen interacting more in private spaces and less in public spaces (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Jordan and United Nations Development Program, 2004).

Six quads of the campus were selected for this study. They have similar size, shape and architecture [Figure 2]. The six campus quads are located in six different departments. We label these departments as A, B, C, D, E and F; therefore, the quads within these departments are called A-Quad, B-Quad, C-Quad, D-Quad, E-Quad, and F-Quad. Even though the class schedules of A, B, C, D, E, and F departments vary, the amount of time students spend over a day and a week are comparable in these and other departments of this university, as our field investigations indicated. Figure 3.1 shows that A, B, C, D, E, and F departments have different numbers of enrolled students, with A-Department having the highest and C-Department having the lowest number of enrolled students. Figure 3.2 shows the percentages of male and female students in each department. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show the rank orders of the departments for male and female students' enrollment percentages. For male students, the descending rank order is F, E, B, A, C, and D. For female students, the descending rank is D, C, A, B, E, and F.

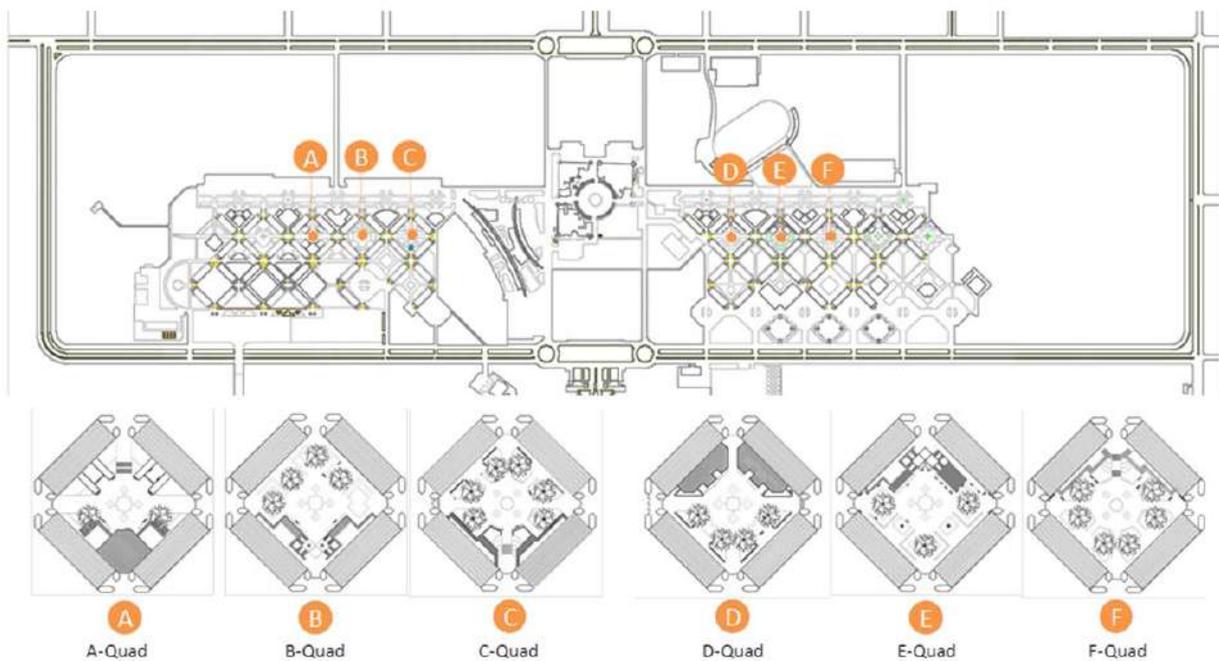


Figure 2: Six quads—A-Quad, B-Quad, C-Quad, D-Quad, E-Quad and F-Quad, and their locations in the university campus.

Collection of Behavioral Data

One male and one female student of the university were trained to collect behavioral data in the six campus quads. One student was responsible for taking photos and short videos of the quads from a predefined set of positions covering the whole area of each quad. These photos and videos were taken at a regular interval of 30 minutes for five consecutive weekdays from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. The other student was responsible for recording students (male and female) found engaged in different static activities (reading, talking, and idling) at the same 30-minute interval on the plan of a quad. In the end, the videos and photographs were used to verify the field observations of students' static activities recorded at different locations of a quad. Altogether, 13 rounds of observations were completed in each quad for each of the 5 weekdays. During 390 rounds of observations (65 rounds per quad), the static activities of male and female students at 8,914 locations in the six quads were collected.

Collection of Data on Campus Quad Design and Layout

Data on the manmade and natural design features of the quads were collected on-site [Table I]. The data show differences among the six quads; therefore, they are expected to have differential effects on students' static activities in these quads, as was stipulated in the conceptual framework.

Students' Static Activities in relation to Campus Quad Design and Layout

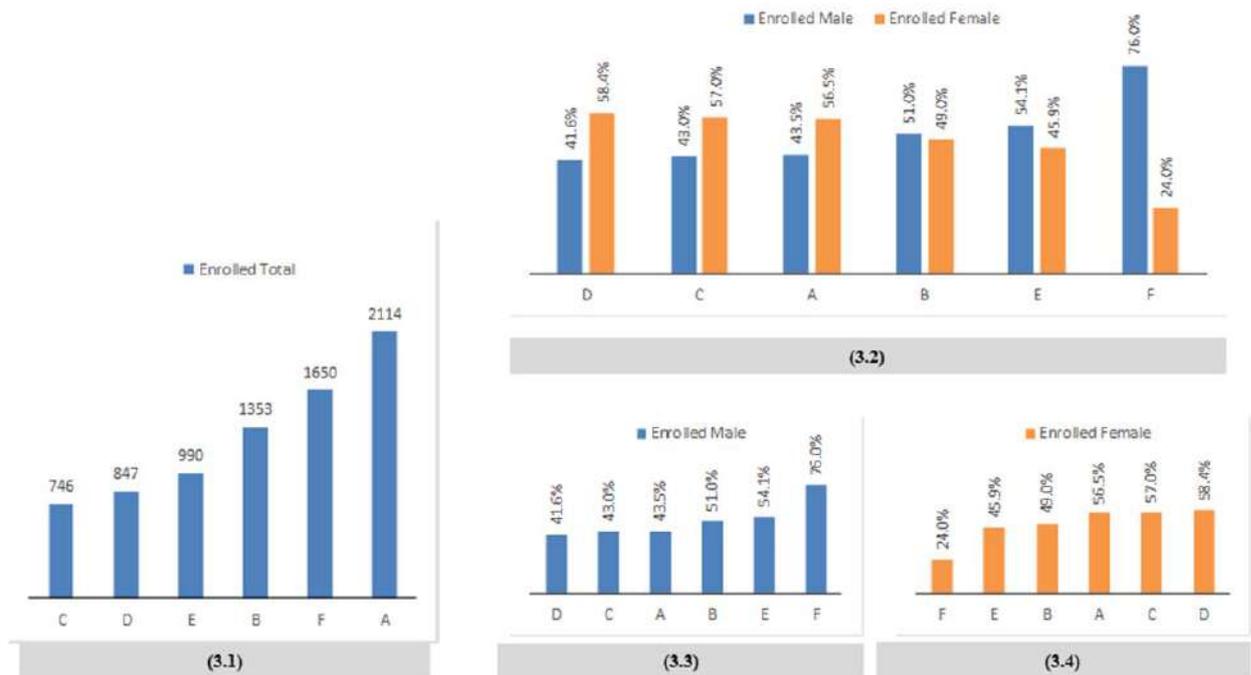


Figure 3: (3.1) The rank-order of departments by the total number of enrolled students, (3.2) the percentages of male and female students enrolled in the six departments at the time of this study, (3.3) the rank-order of departments by the percentages of male students, and (3.4) the rank-order of departments by the percentages of female students.

Measures characterizing the visual and physical accessibility of spaces within a quad were collected using various spatial analysis techniques of “space syntax”. These measures showed significant associations with spatial behaviors in buildings and urban environments in previous studies (e.g., Bada and Farhi, 2009, Campos, 1997, Peponis et al., 1997, Rashid et al., 2006, Rashid et al., 2009, Unlu et al., 2009). In order to describe the layout properties of the campus quads, the axial map analysis and the visibility graph analysis (VGA) of space syntax were performed using the *Depthmap* software, version 10.10.16b (e.g., Turner and Friedrich, 2000-2011).

	A-Quad	B-Quad	C-Quad	D-Quad	E-Quad	F-Quad
Length of glass walls	120.30 m	136.00 m	136.00 m	168.00 m	118.50 m	132.00 m
Number of openings	94.00	110.00	112.00	120.00	95.00	112.00
Length of solid walls	118.80 m	140.20 m	120.20 m	154.02 m	141.50 m	103.00 m
Area of sit-able concrete surfaces	91.43 m ²	391.10 m ²	184.44 m ²	200.62 m ²	391.10 m ²	184.44 m ²
Perimeter of sit-able concrete surfaces	548.37 m	870.93 m	769.14 m	839.68 m	870.93 m	769.14 m

Number of trees	2	4	6	4	3	6
Area of sit-able grass surfaces	0.00 m ²	383.17 m ²	779.75 m ²	328.53 m ²	383.17 m ²	779.75 m ²
Perimeter of sit-able grass surfaces	0.00 m	224.05 m	295.78 m	161.64 m	224.05 m	295.78 m

Table 1: Various design features of the quads

For the axial map analysis, the layout of a campus quad was reduced to a fewest set of axial lines covering all routes of movements and circulation rings. Syntactic measures describing physical and visual accessibility were then computed based on how the lines were connected to each other in the map (Hillier and Hanson, 1984). For this study, local instead of global syntactic measures were used, because static activities are likely to be affected more by local than global factors. These measures are *local axial integration at radius 3* describing how a line is connected to the lines 3 steps away from it, and *axial connectivity* describing how many lines are directly connected to a line. For VGA, the campus quads were divided into a cellular grid with cells sufficiently large to accommodate a person. Syntactic measures describing physical and visual accessibility were then computed based on how the visual fields of the cells in the grid are connected to each other (Turner et al., 2001). Again, two local measures were used: *local visual integration at radius 3* and *visual connectivity*.

For the purpose of this study, the local integration and connectivity values were computed at three different heights describing physical and/or visual access to different amounts of information in the quads. In other words, *local axial integration*, *axial connectivity*, *local visual integration*, and *visual connectivity* at 0.0 m (0') level were used describing physical and visual accessibility at the ground level, where the amount of information available was very limited. *Local axial integration*, *axial connectivity*, *local visual integration*, & *visual connectivity* at 1.10 m (3'6") above the ground were used describing physical and visual accessibility for seated students, where the amount of information available was somewhat limited. Finally, *local axial integration*, *axial connectivity*, *local visual integration*, & *visual connectivity* at 1.65 m (5'5") above the ground were used describing physical and visual accessibility for standing students, where the amount of information available was least limited.

Statistical Analysis

Using IBM SPSS 22 (IBM, 2013), statistical analyses were performed to describe the similarities and differences in students' static activities in the six quads, and to describe the relationships between design and layout variables and students' static activities.

- To answer Q-1, histograms and descriptive statistics were used to study the relationships between students' static activities and departmental enrollment numbers.
- To answer Q-2, correlational statistics were used to study the relationships between the aggregate numbers of students' activities and campus quads' design and layout variables. It is important to note here that, for correlational analysis,

each quad was divided into four quadrants, and observations made in a quadrant were aggregated and associated with the measures of the design and layout features of the quadrant. Therefore, data from the 24 quadrants ($n = 24$) of the six quads were used in correlational analysis.

- To answer Q-3, correlational statistics were used to study the relationships between students' different static activities and campus quads' design and layout variables. Again, data from the 24 quadrants ($n = 24$) of the six quads were used for correlational analysis.

The above analyses were performed for *all students*, *male students*, and *female students*. Following Evans' (1996) interpretation of Pearson's correlation coefficient, the following estimates were used to interpret Spearman's correlation coefficient (ρ): .00-.19 as "very weak"; .20-.39 as "weak"; .40-.59 as "moderate"; .60-.79 as "strong"; and .80-1.0 as "very strong".

Results

Students' static Activities and departmental enrolments

All students' static activities and departmental enrolments

All students' static activities [Figure 4] were not consistent with the enrollment numbers of the departments presented earlier [Figure 3]. The descending rank order of the departments for enrolment was A, F, B, E, D, and C. In contrast, the descending rank order of the departments for talking among all students was C, F, D, A, B, and E. The descending rank order of the departments for reading among all students was C, F, B, A, D, and E. Finally, the descending rank order of the departments for idling among all students was A, D, F, C, B, and E. Therefore, higher enrolments did not consistently produce higher aggregate numbers of static activities among students in these quads.

Male and female students' static activities and departmental enrolments

Like all students' activities, the percentages of male students' and female students' static activities [Figure 5] in the quads did not consistently follow the percentages of enrolled male students and female students in the departments presented earlier [Figure 3].

The descending rank order of the departments for male students' enrolment was F, E, B, A, C, and D. In contrast, the descending rank order for talking among male students was A, D, E, F, C, and B. The descending rank order for reading among male students was A, D, F, E, C, and B. Finally, the descending rank order for idling among male students was E, A, B, D, C, and F.

The descending rank order of the departments for female students' enrolment was D, C, A, B, E, and F. In contrast, the descending rank order for talking among female students was B, C, F, E, D, and A. The descending rank order for reading among female students was B, C, E, F, D, and A. Finally, the descending rank order for idling among female students was F, C, D, B, A, and E.

In summary, the rank order of departments based on the enrolment numbers of male students and female students were not consistent with the rank order of department based on static activities among male students or female students in these quads.

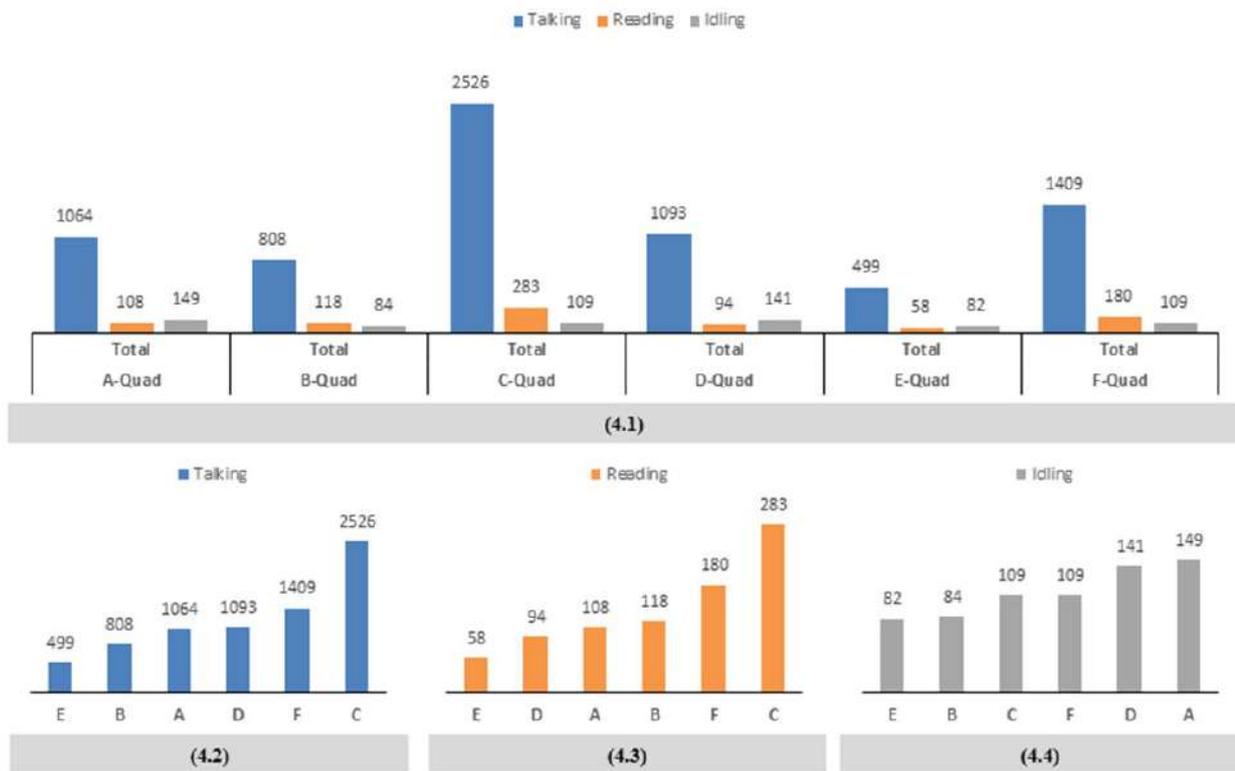


Figure 4: (4.1) The total numbers of static activities observed in the six quads at the time of this study, (4.2) the rank-order of the total number of students engaged in talking activity, (4.3) the rank-order of the total number of students engaged in reading activity, and (4.4) the rank-order of the total number of idling students.

Students' aggregate static activities and campus quad design and layout

Students' aggregate static activities and campus quad design [Table 2]

According to the correlational analysis, the length of glass walls shows somewhat significant moderate positive correlations with male students' and all students' aggregate activities (.449* and .410*), and a non-significant weak positive correlation with female students' aggregate activities. The number of openings shows a somewhat significant moderate positive correlation with male students' aggregate activities (.439*), and non-significant weak positive correlations with all students' and female students' aggregate activities. The length of solid walls shows somewhat significant and significant moderate negative correlations with all students', male students' and female students' aggregate activities (-.492*, -.533**, and -.405*). The area and perimeter of sit-able concrete surfaces show non-significant very weak to weak positive correlations with all students', male students', and female students' aggregate activities.

The number of trees shows somewhat significant and significant moderate to strong positive correlations with all students', male students', and female students' aggregate activities (.620**, .476*, and .726**). The area and perimeter of sit-able grass surfaces show somewhat significant and significant moderate positive correlations with all students' and female students' aggregate activities (all students: .459* and .409*; female students: .559** and .519**), and a non-significant weak positive correlation with male students' aggregate activities.

Therefore, some manmade and natural design features show significant correlations of different strengths with students' static activities. In general, natural features show stronger correlations with students' static activities than manmade design features. Many of these correlations are stronger for female students' than male students' activities. Male students' and female students' static activities are also correlated with different campus quad design features, with male students' activities correlated more frequently with the artificial features, and female students' activities correlated more frequently with the natural features.

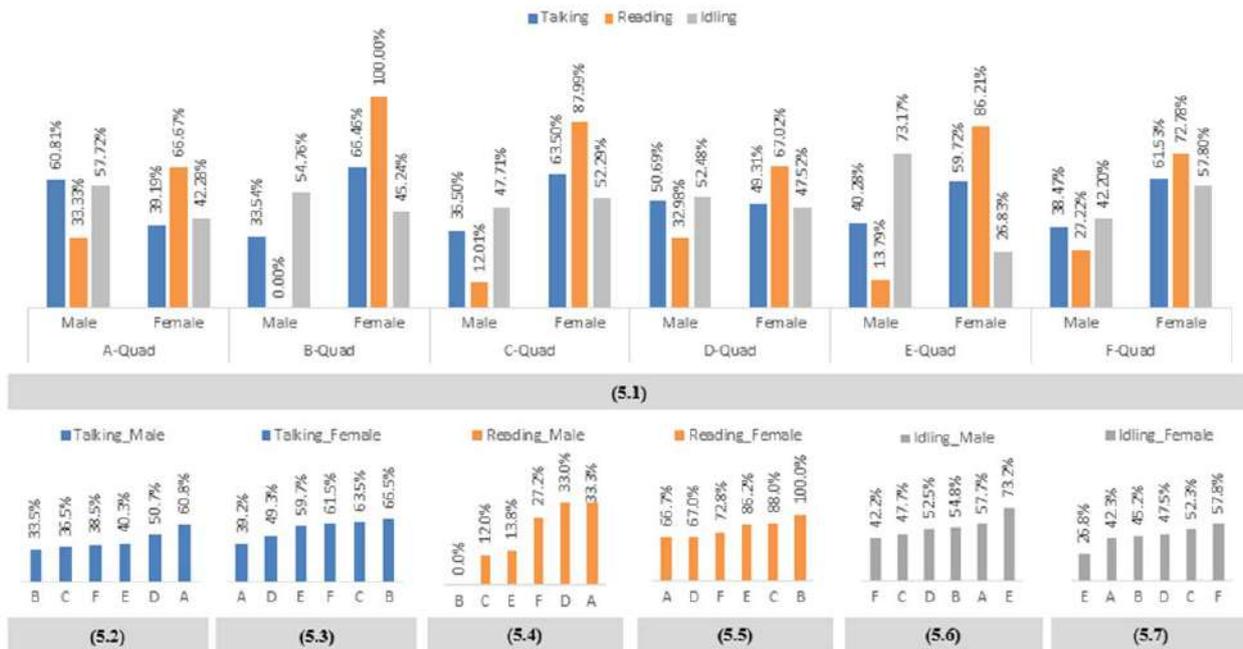


Figure 5: (5.1) Percentages of male and female students engaged in different static activities in the six quads, (5.2) the rank-order of percentages of male students engaged in talking activity, (5.3) the rank-order of percentages of female students engaged in talking activity, (5.4) the rank-order of percentages of male students engaged in reading activity, (5.5) the rank-order of percentages of female students engaged in reading activity, (5.6) the rank-order of percentages of idling male students, and (5.7) the rank-order of percentages of idling female students.

Natural and artificial design elements	Students' aggregate activities		
	AS ^I	MS ^I	FS ^I
Length of glass walls	.410*	.449*	.310
Number of openings	.394	.439*	.300
Length of solid walls	-.492*	-.533**	-.405*
Area of sit-able concrete surfaces	.145	.049	.214
Perimeter of sit-able concrete surfaces	.338	.341	.275
Number of trees	.620**	.476*	.726**
Area of sit-able grass surfaces	.459*	.329	.559**
Perimeter of sit-able grass surfaces	.409*	.264	.519**

Physical and visual accessibility in quad layouts			
Local Axial Integration at 0.0 m Level	.311	.324	.210
Axial Connectivity at 0.0 m Level	.113	-.070	.217
Local Axial Integration at 1.10 m Level	.178	-.057	.351
Axial Connectivity at 1.10m Level	-.035	-.175	.089
Local Axial Integration at 1.65m Level	.247	-.019	.466*
Axial Connectivity at 1.65m Level	.353	.153	.539**
Local Visual Integration at 0.0 m Level	.439*	.548**	.327
Visual Connectivity at 0.0 m Level	-.002	.231	-.157
Local Visual Integration at 1.10 m Level	.420*	.336	.501*
Visual Connectivity at 1.10m Level	.194	.065	.354
Local Visual Integration at 1.65m Level	.501*	.281	.646**
Visual Connectivity at 1.65m Level	.389	.164	.552**

** Significant at the .01 level; *Significant at the .05 level; I: AS = All Students; MS = Male Students; FS = Female Students

Table 2: Correlations between students' aggregate activities and campus quad design and layout features (n = 24)

Students' aggregate static activities and campus quad layout [Table 2]

Local axial integration and axial connectivity at 0.00m and 1.10m levels show non-significant weak correlations with all students', male students', and female students' aggregate static activities in the quads. Local axial integration and axial connectivity at 1.65m level show somewhat significant and significant moderate positive correlations with female students' aggregate activities (.466* and .539**), and non-significant weak and very weak correlations with all students' and male students' aggregate activities.

Local visual integration at 0.0m level shows somewhat significant and significant moderate positive correlations with all students' and male students' aggregate activities (.439* and .548**), and a non-significant weak positive correlation with female students' aggregate activities. Visual connectivity at 0.0m level shows non-significant very weak correlations with all students', male students', and female students' aggregate activities.

Local visual integration at 1.10m level shows somewhat significant moderate positive correlations with all students' and female students' aggregate activities (.420* and .501*), and a non-significant weak positive correlation with male students' aggregate activities.

Visual connectivity at 1.10m level shows non-significant weak to very weak correlations with all students', male students', and female students' aggregate activities.

Local visual integration at 1.65m level shows a somewhat significant moderate positive correlation with all students' aggregate activities (.501*), a significant strong positive correlation with female students' aggregate activities (.646**), and a non-significant weak positive correlation with male students' aggregate activities. Visual connectivity at 1.65m level shows non-significant weak and very weak positive correlations with all students' and male students' aggregate activities, and a significant moderate positive correlation with female students' aggregate activities (.552**).

Therefore, some layout features show significant correlations of different strengths with students' aggregate static activities. Correlations are different for male students' and female students' aggregate activities. The number of correlations of layout features is higher with female students' aggregate activities than with male students' aggregate activities.

Static activities and campus quad design and layout
Static activities and campus quad design [Table 3]

Talking

The length of glass walls shows a somewhat significant moderate positive correlation with talking as an activity for male students (.428*); and non-significant weak positive correlations with talking for all students and female students. *The number of openings* shows non-significant weak to moderate positive correlations with talking for all students, male students, and female students. *The length of solid walls* shows somewhat significant moderate negative correlations with talking for all students and male students (-.465* and -.476*); and a non-significant weak negative correlation with talking for female students. *The area and perimeter of sit-able concrete surfaces* show non-significant very weak to weak positive correlations with talking for all students, male students, and female students.

The number of trees shows somewhat significant and significant moderate to strong positive correlations with talking for all students, male students, and female students (.596**, .453*, and .710**). *The area of grass surfaces* shows somewhat significant and significant moderate correlations with talking for all students and female students (.438* and .558**), and a non-significant weak correlation with talking for male students. *The perimeter of grass surfaces* shows non-significant weak correlations with talking for all students and male students; and a significant moderate correlation for female students (.515**).

Therefore, some manmade and natural design features show significant correlations of different strengths with talking among students. Talking shows stronger correlations with the natural features than it does with the manmade design features. The natural features have several significant strong correlations with talking among female students, but only one non-significant weak correlation with talking among male students.

	Talking			Reading			Idling		
	AS ^l	MS ^l	FS ^l	AS ^l	MS ^l	FS ^l	AS ^l	MS ^l	FS ^l
Natural and artificial design elements									
Length of glass walls	.385	.428*	.289	.354	.180	.310	.566**	.616**	.470*
Number of openings	.366	.400	.286	.279	.249	.225	.581**	.673**	.497*
Length of solid walls	-.465*	-.476*	-.398	-.254	-.359	-.151	-.701**	-.750**	-.692**
Area of sit-able concrete surfaces	.119	.033	.209	.073	-.249	.091	.267	.380	.264
Perimeter of sit-able concrete surfaces	.312	.314	.254	.234	.044	.195	.530**	.677**	.424*

Number of trees	.596**	.453*	.710**	.547**	.299	.524**	.524**	.428*	.663**
Area of sit-able grass surfaces	.438*	.299	.558**	.380	.238	.363	.360	.340	.486*
Perimeter of sit-able grass surfaces	.387	.242	.515**	.359	.148	.357	.314	.312	.422*
Physical and visual accessibility in quad layouts									
Local Axial Integration at 0.0 m Level	.320	.322	.212	.155	.017	.141	.410*	.383	.226
Axial Connectivity at 0.0 m Level	.115	-.063	.243	.046	-.306	.156	.049	.169	-.049
Local Axial Integration at 1.10 m Level	.192	-.024	.370	.250	-.121	.310	-.137	-.205	.059
Axial Connectivity at 1.10m Level	-.044	-.171	.107	-.021	-.121	.029	-.144	-.089	-.005
Local Axial Integration at 1.65m Level	.257	-.004	.482*	.350	.094	.402	-.158	-.227	.063
Axial Connectivity at 1.65m Level	.343	.160	.538**	.424*	.202	.431*	-.009	-.107	.277
Local Visual Integration at 0.0 m Level	.436*	.512*	.309	.355	.748**	.227	.419*	.251	.526**
Visual Connectivity at 0.0 m Level	-.014	.208	-.193	-.031	.327	-.148	.261	.134	.308
Local Visual Integration at 1.10 m Level	.432*	.309	.518**	.386	.710**	.336	.064	-.118	.302
Visual Connectivity at 1.10m Level	.207	.053	.385	.192	.429*	.206	-.235	-.341	.063
Local Visual Integration at 1.65m Level	.505*	.283	.657**	.456*	.315	.449*	.110	.032	.332
Visual Connectivity at 1.65m Level	.396	.157	.571**	.367	.268	.374	-.010	-.020	.196

** Significant at the .01 level; *Significant at the .05 level; I: AS = All Students; MS = Male Students; FS = Female Students

Table 3: Correlations between students' activities and design features (n = 24)

Reading

The length of glass walls shows non-significant very weak to weak positive correlations with reading among all students, male students, and female students. The number of openings shows non-significant weak positive correlations with reading among all students, male students, and female students. The length of solid walls shows non-significant very weak to weak negative correlations with reading among all students, male students, and female students. The area and perimeter of sit-able concrete surfaces show non-significant very weak to weak correlations with reading among all students, male students, and female students.

The number of trees shows significant moderate correlations with reading among all students and female students (.547** and .524**), and a non-significant weak correlation

among male students. *The area and perimeter of grass surfaces* show non-significant very weak to weak positive correlations among all students, male students, and female students.

In sum, among all the natural and artificial design features, *the number of trees* is the only feature that shows significant strong correlations with reading in these quads.

Idling

The length of glass walls shows somewhat significant and significant moderate to strong positive correlations with idling among all students, male students, and female students (.566**, .616**, and .470*). *The number of openings* shows somewhat significant and significant moderate to strong positive correlations with idling among all students, male students, and female students (.581**, .673**, and .497*). *The length of solid walls* shows significant strong negative correlations with idling among all students, male students, and female students (-.701**, -.750**, -.692**). *The area of sit-able concrete surfaces* shows non-significant weak correlations with idling among all students, male students, and female students. *The perimeter of sit-able concrete surfaces* shows somewhat significant and significant moderate to strong positive correlations with idling among all students, male students, and female students (.530**, .677**, and .424*).

The number of trees shows somewhat significant and significant moderate to strong positive correlations with idling among all students, male students, and female students (.524**, .428*, and .663**). *The area and perimeter of grass surfaces* show non-significant weak positive correlations with idling among all students and male students, but somewhat significant moderate positive correlations with idling among female students (.486* and .422*).

Again, supporting our previous findings, some manmade and natural design features show significant correlations of different strengths with idling. However, idling does not always show stronger correlations with the natural features than the manmade design features, even though *the number of trees* still shows significant correlations with idling. Again, campus quad design features and idling among male students and female students show different correlations, with female students showing more frequent correlations than male students.

Static activities and campus quad layout [Table 3]

Talking

Local axial integration at 0.00m level and *axial connectivity at 0.00m level* show non-significant weak correlations with talking among all students, male students, and female students. *local axial integration at 1.10m level* and *axial connectivity at 1.10m level* show non-significant correlations with talking among all students, male students, and female students.

Local axial integration at 1.65m level shows a somewhat significant moderate positive correlation with talking among female students (.482*), but it shows non-significant very weak to weak correlations with talking among all students and male students. *Axial connectivity at 1.65m level* shows a significant moderate positive correlation with talking among female students (.538**), but it shows non-significant very weak to weak positive correlations with talking among all students and male students.

Local visual integration at 0.0 m level shows somewhat significant moderate positive correlations with talking among all students and male students (.436* and .512*), but it shows a non-significant weak positive correlation with talking among female students. *Visual connectivity* at 0.0m level shows non-significant very weak negative correlations with talking among all students, male students and female students.

Local visual integration at 1.10m level shows somewhat significant and significant moderate correlations with talking among all students and female students (.432* and .518**), and a non-significant positive correlation with talking among male students. *Visual connectivity* at 1.10m level shows non-significant very weak to weak correlations with talking among all students, male students and female students.

Local visual integration at 1.65m level shows a somewhat significant moderate positive correlation with talking among all students (.505*), a non-significant very weak correlation with talking among male students, and a significant strong positive correlation with talking among female students (.657**). *Visual connectivity* at 1.65m level shows non-significant very weak correlations with talking among all students and male students, but a significant moderate positive correlation with talking among female students (.571**).

Therefore, some layout features show significant correlations of different strengths with talking. Among these features, *local visual integration* at different levels shows better correlations with talking than the other layout variables. In many cases, *local axial integration*, *axial connectivity*, *local visual integration*, and *visual connectivity* have better correlations with talking among female students than they have with talking among male students.

Reading

Local axial integration at 0.0m and 1.10m levels and *axial connectivity* at 0.0m and 1.10m levels show non-significant weak to very weak correlations with reading among all students, male students, and female students.

Local axial integration at 1.65m level shows non-significant very weak to weak correlations with reading among all students, male students, and female students. *Axial connectivity* at 1.65m level shows somewhat significant moderate positive correlations with reading among all students and female students (.424* and .431*), and a non-significant weak positive correlation with reading among male students.

Local visual integration at 0.00m level shows a significant strong positive correlation with reading among male students (.748**), and non-significant weak positive correlations with reading among all students and female students. *Visual connectivity* at 0.00m level shows non-significant very weak to weak negative correlations with reading among all students, male students, and female students.

Local visual integration at 1.10m level shows non-significant weak positive correlations with reading among all students and female students, and a significant strong positive

correlation with reading among male students (.710**). *Visual connectivity at 1.10m level* shows non-significant weak to very weak correlations with reading among all students and female students, and a somewhat significant moderate positive correlation with reading among male students (.429*).

Local visual integration at 1.65m level shows somewhat significant moderate positive correlations with reading among all students and female students (.456* and .449*), and a non-significant weak positive correlation with reading among male students. *Visual connectivity at 1.65m level* shows non-significant weak positive correlations with reading among all students, male students, and female students.

Again, some layout features show significant correlations of different strengths with reading. In general, the layout features showing better correlations with reading among male students are different from those showing better correlations with reading among female students. *Local visual integration at 0.00m and 1.10m levels* show significant strong positive correlations with reading among male students.

Idling

Local axial integration at 0.00m level shows a significant moderate positive correlation with idling among all students (.410*); but non-significant weak correlations with idling among male students and female students, separately. *Axial connectivity at 0.00m level* shows non-significant weak correlations with idling among all students, male students, and female students.

Local axial integration and axial connectivity at 1.10m and 1.65m levels show non-significant very weak to weak correlations with idling among all students, male students and female students.

Local visual integration at 0.00m level shows somewhat significant and significant moderate positive correlations with idling among all students and female students (.419* and .526**); and a non-significant weak positive correlation with idling among male students. *Visual connectivity at 0.00m level* shows non-significant weak to very weak positive correlations with idling among all students, male students and female students.

Local visual integration and visual connectivity at 1.10m and 1.65m levels show non-significant weak to very weak correlations with idling among all students, male students, and female students.

In summary, only some layout features show significant correlations of different strengths with idling.

Discussion and Conclusions

According to the results of the study, the total enrolment number as well as the male and female enrolment numbers of a department did not show any consistent relationships with students' static activities in the department's quad.

The study, however, indicated that different campus quad design and layout features had correlations of different strengths with students' static activities; that students' static

activities often had stronger correlations with the natural design features than the manmade design features; that male and female students static activities were often correlated differently with different design and layout features; and that the natural features and the layout features often had stronger correlations with female students' than male students' static activities.

Among the more interesting findings reported here are that students' aggregate activities, as well as talking and idling separately, decreased as the lengths of solid walls around the quads increased, and that students' idling increased as the number of openings and the length of glass walls around the quads increased. It may be that solid walls do not provide visual access to information; hence, they are less interesting for those engaged in talking and idling. Likewise, openings and glass walls provide visual access to information; hence, they are more interesting for those idling in the quads but less so for those talking in the quads. These findings are in line with the studies that show visual access to information is important for people to decide where to sit in public spaces (Bada and Farhi, 2009, Campos, 1997, Ding and Guaralda, 2013).

As this study showed, visual access to information as well as the amount of visually accessible information, both are important for students' static activities in campus quads. In this study, the local axial integration values at the 0.00m and 1.10m levels describing access to relatively less information showed very little associations with students' static activities. In contrast, the local axial integration value at the 1.65m level describing access to relatively more information showed a few significant associations with students' static activities. Further supporting this claim, the local visual integration values at the 0.00m, 1.10m, and 1.65m levels describing visual access to relatively more information showed several relatively strong associations with students' static activities. These findings are in line with the studies that associate too little information with a lack of interest (Shi et al., 2014, Unlu et al., 2009, Unlu et al., 2001).

According to this study, students' static activities had stronger positive associations with the natural design features, such as trees and grass surfaces, than the manmade design features, such as solid and glass walls, openings, and concrete surfaces. These findings support human's persistent fascination with nature (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989, Ulrich, 1986), and the importance of nature in urban spaces in hot-arid climate (Aljawabra and Nikolopoulou, 2010, Rached and Elsharkawy, 2012). These findings also support the studies that show nature as an important component of urban spaces (Ghavampour et al., 2015, Herzog et al., 2003) and of campus public spaces (Ding and Guaralda, 2013, Lau et al., 2014, McFarland et al., 2008, Salama, 2008).

Regarding gender-based differences, the study showed that female students' activities generally had better associations with campus quads' design and layout features than male students' activities had, indicating that female students might have chosen their activity locations more carefully than male students relative to the design and layout features of the quads. More specifically, the study showed that female students' activity locations had better visual access to information than male students' activity locations had. The study also showed that male students' static activities had better associations with the artificial design features such as glass walls, openings, and solid walls; and female students' static activities had better associations with the natural features such as trees and grass surfaces. These findings therefore identify the design and layout features of campus quads as a natural mechanism for gender-based separation in public spaces.

There are several implications of our findings for campus quad design and use. First, of course, is that student numbers may not be related to how a quad is used for static activities by students. According to our study, this may be in part due to the design and layout features of a quad. For example, natural features like trees are something that may encourage static activities more than many other design and layout features. Access to visual information may be yet another feature one may wish to consider regarding static activities in campus quads. Differences between male and female students' activities in relation to different design features may be important as well for campus quad design. According to findings of this study, it may be possible to increase one kind of static activity in favour of another kind using campus quad design and layout. To conclude, it is necessary to note that future studies should replicate this study in different countries and cultures to improve generalizability of the findings reported here. They should also focus on the effects of campus quad design and layout on dynamic behaviours, and on the relationships between dynamic and static behaviours. Finally, future studies should consider developing robust statistical models that use multiple features of campus quad design and layout to explain and predict students' static behaviours.

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Incorporating Practices of Publicness in Kuwaiti Parks.

Chai Ithahha, Cricket, Diwaniya, and Malls

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Abstract

This paper focuses on practices of publicness in Kuwait that do not necessarily fall under accepted discourses of public space, highlighting the importance of incorporating such practices within the existing literature as they affect landscape architecture. The practices include *chai ithahha* (women's morning tea), *diwaniya* (predominantly men's gathering), cricket games played by South Asian men, and mall outings. I suggest using these practices in the design of parks at a time of increasing privatization. While these practices enhance social connectivity in Kuwait and highlight political demands as in the case of the *diwaniya* and *chai ithahha*, I contend that these examples have limitations because they take place in exclusive settings, affecting access and appearance of certain publics based on class, gender, nationality, and location. The mall is a landscape and one can argue that malls can incorporate spaces for *diwaniya* and *chai ithahha* gatherings, and perhaps even cricket courts. Yet, there is something about the tactility of the landscape that is unsatisfied by the mall. The mall is meeting a certain need but is insufficient, as it remains an exclusive, private, and closed space. Parks stand as complex cultural spaces of representation and risk and they offer the best opportunity for an inclusive atmosphere. The practices highlight a potential for parks in dealing with privatization and segregation. Embracing and reinterpreting these practices in more inclusive parks may lead to the appearance and representation of more publics in spaces tailored to a place's identity and people's needs. This could mean introducing multiple programs in one space, like gathering spaces for a *diwaniya* and *chai ithahha*, and sports areas, within diverse urban settings, while also focusing on the micro-scale of design elements like seating. This paper concludes that public parks which embrace such practices begin to respond to the needs of society with all its complexity, becoming a terrain for fostering both community engagement and placemaking.

Keywords: public space, expansion of publics, parks, cultural landscapes and sports

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Introduction

Practices of publicness differ all over the world and in many instances, they allow similarities and differences between multiple publics to arise. Within the Kuwaiti context, four very different practices of publicness – the *diwaniya*, *chai ithahha*, mall gatherings, and cricket games – become very important and worthy of study for future public park projects. The four activities all include and exclude certain publics and thus have benefits and limitations. Common public space discourses do not acknowledge such practices. By examining these activities, I am highlighting the importance of focusing on these practices within the literature because of the practices' potential in place-making in public parks. I aim to better understand how multiple publics in Kuwait may begin to benefit from the incorporation of the practices in future parks at a time of increased privatization. Currently, the four practices take place in private settings apart from the cricket games and thus allow and/or inhibit certain publics and actions in their current existence. This paper is less about the practices in Kuwait, and more about putting into question practices ignored from the literature, to see how they potentially lead to more inclusive and culturally sensitive parks.

Chai ithahha (women's morning tea), *diwaniya* (pl. *diwaween* or *diwaniyaat*) (men's evening gatherings), cricket games, and mall gatherings depict practices of publicness that are unique to the Kuwaiti context. These examples inherently combine an activity and a particular space. The cricket games take place on public lots that are yet to be developed. Although the other examples facilitate public interactions, they exist in private spaces. This resonates with Jürgen Habermas' (1962) notion of the public sphere which allows one to imagine public life occurring in private spaces. Each of the four practices has different origins, meanings, spaces, and crowds. However, they share the fact that they are practiced by people in Kuwait regularly, thus requiring attention. The social and political impacts of the four activities also deserve attention. One example that speaks of gender roles in Kuwait is *chai ithahha*, which is a women-only gathering that happens in private residences or nowadays in cafes and restaurants. Another powerful example is the *diwaniya*, which is mostly a space for men to gather and talk, but nowadays they are opening up to women. Socially, both private gatherings, at different times of day, allow men and women to argue and speak about both important and rather trivial issues. Cricket games allow migrant workers to celebrate their own identity within a completely different cultural context during the early mornings and late afternoons. The mall allows people to mingle with and flirt with people of different backgrounds, and maybe even meet significant others throughout the day. While the practices may seem apolitical, the conversations taking place in private gatherings speak to local and global politics; *diwaween* can even impact who wins a seat in parliament. While the cricket games do not inherently deal with politics, they highlight a tactic in fighting against the social order in Kuwait, which prioritizes Kuwaitis over immigrants. South Asian workers don't have public spaces to call their own, leading them to set up impromptu cricket spaces to reclaim their identity through active participation in public space.¹

Yet, one must also understand the limitations of the four practices due to their existence in exclusive and private settings, and especially concerning the separation of multiple publics. I use the word publics to try and get away from the notion of a single

¹ Asians make up the majority of the population.

public as this excludes many social groups, or publics. The Ninth session of the World Urban Forum highlighted the problems of increasing privatization leading to greater inequities, barriers, and segregation of different social groups (Bravo, 2018.) While the four examples enrich social connectivity, and some preserve cultural heritage and influence the country's politics, they reveal problems of exclusion, segregation, and social stratification. The affiliated spaces are private (apart from the cricket spaces) and homogeneous. I must clarify that these practices are not wrong or bad, and especially when it comes to the gendered aspect. While in other contexts one would expect that these conversations could be had in a mix-gendered setting, the historical, religious, and cultural aspects make this gender separation appropriate. In Kuwait, numerous activities continue to take place in single-sex spaces including public schooling. It would be very commanding to expect all men and women to gather and debate in this eclectic context which has both conservative and liberal crowds. Rather, one must begin to understand the dynamics and activities of this place and incorporate them in designs. Designed parks from such a perspective would allow the representation of more publics in a more culturally sensitive manner. There is space for landscape architecture within these practices and this paper questions what such public spaces that preserve place identity can look like.

Beginning with the premise that public parks stand as complex cultural spaces (Czerniak & Hargreaves, 2007), and spaces of representation and risk (Meyer 2007), I argue that reinterpreting these practices within the literature and incorporating them in parks may lead to the appearance of a greater diversity of publics, enriched public spaces, and more successful urban placemaking. This suggests more balanced and equitable park design. This effort nurtures social connectivity, respects different cultures, and highlights hidden tensions in society, allowing people to see and confront their differences. In the end, the paper highlights two things: the importance of incorporating such practices of publicness within public space literature, and the role of parks in democratic/semi-democratic societies in expanding publics and allowing for co-existence. While some may question incorporating mostly private practices in public space, especially when arguing against privatization, I argue that the selected practices are worthy of study because they both facilitate the needs of people in Kuwait and placemaking at times of increasing privatization and capitalism.

Methodologically, this paper employs critical theories on public space and parks, writings on Kuwait's practices of publicness, field observations, and secondary sources including newspaper articles and photographs. The ethnographic research took place in Kuwait, and briefly Dubai, during the summers of 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Practices of publicness

Chai ithahha

Several scholars have studied the relationship between women, space and politics in Kuwait (Al-Mughni 2000; Alenazy 2007; Alsayer 2014; Al-Ansari 2016). However, morning tea, or *chai ithahha*, is an understudied social and political ritual for Kuwaiti

women.² In this practice, women traditionally get together for light snacks and tea in private residences. *Chai* refers to tea and *ithahha* refers to the morning time. This takes place on weekdays around 10 am for an hour or two and the number of women varies in each setting. These gatherings typically involve women who do not work outside of the household. Interestingly, a television program hosted by female hosts titled '*Chai Ithahha*' broadcasts live on weekdays at 10 am on the national Kuwait Television Channel 1 (Chai Ithahha, 2019). Officially labeled as a 'social program,' it covers topics including medicine, psychology, finance, art, literature and more. The origins of *chai ithahha* are unclear, but according to Fouad Al-Mogahwi, a researcher of Kuwaiti heritage, this ritual started centuries ago (Al-Soula, 2013). Due to changing times, these gatherings take place nowadays in coffee shops or restaurants, as well as in private residences (Al-Soula, 2013), which speaks to Habermas' (1962) conceptualization of the public sphere in coffee shops. Rituals may adjust with time, suggesting that the spaces that support them must adapt as well.

Moreover, *chai ithahha* started as a social ritual but has taken a more political turn at a time when society discusses and monitors political events locally and globally (Atifa, 2013). This is true especially in the aftermath of political events like the Arab Spring (Atifa 2013). Nouriya Al-Kharafi states that the political overshadows the social in these get-togethers, while still stressing the importance of social networking through morning tea sessions (Atifa, 2013). This resembles London coffee shops of 17th century England that were privately owned but publicly used to have political debates (Cowan, 2005). While *chai ithahha* gatherings may seem, at first glance, like superficial slander sessions, they operate as spaces of meaningful exchange because they are a place in which women, who are not actively engaged in the public sphere are reclaiming their political voices. Unemployed women are still an important part of civil society and this morning tea ritual emphasizes that.

Diwaniya

The *diwaniya*, which is both a practice and space, started as a gathering for men to socialize and converse. The term *diwaniya* speaks to both the physical space of the congregation and the practice of gathering itself (Clemens, 2016). The term comes from the word *divan* in Persian, meaning a formal council room. Numerous scholars study the social and political aspects of the *diwaniya* and its importance in Kuwaiti society (Al-Jassar, 2009; Alhabib, 2009; Alhajeri, 2010; Clemens, 2016; Almutairi & Kruckerberg, 2019). Some *diwaween* are more public than others and this responds to the nature of each *diwaniya* owner or their social and/or political position. The *diwaniya* emerged in the 19th century, taking multiple shapes and forms from a single room in a house with a private entryway, to an elaborate standalone building. Also, affluence is directly proportional to the scale of the spaces. *Diwaween* may occur daily or less frequently. Clemens Chay describes the *diwaniya* "as 'a given' in everyday Kuwaiti life" (Clemens, 2016: 1), emphasizing the routine aspect of this practice, and a ritual that is "reinforced in the architecture of the courtyard houses" (Clemens, 2016: 8). A typical modern Kuwaiti home most often includes a *diwaniya* or gathering space of some sort with separate access as to respect the privacy of the home. This allows men, and nowadays

² Most of the sources used in this section are based on a newspaper article titled "File of the Week" because it is a much understudied subject matter with limited sources.

women, to invite people to talk, argue and commiserate over sustenance. Figure 1 showcases a men's diwaniya in Mishref, which is an upper-middle class residential neighbourhood.



Figure 1. AlQaud Family Diwaniya, Mishref, Kuwait (Photographed by Mohammed AlKouh)

Politics play a major role in the diwaniya. Several scholars focus on the diwaniya as both a social and political space in the Kuwaiti landscape (Alhajeri, 2010; Clemens, 2016; Almutairi & Kruckerberg, 2019). Historically, Kuwaiti politics took place in the diwaniya, especially the Monday *diwaween* or '*diwaween ilathnain*' (Alhajeri, 2010; Clemens, 2016.) These started in the 1980s as a way for people and parliamentary members "to convey their absolute rejection of the resignation of the cabinet and the dissolution of parliament" (Alhajeri, 2010: 37). One may recognize the *diwaniya* as an informal political space because it deals with public opinions, which in turn affected the formal parliamentary field. Members running for parliament undertake *diwaniya*-hopping to make sure they reach a larger voting audience, which in turn impacts who succeeds. Thus within the *diwaniya*, politicians build relationships to navigate political life. Hannah Arendt states that "wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action" (Arendt, 1958: 199), democracy takes place. The *diwaniya* stands as a democratic space that goes beyond people's social lives.

Even though this space was historically associated with men, the diwaniya today caters to all genders and ages. The mechanisms through which one is included, or for that matter excluded, vary from one setting to another. For instance, in more liberal neighborhoods, it is normal for women, especially those interested in politics, to attend and host *diwaween*, thereby diversifying *diwaniya* crowds. However, while women and men may attend some *diwaween* together, many are still segregated. Monday crowds vary in age, as anyone eligible to vote may choose to attend, in particular, ones hosted

by campaigning politicians. Furthermore, high school teenagers host *diwaween* within their homes, suggesting that this historic practice appeals to the youth. While the *diwaniya* remains very ‘Kuwaiti’ in nature, it persists as an example of successful heritage, which has continued through time – one that has been preserved by the people themselves. Abdullah Alhajeri defines the *diwaniya* as “the first democratic institution in Kuwait [where] it is one of the oldest and most deeply rooted social institutions of the Gulf States” (Alhajeri, 2010: 24). Although the *diwaniya* is a private space, Alhajeri describes it as “the first pseudo-parliament in Kuwait, in which various views could be exchanged with full democracy” (Alhajeri, 2010: 28). Thus one may interpret the *diwaniya* as a gathering which helps establish a civil society.

The mall



Figure 2. People walking at the Avenues Mall, Rai Area, Kuwait (Photographed by Gareth Doherty)

Generally speaking, malls in the Persian Gulf countries stand as both a social and a capitalist space. This contrasts a vast body of research on malls in urban studies that defines malls as deceptive, controlling, and strictly consumerist spaces, (Crawford, 1995; Goss, 1993; Kohn, 2004; Sorkin, 1999; Zukin, 2011), neglecting the meaningful social interactions that take place in them. While some may say malls are social spaces everywhere, one can argue that they embody a unique condition in this region. Due to

the limited nightlife options in Kuwait, along with the extremely hot climate, people utilize the mall as public space, walking and socializing in the shopping mall without necessarily consuming.

This past Ramadan in Kuwait, numerous malls were packed with people exercising and walking during the last couple of hours before breaking fast at *futour* time (sunset). Since the country lacks shaded public spaces, people resort to malls to shelter themselves from the summer sun. They do not eat or drink at the malls, as the law bans this during fasting hours, and so people do not necessarily spend money.

Even in non-Ramadan days and evenings, people from different classes, ages, and nationalities flock to the malls to get away from the summer heat and walk around (Figure 2). Some malls cater to different classes by having ‘luxurious’ high-end zones and other more affordable hypermarket areas. Additionally, free parking exists in many malls. Gulf Scholar Rana Al-Mutawa (2018) states that many malls in Dubai “cater to different segments of the population, leading a diverse set of demographics to share the same space (cheap fast food joints and restaurants selling edible gold desserts can be found within the same vicinity)”. This resonates with the diverse Kuwaiti social structure.

Also, the male and female gazes, not to mention the security gaze, play a huge role in the mall experience. Ironically, within the socially conservative Kuwaiti context, common mall activities include flirting while walking and people watching. These can result in dating or flirting with no further interaction. The fact that such taboo activities take place here allows people to ‘tactically’ subvert the social rules.³ In the Kuwaiti mall, such activities practiced while walking highlight a sense of working around the panoptic social and security gazes and thereby fighting the system.

Cricket

Driving around the city on an early Friday morning, one would normally see multiple cricket games taking place throughout the urban area (Figure 3). Cricket games are not exclusive to Kuwait City – they take place in other Gulf cities where there are large numbers of South Asian male workers, like Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, as well. However, in 2018, the city of Sharjah “banned playing cricket in undesignated areas” (Elsheshtawy, 2018). In Kuwait, these games take place on vacant lots, which are not privately owned but rather are under the government’s authority. Numerous games take place simultaneously on some of the vast spaces, with small audiences watching on the peripheries. The players are all young South Asian men. Some are clad in all-white uniforms, some wear formal team jerseys, and others are dressed in casual sportswear attire. Figure 3 shows one of the largest empty lots, standing directly across the street from Al-Shaheed Park, which is the largest urban public park in Kuwait City. The vacant lot is generally flat and empty. A few old buttonwood trees line the boundary of the site, with a larger number on the side bordering the main ‘Al-Soor Street’. The site is used for parking during the busy weekdays for people working or visiting the buildings nearby, which include souks like ‘Souk Al-Awqaf’ and governmental institutions like the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

Sports spaces, in general, are missing from the official parks of Kuwait City. Two-thirds of Kuwait’s population are non-Kuwaitis. Asians make up the majority of the population

³ This speaks to Michel de Certeau’s notion of tactics.

(Al-Jasser 2012; Central Intelligence Agency 2018). Cricket is a very popular game for South Asians in Kuwait, particularly Indians, Bengalis, Pakistanis, and Sri Lankans. Yet, upon reviewing the public spaces and parks of Kuwait City, no designated spaces for such activities can be found. Private sports clubs exist, but the cost of using these spaces is prohibitive for many people. Low-income migrant workers are forced to find places elsewhere. Reem Alissa states, “Migrant worker’s spatial practices in Kuwait’s public space subvert [city planners] explicit exclusionary nature, injecting a brief public vision of communities rendered invisible by the official plan of the contemporary state” (Alissa, 2009: 85). I would add that by using empty public lots, not only do these workers emphasize their existence within society, but they do so through their local practices. If anything, they are placemaking in the city.



Figure 3. Multiple cricket games taking place on a vacant lot on a Friday morning, Kuwait City, Kuwait (Photographed by Weaam Alabdullah)

Limitations

While the practices of publicness highlight strong social and political values in society, they are relatively limiting, low-risk, and lacking in diversity since they are mostly private and exclude many publics. The lack of diversity in public spaces is not unique to the Kuwaiti situation (Doherty, 2017; Elsheshtawy, 2011, 2013; Fawaz, 2016; Kanna, 2011; Salama et al., 2017). Most recently, Maryam Nazzal and Samer Chinder unpacked this in the Lebanese context, where political meetings increasingly occur in private spaces, highlighting the problematic lack of awareness when it comes to the rights of citizens

(Nazzal & Chinder, 2018). At a time of increasing consumerism, communities must rethink the reliance on privatization to create spaces for public life.

Public space is essential because malls, residences, and private gathering spaces remain inaccessible to many people and diversity is for the most part absent in these spaces. The cricket spaces highlight this strongly. Income, class, gender, area of living, political ideology and affiliation all come into play. Acceptance into the private settings is bestowed upon those who know about the gathering to begin with, or those who fulfil a certain identity that resembles the identity of the space's owner and crowd/attendees. Most *diwaniya* and *chai ithahha* gatherings take place in residential neighbourhoods, and like-minded people, for the most part, attend the same gatherings because each neighbourhood has a certain character. Mary Ann Tétreault and Haya Al-Mughni describe the change in Kuwait's urbanity through time, and when it comes to the post-oil neighbourhoods, they state, "The new neighbourhoods introduced new boundaries based on nationality, age cohort, and family status" (1995: 412). They describe how some areas closer to the city centre, like Shuwaykh, are primarily occupied by merchant families, and how some neighbourhoods, like Jahra, which are farther away, are housed by Bedouin families (Tétreault & Al-Mughni, 1995). For the most part, neighbourhoods closer to the city centre, and those adjacent to the sea, are the most expensive. Moreover, an area like Hawalli houses many non-Kuwaitis; other areas may be populated by mostly a singular Muslim sect, like Rumaythiya, which primarily includes Shiite Muslims (Tétreault & Al-Mughni, 1995). Thus, each neighbourhood has its unique identity based on income, class, religion, nationality and political affiliation. In some conservative neighbourhoods, the *diwaniya* may exclude women completely or allocate a separate area, and thus women are left out of conversations and confrontations. Low-income migrant groups are in many ways excluded from both political and social life, congregating instead in vacant lots, streets, and sidewalks (Alissa, 2009). While malls may seem to be more diverse spaces, they still generally cater to the middle and upper classes.

Due to required approval to enter private spaces, and prior knowledge about them, like-minded people end up gathering together, thereby minimizing both risk and struggle, which are necessary in public space. Don Mitchell highlights the importance of embracing struggles in public space, as marginalized groups are seen, represented, heard and become part of the public potentially leading to justice (2003). Farah Al-Nakib argues that malls are a "prime venue for antisocial behaviour" which lack diversity (2016: 4). She also states that malls are "anything but public ... [they] do not foster any type of social public interaction or exchange other than economic exchange" (Al-Nakib, 2017). While I disagree with Al-Nakib on the non-existence of social interaction in malls, I agree with the fact that these spaces are anything but public because they do not allow the physical representation of 'others' and thus lack diversity. This past 'Eid Al-Fitr, I was walking in a grand shopping mall in Dubai when I saw a security guard stop five young, South Asian, working-class men from entering the 'luxury' area. A large South Asian migrant workforce exists in the Gulf countries. While all areas of the mall flow into one another, and while no physical barriers signify approval for entry, the guard became that barrier. The appearance of these young men did not appeal to 'the mall,' thereby leading to their exclusion. Scenarios like this demonstrate the segregation

enforced in spaces like malls, while private spaces add another layer of exclusivity to social life in Kuwait.

Framing malls as public spaces minimizes the importance of actual public spaces like parks, which are undeniably spaces of representation. Mitchell states that “[struggle] is the only way that the right to public space can be maintained and [the] only way that social justice can be advanced” (2003: 5). Thus, the actions and occupation of a particular space make it public. This highlights the need for democratic public spaces like parks, which increase in value as time elapses and a broader range of interactions are facilitated.



Figure 4. Al-Shaheed Park, Kuwait City, Kuwait (Photographed by Weaam Alabdullah)

All four practices highlight simple requirements for public space. They require plenty of room for gathering or playing sports; shade; basic services like restrooms; food and drinks; and a safe, non-judgmental environment. Incorporating these necessities in parks may allow for the representation of more publics, leading to the creation of public spaces that both respond to this particular locality and allow for greater access. While the private residences and malls will probably continue to exist and cater to their particular audience, one questions what will happen to the cricket games once development takes over the cricket sites.

If one were to look at Kuwait’s existing public spaces, they fall under two categories: first, the derelict spaces, and secondly, the overly controlled spaces. The derelict spaces include neighbourhood parks, public beaches, and vacant sites. The overly controlled

spaces include newer public projects such as Al-Shaheed Park (Figure 4), which is funded by the Emir's Council. Public spaces under both categories generally don't include areas for sports or larger social gatherings, or sufficient shading. Thus, existing public spaces fall short from addressing basic needs.

Parks

The public park came into being with democratic societies, emerging in the 1830s as a result of a desire to improve urban conditions in Europe and the United States. Frederick Law Olmsted questioned how the United States could create parks that improved such issues and also reflected democratic political and social values. While Kuwait is a semi-democratic country, public parks can help expand publics and allow for co-existence due to their openness, not to mention centrality within urban settings. Yet, not enough parks exist in Kuwait City, especially parks that cater to people's needs. While some may argue that summers in Kuwait are hot and people would rather seek shelter indoors, I would argue that many public spaces are nocturnal during the summer. Besides, landscape architects may begin to rethink human comfort in extreme arid public landscapes creating an opportunity for social bridging. Also, Kuwaiti public spaces may be more actively used in the winter, similarly to parks in colder climates that are primarily used in the summer.

Public spaces and particularly parks have the potential to become a platform for the four practices while respecting the multiple cultures overlapping in this space. Parks exist as more than spaces of nature but as spaces of representation and risk. In *Large Parks*, Julia Czerniak and George Hargreaves (2007) understand parks as complex cultural spaces. James Corner highlights the "profound cultural and ecological virtues" of parks where they "function as 'green lungs,' cleaning, refreshing, and enriching life in the metropolis" (2007: 11). Elizabeth Meyer (2007) reframes parks as spaces that work with difference, diversity, difficulties, and risk. The idea of risk can mean taking social risks in the hopes of enlightening a community. Parks stand as public spaces of awareness and recognition, provoking citizens to think and act. Meyer states that using 'disturbed sites,' which one can understand as physically and/or socially disturbed, as parks, "resurrects the park's agency as a vehicle for engendering new connections between private actions and public values, between individuals and the world" (2007: 75). Parks may highlight hidden battles, bringing them to the forefront and allowing for the construction of public opinions around them. For example, a hidden battle could exist between conservative and liberal Kuwaitis based on the concept of mixed-gender gatherings at the park. Earlier this month, a conservative parliamentary member deemed dancing at a concert an immoral act, which affects Kuwaiti society (Al Sherbini, 2019). In February, several Islamist parliamentary members questioned the government about a dancing event at the Mubarkiya Souk in Kuwait City, which they suggested was violating 'the system' (Alanba, 2019). Awareness of these issues in public spaces could allow other people to speak up. Would this happen at the mall? Maybe, but most probably not, as security would immediately involve themselves before letting this issue escalate. The constructed environment performs as the terrain for political action, increasing its political agency. Representation reveals something hidden, which allows social risk to increase, possibly allowing people to act. This can mean considering others when taking

political actions in the future. Furthermore, the park becomes a site for multiple practices to take place simultaneously, allowing others to acknowledge their existence. A park design project stemming from existing practices and the notion of risk can empower members of the community and perhaps lead them to act on issues affecting the larger society. In Kuwait, this can mean bringing publics that were not brought together before and this works across different scales from the macro to the micro. At the metropolitan scale, choosing sites in more urban settings rather than suburban areas may allow more 'publics' to converge. Many of Kuwait's present parks exist in suburban neighbourhoods that are primarily composed of Kuwaiti residents. Within the park's scale, allowing different programs that are not typically close in proximity to exist in the same place, may increase the appearance and awareness of multiple publics. For example, cricket and soccer areas, barbeque areas, and kids play areas could exist in the same park. By seeing people who one wouldn't usually be around, i.e. those from different social groups, genders, ages, classes or nationalities, one becomes aware of the real composition of society. However, this does not mean that all these publics must interact or gather together. The park simply creates opportunities.

Cricket is largely popular amongst the South Asian male community, while soccer attracts a huge multi-national group of people. Nevertheless, existing parks lack spaces that support these sports. Barbequing used to take place on the weekends alongside public beaches by numerous expatriates. Then, the municipality prohibited barbequing in public space in 2015, arguing that they affect the cleanliness and aesthetic of public facilities (Saleh, 2015). A park that combines all of these activities simultaneously may allow moments of reflection where people start to question the prohibition of public barbeques and acknowledge Kuwait's societal diversity, its diverse interests, and needs. It allows people to question the discrimination within the system and have space to comment on it. As a semi-democratic country, people have the right to change rules like this. An urban park could be flanked with small, open buildings or pavilions that serve as *chai ithahha* tea rooms in the morning and as *diwaween* in the evening. It can have large empty spaces for cricket games on Friday mornings that can transform into spaces for soccer games in the weekday evenings. The incorporation of such practices through the lens of social risk and cultural sensitivity simultaneously would accommodate publics from multiple classes, genders, nationalities and income groups, and it would start to uniquely frame parks in Kuwait.

At the micro-scale, focusing on seating may also allow more inclusivity. Laurie Olin (2017) emphasizes the utility of public seating in affecting our role as citizens in a city. Benches and chairs arise as the setting for simple yet significant aspects of daily life, especially for underrepresented groups. The designing of benches begins to deal with heterogeneity and specifically issues of lack of recreational space for underrepresented low-income groups such as the South Asian migrant workers who are not allowed access to the mall.

A simple reframing of where a design project starts from can alter the meaning of a public space, defining it as a space where a whole society rethinks their values, and which reproduces citizens who not only think, but act. Imagine the shift in national mind-set that might occur if more parks facilitated diverse interactions amongst people of different race, class, age, religion, and gender. Where a mall remains a consumer space with little representation, the park challenges its users to be more conscious citizens. The mall does not suffice. The blurry public-private status of the mall traps a

consumer in the world of capitalism and consumption. Similarly, the semi-public nature of the *diwaniya* and *chai ithahha* gatherings creates an unrealistic representation of chosen participants that do not symbolize the numerous publics in society. Public spaces cannot fix societal problems, rather they can reckon with and reveal them, and this in itself creates potential in dealing with disputes and differences and maybe even creating more resilient citizens.

Conclusion

Parks founded on practices of publicness can recreate a distinct sense of place and become catalysts for new publics and communities because they stem from the needs of multiple groups of people. Public space literature highly affects landscape architecture as a practice, yet, the four practices, amongst others in different geographies, do not fall under accepted discourses of public space. Their absence from the literature affects landscape architecture and particularly park projects. Bringing forth such activities within the literature may allow a change in the design of parks, increasing their potential in placemaking.

Unpacking the four practices in one conversation highlights the importance of rethinking meaningful yet exclusive activities in parks to benefit more people. Parks that acknowledge and work with such practices may allow more people and societal issues to 'appear'. Some tensions would no longer be hidden, allowing people to have a say about them. Perhaps then, new hope, new politics, and multiple publics, as opposed to only a singular 'public', can emerge. This has major implications on the politics of a given society, creating an infrastructure to support future action. All of this matters because it allows us to rethink public space theory, static design methods and the scope of design, as well as understand that cities may benefit tremendously from constructed spaces of nature that take into consideration a specific society's practices of publicness.

Such parks stand as more than recreational open spaces. Potential exists in the expansion and reproduction of citizenship in these spaces, where one foresees an inclusion of more people as citizens in a city. Landscape architects can use people's practices as inspiration to create parks that take cultural forms restricted to the economically privileged and (for the most part) Kuwaiti citizens and flip this formula upside down. Doing this would create spaces that allow more people to be visible and take action, while also maintaining the cultural identity of the place and allowing people to do what they want. An example of this is the Cross Cultural Diwaniya, "a monthly discussion forum where local residents gather to discuss and debate topics of importance relating to the community – including social, political, and economic issues – in a multilateral and open environment" (Cross Cultural Diwaniya 2013). Topics range from censorship to women's rights, to voting and more. This takes place in Masaha 13, a privately owned art-infused community space composed of a library, gallery space, and café. How would a plethora of *diwanias* and *chai ithahha* gatherings perform in the park – a more open and inclusive space?

The challenge is not to create a park of a unified whole where people must talk to one another, but to find design alternatives that speak to multiple publics. This occurs while working with the publics' wants and needs, as well as the place's complex identity. The *Superkilen* project in Copenhagen, Denmark represents, under the premise of

supporting diversity, a utopian idea where design can fix social limitations and foster community immediately. The design celebrates symbols from multiple religions and cultures within a half a mile long urban space that spans across ethnically diverse neighborhoods in Copenhagen. One might question whether a direct rather superficial symbolic translation of one's religion leads to immigrants feeling at home in this Scandinavian context. One also might question how 'heterogeneity' is taken up in the research and investigation part of any design process. Incorporating richer existing practices within a given place that speak to people's needs may bring social problems forward to our attention, allowing different publics to speak about them, and instigate action around them. Understanding that gender segregation at times is necessary and preferred for certain groups of people is important, and working with that rather than against it becomes crucial. How would the political debates in a park *diwaniya* differ, where the men can still be separated from women and migrant workers, but still see them upon entering the site, walking around or playing sports? How would this affect who they acknowledge and assume to be part of society during their conversation and political actions? How would the park *chai ithahha* debates differ, where the women are having tea without the male gaze, yet the men can be seen outside and acknowledge their existence? How would the mixed-gender *diwaniya* seem to people passing by? While the *diwaniya*, *chai ithahha*, the mall, and cricket spaces may be understood as 'spaces of appearance' (Arendt 1958), I consider how to expand 'the public' into 'publics' through public space theory and design to include more participants but without enforcing a foreign ideology of what a public space or park is. *I argue that one ought to focus on practices of publicness unique to each context, both in the literature and practice, as this affects placemaking practices.*

One may argue that the four practices discussed in this paper are exclusive because people participating in them want to exclude others. Hence, we must turn to parks in cities as a space for shared experience and diversity in the face of radical capitalism and segregation. I do not wish to suggest that gatherings should be forced into public spaces. Rather, I argue that creating opportunities for public space gatherings allows for a more realistic representation of publics, allowing different people to acknowledge and/or respond to them.

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Public Space and Social Polarization. A case study of the New Wave Turkish Migrants with a comparative analysis of Berlin, İstanbul & Ankara

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Abstract

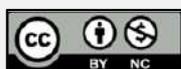
Public space is by no means a place for complete unity or harmony. It is always open to contradiction and struggle. It is a space in which dwellers of the city find various ways to cope with living with one another. This could be in the form of negotiation, or confrontation. Or, it could be where they avoid others, where they maintain distance. Yet, there is always the expectation of all parties, to have one's own place in that struggle. Turkey has experienced increased social polarization in recent years, and this is reflected in its public spaces. With the 'us' versus 'them' mentality in politics being also found in everyday urban life, the gap between different lifestyles has widened, hostility among people has intensified and urban space became a battlefield rather than a ground for commons. Hate and intolerance began to define what is *public*. In the meantime, a great number of high-skilled, young individuals, particularly from İstanbul and Ankara, began to leave the country to carve out a better future; and, one of the popular destinations was Berlin, Germany. This paper addresses this group of young migrants to make a comparative analysis on the definitions of public space and to rethink the social production of urban space. With thirty interviews and two focus groups, it aims to consider the reflections of social polarization on public space.

Keywords: public space, social production of space, urban, youth, migration

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Prologue

In 2013, during the Gezi Park protests, an anonymous manifesto was published addressing the demands of people from different social groups saying that “I am here, because I don’t want to be told how to dress; what to eat or drink; how to make love; and how many children to have. I don’t want to be insulted due to my lifestyle or choices. I want to be able to express my thoughts freely, even though they may sound nonsense to others. I don’t want to be discriminated against due to my religion, my religious sect, my ethnicity, my sex or my social stature. If I am unhappy with something, I want to be able to freely walk into the public arena and loudly say “No!”.”¹

On June 18th, 2016, a group of ten to fifteen people attacked a vinyl shop, called Velvet Indiegroun Records, in Beyoğlu Fırzağa during an event for the famous British Rock Group Radiohead. A section from the news on that day reported that “the reason for the attack was alcohol consumption”. One attacker yelled, “Shut this place down, now! Aren’t you ashamed of drinking during Ramadan” while another one threatened people “I will burn you while you’re inside. Try drinking during Ramadan again and you’ll see what will happen.”²

Introduction

In recent years, Turkey has faced several socio-political crises and conflicts. These were especially brought to light through the Gezi uprising in 2013³, the numerous terror attacks and coup attempt in 2016, and the referendum for a presidential government in 2017. This tension regards mostly lifestyles, beliefs, life choices and preferences. But all are eventually linked with civil rights and liberties. Social arena witnessed conflicts among secular and religious perspectives. As an element of these debates, life choices became a highly controversial topic. Discussions about abortion⁴, use of alcohol, sexual preferences, and even the visibility of pregnant women⁵ are spoken about.

Once a dominant view on these issues begins to be spoken about and imposed in the media medium and in the public realm, groups of people who have a different worldview begin to dissent to said societal assertiveness. The more dominant the imposition is, the tenser the opposition becomes. It has not only been politicians who have got involved in these rough in debates, but also people without political backgrounds have started to keenly argue about their life choices. Some groups advocate the ideals and opinions of the government which have been mostly grounded by either religious codes or conservative points of view⁶. However, some others (not necessarily supporters of the opposition parties) rejected the externally imposed ideals and norms regarding personal matters, choices and lifestyles⁷. Through the increasing polarization between the religious versus the secular, one political party versus another, one sect versus another, and one life view versus another, people in Turkey eventually found themselves in a very strict ‘us’ versus ‘them’ situation. Even by a mere observation on the streets, one can easily trace how frequently people mention this separation, just by noting the ‘us’ and ‘them’ in an idle conversation, even though it is usually difficult to find a concrete and explicit defined ‘other’ party. Obviously, this polarization did not emerge in one day or as the result of a single event. The notion of difference became more and more visible between various perspectives and lifestyles over the years. Eventually, the public sphere became more under dispute day by day.

Cities are no longer like the *agoras* of Ancient Greece. They are crowded, multifaceted, complicated and contested. Acts, interactions, encounters are not facile or smooth. Any practice in public space appears as an act of claiming a right over that place. Consider 'occupy' movements, protests against discrimination or pride marches. However, claim of public space does not solely appear in the form of a concrete resistance. Sometimes it reveals itself in small acts of everyday life. Through such ingrained practices, urban space is socially produced. But the question of this paper is: if there is high socio-political polarization within a society, then how will public space be? Beyond the natural complexity of urban space, this question uncloaks a deeper tension.

These past few years have not only born witness to harsh conflicts in the public arena. Today, Turkey is also under the risk of facing the negative consequences of brain drain. A great number of highly skilled young professionals and students are in pursuit of leaving Turkey and to continue their lives in other countries (Yörükoğlu & Kaya, 2017: 31). This paper, on the basis of their comparative experiences in İstanbul, Ankara and Berlin, investigates the ways of defining urban spaces with respect to accessibility, inhabitability, the feeling of security and freedom, and sharing commons. This paper neither makes any generalizations about public space use nor builds a naïve understanding of city life. The only aim it seeks is to reconsider the meaning of public space, particularly in times of political turmoil and social segregation. It anticipates being an empirical contribution to existing public space literature.

Research Design and Methodology

The best way of understanding what people think about their own experiences is to let them speak about their opinions and practices. So, the research for this study was conducted based on qualitative research techniques; in-depth interviews and focus groups. Without any attempts to be representative in terms of the sample, thirty in-depth interviews were conducted and two focus groups were organized with a composition of five to six participants. Interviews consisted of three main parts: migration experiences, public space use (comparatively), and social networking in everyday urban life. Focus groups, on the other hand, were mostly about the feeling of freedom, security, claiming rights over a city and the consequences of social polarization in Turkey.

Understanding the Sample

The sample was selected intentionally from a recently migrated group in order to gain deliberate and comparative knowledge on all cities within the study. This group of young, highly skilled individuals was not homogenous in terms of the reasons for their migration. However, all interviewees can be considered as migrants and have had experience on both sides. At the time of the interviews all interviewees lived in Berlin, but they previously lived either in İstanbul or Ankara, for amount of considerable time. In the social sphere, this group is called the *New Wave*, because there was a former massive migration to German cities in the 1960s as a result of work recruitment from Turkey by Germany. *New Wave* refers to a second wave of migration and it was originally a Facebook group which was created for cooperation and socialization among

Turkish newcomers to Berlin. Since this name was used so frequently among participants, the group is referred to as being a part of the *New Wave* in this paper as well.

Migration is a transformative practice and it is by no means an easy experience. Before addressing the main questions of this paper, there is need to understand the daily lives of the *New Wave* and their experiences in the public sphere. According to the participants, the main difficulties involve: language, isolation and the chances of establishing roots in Germany.

In the interviews, the most frequently mentioned difficulty was language. As Berlin provides numerous English-speaking opportunities in education and the labor market, coming to Berlin seems relatively easy to many people. However, without compatibility in German, many young individuals experience difficulties finding jobs or being permanent residents in Germany. The lack of knowledge of German even reveals itself in public life despite the fact that Berlin is one of the European cities in which use of the English language is rife. A respondent expressed that “I felt myself voiceless before I learned German, in those times, feeling in that way made me lose my motivation towards participating in social life in Germany.”

The second difficulty reported was the feeling of loneliness. It was repeatedly mentioned that this is due to a lack of close relationships and the inability to get along with others. A female respondent, a 25-year-old, stated this feeling of isolation as “It is not because I don’t have friends here. It is nothing to do with social relations either. You can’t be *really* close with your friends here. There is always a context in which you see each other and certain topics that you talk about. It never goes beyond this context.” One reason for such feelings may be that the participants were recent migrants to Berlin, with no long establishments in the city.

Finally, regarding the chances of establishing roots in Germany, only a few interview partners said that they are totally fine with going back to Turkey after their educational studies are completed. The majority of answers about returning to Turkey are either rigorously rejected, or accepted only as a worst case scenario. Therefore, managing to somehow establish roots in Europe comes into prominence in their future plans. But that is also a challenge. A respondent expressed that, “At first, it was all good in Berlin. But as time passes and as I try to make a life here, it is getting tough, especially in terms of finding a job.” but still continued by saying, “But, I mean, still, my most miserable day in Berlin this year is still much better than my best day back in Turkey, in 2016.” So, anxiety about their future plans continues in a different manner for them as they think of being at ease in comparison to how they previously felt in Turkey. The preference is still Berlin.

Understanding the Setting

Germany vastly became one of the targets of immigration firstly because it encourages the migration of educated groups in industrial, technological and scientific areas of work and it aims to generate employment in the business sector⁸. Berlin is favored for its relatively cheaper living conditions, its wider range of educational and occupational opportunities and its vibrant social life. It has attracted a great number of educated, highly skilled young professionals, academics and artists from Turkey as well. Moreover, existing Turkish culture in German cities provides the potential for opportunities for

Turkish people that come to Germany either by social networks (relatives or acquaintances who have lived here and are established) or by the deep-seated Turkish society and culture. Although it does not appear as a reason to migrate, it eventually makes the city attractive⁹.

İstanbul, on the other hand, by being the largest and most crowded city of Turkey, offers various educational and occupational opportunities in comparison to other cities in the country. However, it also demands great effort to build a life and to make use of public spaces. Due to its traffic problem and dense population, the use of time and space can rarely be efficient. It is a capital of culture on one hand, but a chaotic urban order on the other. Especially in the last decade, the urban fabric of the city has drastically changed because of new construction projects in the area. İstanbul is a city in which the aforesaid polarization and conflict are experienced the most. This is because a great variety of distinct social groups and lifestyles are involved. The characteristics of this huge crowded city are surely innumerable, but for the purposes of this research, the reason for selecting İstanbul is due to the background of the participants. Either as a hometown or as the city where they attended university (and in some cases where they also worked for a while), respondents were asked to compare İstanbul to Berlin.

Ankara, as the last city within this study, is different from İstanbul. It is the capital of Turkey and for the most part it revolves around affairs of the state. It is usually described as ‘city of civil servants’ by people to define its mediocrity. Among thirteen interviewees, four of them came to Ankara for higher education and the rest remarked that Ankara is both their hometown and the city in which they continued their higher education. This indicates that despite its well-known universities, in comparison to İstanbul, Ankara is less likely to be a preference for many respondents to study if they are not already living there. Regarding the space use of Ankara, unlike İstanbul or Berlin, it has a relatively uncomplicated urban life. Nevertheless, socio-spatial segregation is higher due to the larger areas allowing for the creation of suburbs which in turn enlarges the distance between socio-economic groups.

Social Production of Public Space

Cities are produced, not only by urban planning, but also by their dwellers, each day with each practice in public space. Jane Jacobs argued that urban planning should not dominate urban space since social life exists in the sharing of commons, using spaces, and encounters; and these are particularly what generate a social life of mutuality, tolerance and togetherness (Jacobs, 1961). Taking into consideration the three cities within this study, Ankara, İstanbul and Berlin, all have a particular way of being socially produced. As this paper argues, in Turkey, this social production is highly based on socio-spatial segregation, particularly in recent years. In the light of the interviews conducted, the most frequently mentioned characteristics of these cities and the ways of using urban public spaces are analysed to understand the consequences of this segregation more clearly.

“Ever since its birth, public space has acted as a central social and political arena in which free expressions of ideas and opinions are allowed and encouraged.” (Qian, 2018: 13). For example, Arendt (1958) referred to the Greek agora to describe an ideal case of publicity. Habermas also argued that ‘only in the light of the public sphere did that

which existed become revealed, did everything become visible to all.” (Habermas, 1989: 4) However, unlike Arendt or Habermas, who saw commonality and harmony in public space, Judit Bodnar described public space as “the clearest expression of the urban predicament, the tension between the physical proximity and moral remoteness of city dwellers.” (Bodnar, 2015: 2091). The predicament and tension is not necessarily an actual battle of dwellers, but may appear sometimes as the strategy of negation or the ignoring of others.

In this paper, both views are acknowledged and it is argued that urban life is a unity of conflict and harmony. Thus, all three cities will be approached according to their perceived levels of harmony or tension. In the analysis, the important concerns are about free access to urban places, the visibility of differences in urban environments, the feeling of security for everyone, and on the basis of all these, the possibility of sharing commons in the city. These are the fundamental topics of how “public space” was defined by interview participants.

The Case of Ankara



Figure 1. Eskişehir Road in Ankara (December 2019)¹⁰

Sennett defined public space as ‘dead’ (Sennett 2013: 27), where the conflict is transformed to *distance* between social classes and public space turns out to be an abandoned place. Ankara is a good example of this upper-middle class disengagement from the rest of the city; whereas, in İstanbul and in Berlin social segregation does not appear through *spatial distance*. In Ankara, it is created with huge boulevards between boroughs, widening the urban setting beyond edges. Some suburb areas like Çayyolu or Yaşamkent have emerged in the last decade with the desire of the upper-middle class for detachment¹¹. The suburbanization is a visible feature of social production in this city and it strengthens the polarization not by conflict -because there is little interaction- but

with spatial distance. Public space is jeopardized of rupture when there is a huge spatial gap compounded by an existing social polarization among different groups. Although suburbanization is understandably seen as a result of social class mobility, under the circumstances of high political polarization, it could also be analysed as a result of socio-political conjuncture.

Neighbourhoods like Çayyolu, Yaşamkent, and Ümitköy are considered to be the dwelling of 'secular', highly skilled, well-educated, upper-middle class families. Whether this statement is correct or not is not the topic of this study. However, this perception was visible in the interviews. For example a 24-year-old interviewee explained that "I was living with my parents in Çayyolu before coming here. But I wasn't only residing there. I was spending most of my time there with friends and family. I find Çayyolu as a place of my own. There is a standard of people, you know, it is a *liberated area*." This emphasis on it being a liberated zone was also mentioned by other respondents regarding Çankaya –an inner city district of Ankara- and for the Kadıköy District of İstanbul. These statements carry strong meaning as they refer to a strict distinction of political views. However, there was no clear expression of from what, or from whom, these places were seen as *liberated*.

The inner city has also been under considerable change through urban transformation. While speaking of public spaces in Ankara, an interviewee mentioned that the only place she could ever live in Ankara is the Çankaya District. According to a recent research study, Çankaya is the most educated district of Turkey as it also includes the university campuses of Middle East Technical University and Bilkent University¹². She particularly emphasized this information while saying that she somehow identifies herself with the area.

According to the interviews, the most prominent characteristic of public space in Ankara is the absence of open areas. In other words, public space is described by its deficiencies. A respondent laughingly said that, "I wasn't aware of these constraints in Ankara, before I moved to Berlin. I didn't ever think about it while I was living there." The constraints she refers to are mainly the lack of "open areas to spend time in". Another interviewee mentioned the same problem in Ankara, "There are malls everywhere. If you don't have a car, you can't even go somewhere for fresh air. There are roads, shopping malls, other roads, and then more shopping malls." Similar to other responses, Ankara is defined as a city of enclosure. This enclosure is sometimes based on a transportation and access issue; at other times it is related with social polarization. A respondent clearly expressed the latter reason by saying, "In Turkey we were living seriously confined. It was often a discomfort. For instance, when I was about to go somewhere, I needed to think through which areas I would pass. If I would go through one neighbourhood than it would be better to wear these jeans, but not a skirt." The consideration she gave to clothing is not a choice she made herself but rather a pre-emptive solution to any possible confrontation –a gaze, maybe even a disturbing word. This kind of example was also given by other respondents, and it can be seen that public space in Turkey are very likely to be based on this discomfort, of changing oneself for *others*.

Parallel to a feeling of discomfort, insecurity in the public arena emerges as an important dimension of city life. Especially among women, the feeling of security is frequently mentioned as a luxury in public spaces of Ankara and İstanbul. A respondent from

Ankara said that, “It is even absurd to mention how uncomfortable and insecure I was when I lived in Turkey. Even a short walk alone down the street at night was an issue.” According to the interviewees, being a woman in Turkey appears as a challenge and it requires conceiving time and space all the time. For example, an interviewee spoke about her public space experiences in the city center of Ankara, saying that she always had to consider what time it was and where she was at that moment; “If you are a woman, you live according to time and space. If it is late at night you should take a cab, not walk... if you are on a busy street at night it is fine to walk, if it is a desolate place, you should find your way out.” The feeling of security is also tied to being familiar with a place. For instance, people usually feel more safe and comfortable in the neighborhood they have lived in for many years. However, gender dimension goes further and exceeds familiarity. A female respondent said that, “I spent time in Tunalı for almost a decade, since I was a teenager; I know every inch of the area. I didn’t even think about my safety there. But, it is not because I was safe, rather because I already knew how to secure myself. It is something that I built on my own.” Therefore, the feeling of safety does not come from the public space or social environment per se. It is rather recognized and developed through various strategies of women themselves. How this situation has changed after they moved to Berlin will be explained later.

To sum up, Ankara remained insufficient for many respondents to fulfill their expectations about public space. Most prominently, the lack of open areas, the lack of public transportation and the feeling of insecurity were mentioned as the main characteristics of the city. But more importantly, almost all interviewees from Ankara mentioned that they were not fully aware of the enclosure and restrictions they had faced in Ankara until they moved to Berlin.

The Case of İstanbul

As interviews revealed, social life in İstanbul is formed according to districts as the city is too large and transportation is difficult. Many interviewees emphasized that they only used specific boroughs in the city. These are; namely, Kadıköy, Beşiktaş, and Beyoğlu. There is nothing surprising in the localization of inhabitants in specific districts; whereas, it is worth seeing how the concentration of specific groups determines the urban fabric in those public spaces. Kadıköy is considered to have the most *hipster* public in İstanbul. There is a locality which originated, mostly, from a boulevard name, but nowadays it is considered as if it is a neighborhood, called Moda, and it has undergone massive gentrification in the few last years. Secondly, Beşiktaş is one of the biggest and oldest districts of İstanbul. It has historical significance dating back to the Byzantine and Ottoman empires, but it also has contemporary importance for transportation, social life and business. The well-known neighbourhoods of the European side of İstanbul; namely, Etiler, Bebek, Levent, Arnavutköy, Nişantaşı and Ortaköy, are located under the Beşiktaş municipality and district¹³. Beyoğlu is another district which has the neighbourhood of Cihangir which has functioned for many years after a gentrification process as a safe locality for intellectuals, artists and bohemia.



Figure 1. A street view from Nişantaşı – an upper-middle class neighborhood (December 2019)



Figure 2. A vintage store in a gentrified area around Kadıköy, Moda (March 2019)

Most respondents from İstanbul mentioned that they were using İstiklal Avenue and Beyoğlu as the meeting point of their circle of friends. Then, they all added, “But those

places have changed, so radically changed.” When I asked one interviewee to explain this change, she told me, “Well, you can’t find people like us anymore. Even if you could, there is a majority that you could never interact with. I can’t even recognize those places, places where I spent the entirety of my teenage years.” Yet another interviewee stated, “Not only people, but, I mean... The venues have changed. Maybe this is something that we see only because we used to spend all of our time in İstiklal, Beyoğlu, and Taksim. It is ugly now. Somehow, it is not for me anymore. I can’t explain how, but I can feel it.” Such expressions give the very importance of being an inhabitant of a city that one cannot verbalize but surely feel, especially the change. Also, the expressions of ‘people like us’ and ‘cannot even recognize now’ show the very ingrained feature of social segregation and disappointment. In the expression of ‘people like us’ the identity of the other ‘people’ is never crystal clear and only a few respondents were willing to depict the other. As for many other respondents, when I asked them to open it up, answers were similar to this one: “You name them... Say it government supporters, say right-wing, conservative, religious –but I mean not really pious people, who have nothing to do with politics” The ‘other’ is thus never specified in an explicit way but all respondents spoke about ‘them’ as if we all know who they are. Secondly, for the feeling of disappointment that is indicated in many interviews with ‘cannot find anything suitable for me anymore’ or ‘cannot recognize the place’, it is highly related with a discomfort of ‘others’ prevailing in the public space. A 25-year-old interviewee made a conspicuous expression; “In last two years, and especially with that coup attempt, we realized that the city does not only belong to us... that the city has other owners as well.” As it is visible in this statement, public space is conceived as a place to own, to occupy and to fight for, against ‘others’; and for İstiklal and Taksim, it is believed that the battle over public space possession was lost.

With the change experienced in most preferred localities of the European side, many people, including some interviewees, crossed over to the Anatolian side, to Kadıköy. It is not certain whether it was the moving of people that created a new urban life there or that the desired cafés and bars no longer found in Taksim, already existed there before the move. Either way, the change in Kadıköy brought gentrification, bohemianism and social transformation.

Kadıköy has always been one of the localities similar to Beşiktaş or Beyoğlu. However, over the last few years, as many interviewees mentioned, Kadıköy became almost the only locality for their lifestyle. A respondent said that, “Kadıköy is a rising trend. I used live there before moving here (*referring Berlin*). It has changed very fast. Everywhere, there is a third wave coffee shop, a local venue, a hipster bar...” and another one described her neighbourhood, Kadıköy, as: “It is a place where people don’t ever intervene with one another. It is modern. It has people with high incomes. It is where even stray cats are fed, –which, to me, is a sign of social status.” Therefore, Kadıköy is more than a preferred district; it is a symbol of a secular and a modern way of living. On the other hand, some other districts such as Beylikdüzü, Fatih, and Ümraniye are mostly mentioned as unfavourable places to go, to spend time at, or to reside in. These areas are again identified with a *non-specific other*. In other words, interviewees commonly referred to others in the sense of political view as well as social lifestyle and religious belief; however, they never clearly expressed who the other was.

Nevertheless, the connotations of such urban areas are strongly linked with the notion of *other* which eventually creates an unwillingness to go there. Although it requires

further analysis to claim that spatial segregation is a strategy for city-dwellers of the city to prevent the encounter with *the others*; the vague reference of interviewees still indicates a two-sided society. It is not to say that there are only two groups in the city; it is rather the perception of the *New Wave* about Turkish society.



Figure 3. A street view from Bahariye, Kadıköy (March, 2019)

To sum up, the first set of districts is composed of neighbourhoods that are appealing for the high-income group, and many interviewees argued that these are ‘secular’ places. This notion of secularity is not necessarily used in contrast to religiosity. As it was explained by respondents frequently, it is to say that they feel more comfortable with their attire, actions, behaviour and accessibility as there are coffee shops, hipster bars, trendy restaurants and rapid gentrification in these locations. The second set of boroughs, on the other hand, is described as the total opposite of the former; being relatively conservative and not having any attraction for interviewees of this study. A very common usage of the phrases “What would be the reason for me to go those areas?”, “Why would I ever go there?” was observed in the interviews. The implication of *other* also reveals itself here, once again with very vague definition.

The notion of security was also a frequently mentioned topic among interviewees from İstanbul. Having the same issues in public space as a woman just as in Ankara, respondents from İstanbul also spoke about the freedom of choice as a part of feeling secure. A 25-year-old male respondent mentioned security with a deliberate awareness of his own identity in terms of gender by saying; “Look at me; a man, a heterosexual, a person who grew up in Güngören, İstanbul... I had never really experienced nor understood the feminist movement until my ex-girlfriend from Croatia came and stayed in my parent’s house. We couldn’t use 95% of the city without having trouble. In the end, I spent all of my money at an air-bnb in Beşiktaş to be comfortable.”

Although he complained about this situation, he later added that, “Putting up a fight for all identities adds beauty to social life.” However for many other respondents, especially those who fought that battle for their sexual identities, the struggle is tiring most of the time. A respondent who identified as queer said that, “Knowing that I wouldn’t be attacked by someone for holding hands with my boyfriend is something I value in Berlin.” and he succinctly summarized the problems he had previously faced in Turkey by saying that, “In Turkey, my life choices are considered to be a psychosexual disorder.” The feeling of security is not necessarily about gender identity, but in this research study it appears to be the most prominent feature of those seeking safety and freedom. In order to feel free in public space, people need to feel safe with their life choices and identities. Ankara and İstanbul do not provide this sense of security or freedom to the interviewees, and while in Berlin they realized just how restricted they had previously been. This will be analysed later on.

The Case of Berlin

In Berlin, both suburbanization and borough separation exist, but socio-spatial disengagement is relatively low in comparison to the former cities discussed. Unlike Ankara, Berlin has an extensive subway and railway line which allows for more frequent everyday encounters among different social groups. Even if not upper class, the middle class surely coexists with all city dwellers and a great variety of lifestyles have contact with each other. Unlike İstanbul, Berlin is considered to be largely constructed by its inhabitants. An interviewee said that, “Everywhere is public space in Berlin. It’s for the people, really... I have got used to it. Every place is somehow occupied by people. Parks, bridges, everywhere is open to us. In İstanbul, you only have small places like this.” For İstanbul, public space is mostly seen as a place of restriction. A strong control mechanism functions as a key to be comfortable and free of judgement. A respondent stated that, “You can’t speak your own language (*emphasizing a mindset, knowledge*) everywhere in İstanbul. You must be quiet in some places.” As regions and localities are highly identified with the generalized mentality of its population¹⁴, public space is directly related with free speech and free actions.

The most striking finding about the public spaces of Berlin for the New Wave is the shift in perception towards *others* and *differences*. It was already said that respondents claimed that they would never go to conservative neighbourhoods of Ankara or İstanbul, or that they would never be willing to live in a society which restricts their lifestyles and choices. However, the same respondents narrated that in Berlin their comfort zone is Neukölln or Kreuzberg where the main portion of the Berlin Turkish

population and similar regional backgrounds exist. To be more specific, while the New Wave felt suffocation of socio-political restrictions in Turkey and matched this with a vague definition of *other*, there is a shift in their perceptions towards that *other* lifestyle. The urban fabric of Neukölln and Kreuzberg is highly similar to districts of Keçiören, Sincan, Ümraniye, Fatih (areas which are unfavorable places in Turkey for those of the New Wave); certainly not similar to Kadıköy, Çayyolu or Nişantaşı. The New Wave prefers to be in the most European style places in Turkey, and, yet, chooses the most orientalist localities as their comfort zone in Berlin. An interviewee, similar to many others, said that, “Tiergarten, Charlottenburg... Such areas are also nice, but I feel more comfortable in Neukölln or Kreuzberg.” while another also stated that “Neukölln is the middle east of Berlin. But it is the place I feel most comfortable. There are always gentle people around.” As it can be seen from the words of interviewees, the New Wave is not unaware of the social environment of Neukölln or Kreuzberg, just as they are not unaware of the socio-spatial conjuncture of Turkey. Therefore, this perceptual shift is not a delusion. Nevertheless, it is also impossible to say that it is certainly a conscious shift.

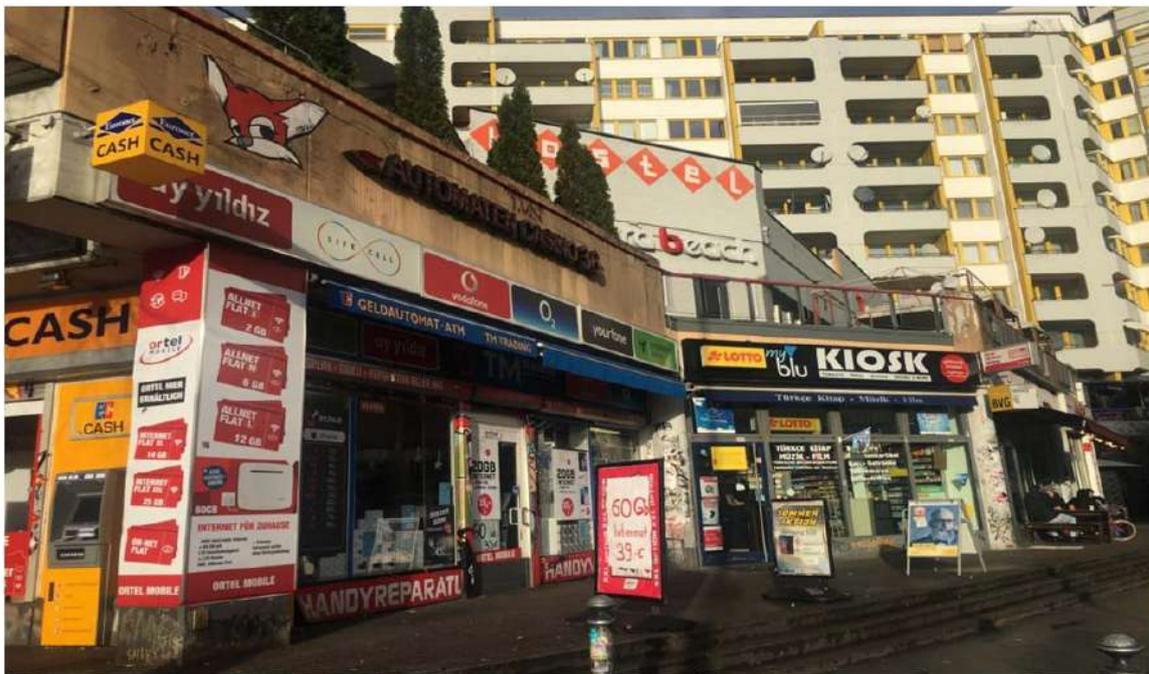


Figure 5. Shops with Turkish labels in Kreuzberg/Kottbusser Tor (December, 2019)

By looking to the public space use of the New Wave in Berlin, it was revealed that what the New Wave desires is not to be isolated and free from differences. On the other hand, they are certainly open to differences as they also have differences within and as they are willing to live with all diversities. Their unwillingness to interact with *others* is not because of a delusional hatred towards conservative or religious people. They only do not want to live under the control and domination of *others*. And the notion of *other* is surely a restricting, discriminative perspective in the big picture, not individuals. And this feeling of contradiction, struggle and sometimes even hatred gradually disappeared

after the *New Wave* started to live in Berlin. Berlin provided places of escape and it also provided the sense of security that no government can play a dominant role in their daily lives. As government interventionism was removed from the scene, the strict line between *us* and *them* began to disappear. And later, this is reflected to public spaces – like Neukölln or Kreuzberg, in which radically different lifestyles can coexist. As for the notion of security, once again, Berlin is mentioned as a ‘city of freedom’ for all respondents, except two. Especially when compared to İstanbul and Ankara, the feeling of security, freedom, and the manifestation of identities, interviewees found there to be prominent differences between Berlin and the other two cities. Since all respondents believe that Berlin is a place of co-existence for all identities and lifestyles, they usually argued that security and freedom come with the acceptance of whoever they are. A queer interviewee clearly expressed this as, “There is a place for everyone here and this is why I have never felt as an outcast or stranger in Berlin. And also, this is why I don’t think about changing myself according to different places in the city. I am who I am and I am safe like this.” The idea of being recognized brings the feeling of security in public space. Moreover, the character of public space is conceived by interviewees accordingly.

Conclusion

To turn back to the introduction, Turkey experiences a great deal of segregation which paves the way for tension, hatred, and violence in public space. A young, high-skilled, educated and now migrated group told their experiences of public life comparatively. Among Ankara, İstanbul and Berlin, it is shown that the main concerns are about feeling safe, feeling free and having inhabitable public spaces without the fear of being an outcast or controlled. Moreover, in terms of public space use, it is demonstrated that the *New Wave* is highly interested in open public areas where they can socialize. In light of all these concerns, all three cities were analysed. First and foremost, the issue on public space is about feeling familiar with and as an inhabitant of a district. In Ankara, Çankaya and Çayyolu districts are described as the most liveable with their characteristics of being educated and secular. In İstanbul, these days, Kadıköy appears to be the district of choice to be free and happy, after the disappointment felt by the *New Wave* in Beyoğlu, including İstiklal and Taksim. The second important concern was about the feeling of security, which can be defined as the safety of one’s life, the guarantee of one’s rights and liberties and freedom from any kind of physical or psychological harm in general; but, it can also be multiplied within other contexts as well. Security can also go along with familiarity and trust. A city in which people feel the most secure is probably be a place they know well, or at least a place they have familiarity with. Especially, when crime is taken into consideration; regardless of actual crime rates, many people will have the tendency to feel safer in the localities they know best. However, the dimension of gender exceeds the notion of familiarity and in some cases it is shown that being familiar with a public space does not necessarily mean that a woman will feel safe there as is, or this may change depending on her clothing. Finally, a significant shift is analysed in the last section. The perceptual shift that emerged with the migration of the *New Wave* to Berlin. This shift in perception includes tolerance and a sense of unity with the *others*, which previously had appeared to be an undesirable group to live with. This shift explains that the desire of the *New Wave* is neither to

escape the people of Turkey, nor to develop a hatred towards them. Their unwillingness to share commons in public space with that *non-specific other* comes from the oppression and restriction they have faced in the last years. This is not to say that this is the only cause for the prominence of social segregation in Turkey. That would be a naive analysis. It is rather only an offer to reconsider how public space plays an important role in unity and commons and how significant it is to use public space for coexistence rather than hatred. The perceptual shift of the New Wave after migrating to Berlin has demonstrated this very well.

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Interview Partners List

	AGE	CURRENT EDUCATION LEVEL	OCCUPATION/ AREA	HOME COUNTRY/CITY	YEARS IN BERLIN
1.	27	UNDERGRADUATE	ARCHITECTURE	İSTANBUL	9
2.	24	GRADUATE	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	ANKARA	3 MONTHS
3.	29	GRADUATE	NEUROSCIENCES	İSTANBUL	6
4.	25	GRADUATE	SOCIAL SCIENCES	ANKARA	1
5.	24	GRADUATE	MEDIA	İSTANBUL	1
6.	24	GRADUATE	INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING	İSTANBUL	2
7.	28	GRADUATE	INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY	İSTANBUL	1
8.	25	UNDERGRADUATE	JOURNALISM	İSTANBUL	2
9.	26	GRADUATE	INTERNATIONAL RELATION	ANKARA	1
10.	26	GRADUATE	SOCIOLOGY	İSTANBUL	1
11.	24	GRADUATE	ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE	ANKARA	6 MONTHS
12.	26	GRADUATE	ECONOMY	İSTANBUL	1
13.	28	UNDERGRADUATE	SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT	ANKARA	9 MONTHS
14.	26	GRADUATE	POLITICAL SCIENCES	ANKARA	3
15.	30	GRADUATE	DESIGNER	İSTANBUL	6
16.	28	GRADUATE	POLITICAL SCIENCES	ANKARA	3
17.	25	UNDERGRADUATE	GRAPHIC DESIGN	İSTANBUL	3
18.	26	GRADUATE	POLITICAL SCIENCES	ANKARA	2
19.	27	UNDERGRADUATE	LAW	İSTANBUL	7 MONTHS
20.	30	GRADUATE	SOCIOLOGY	İSTANBUL	4
21.	29	GRADUATE	SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT	İSTANBUL	3 MONTHS
22.	25	UNDERGRADUATE	SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT	ANKARA	6 MONTHS
23.	24	GRADUATE	MEDIA	İSTANBUL	3
24.	26	GRADUATE	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	ANKARA	5
25.	28	GRADUATE	FINE ARTS	İSTANBUL	1
26.	25	GRADUATE	ECONOMY	İSTANBUL	2
27.	25	GRADUATE	FINE ARTS	ANKARA	2
28.	27	UNDERGRADUATE	ARCHITECTURE	ANKARA	2
29.	29	UNDERGRADUATE	SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT	ANKARA	1
30.	26	GRADUATE	JOURNALISM	İSTANBUL	3

Notes

¹ Retrieved from http://subjektif.org/gezi-parki-bildirileri/#Anonim_Bildiri-18 on 26.06.2018

² Retrieved from <https://www.haberler.com/icki-nedeniyle-saldiriya-ugrayan-dukkani-koreli-8539478-haberi/> Translated to English by the author.

³ For further analysis, see Örs, İ. R. (2014) and Kuymulu, M. B. (2013).

⁴ In 2012, the then PM Erdogan stated that abortion is murder. In following years, this topic was highly debated and even though it was not made illegal, a great number of hospitals and private practices, and doctors have refused to perform abortions since. For more information see https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-kurtaj-cinayettir,VgwTjliEyEuq-9Qcqqy6Ag?_ref=infinite and <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yasa-yok-ama-kurtaj-yasak/gundem/detay/1838845/default.htm> (Retrieved on November, 2018)

⁵ In 2013, a hot debate occurred after Ö. T. İnançer stated that it is not aesthetically pleasing and that it is inappropriate for a pregnant woman to be visible in public after 6-7 months of her pregnancy. This statement was strongly criticized and protested not only by feminist groups and women organizations, but also by a great number of people. The whole statement can be found on <https://www.haberturk.com/polemik/haber/863521-hamile-kadinin-sokakta-gezmesi-uygun-degildir> (Retrieved on November, 2018)

⁶ The prime minister at the time, Erdogan asserted that it was their wish to rear religious youth, 2012. Retrieved from <https://nationalpost.com/news/turkey-pm-recep-tayyip-erdogan-sparks-furor-by-saying-he-wants-to-raise-a-religious-youth> on 18.10.2018

⁷ The manifestation of Gezi Park protests above explicitly reveals this.

⁸ Frank-Jürgen Weise, the chair of the German Federal Agency for Employment, in 2011, stated that Germany needs two million qualified immigrants. Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/tr/iki-milyon-nitelikli-göçmene-ihitiyaç-var/a-15076239> (in Turkish). In 2012, Germany has also observed Blaue Karte EU which enables qualified workers to get a permanent residence permit or a work permit.

⁹ For more information about the pull factors of Berlin for highly skilled young individuals, see, M. Oğuzhan Okumuş (2019) *How Berlin Attracts the Turkish “New Wave”: Comparison of Economic and Socio Cultural Pull Factors for Highly Skilled Immigrants*, (unpublished master’s thesis)

¹⁰ All pictures are taken by the author.

¹¹ For more information on spatial segregation in these neighborhoods, see Ayça Ergun & Ceren Kulkul (2018): “Defining semi-public space: A case study in the gated communities of Yaşamkent, Ankara”, *Turkish Studies*.

¹² The second and third highest educated districts of Turkey are Kadıköy and Beşiktaş, respectively, in İstanbul. For more information about the research and statistics, see the website: http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/874485/Turkiye_nin_en_egitimli_ilceleri_belli_oldu_ilk_uc_sirada_CHP_li_ilceler_var.html

¹³ <http://www.greatistanbul.com/besiktas.html>

¹⁴ Many respondents stated that they prefer certain localities and did not prefer others, mostly due to their inhabitants’ world views and mentalities.

Sustaining the Liveliness of Public Spaces in El Houma through Placemaking. The Case of Algiers

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Abstract

This paper takes Algiers as a case study, highlighting the social use of urban spaces in El Houma, in the Algerian capital, as a form of placemaking, a people-centred approach aimed at improving urban spaces within a neighbourhood.

El Houma is a word for neighbourhood in North Africa synonymous with Hara and Mahalla in the Middle East. El Houma is not a typical neighbourhood that only houses people, it is a socio-spatial product formed by social relations between residents of the same neighbourhood. It is, therefore, a way of representing urban space through social practices, creating a strong sense of community, a sense of place and social interaction. Based on theories and mapping techniques from urban sociology and urban design, the research applies a methodology of activity mapping, in order to investigate patterns of outdoor social activities in public spaces and their correlation with the physical design of the neighbourhood. The research will measure the liveliness of public spaces exploring how people adapted their lifestyle to the built environment and vice versa. The findings demonstrate how the different social activities are spatially distributed, and their impact on the liveliness of el Houma.

Keywords: placemaking, el Houma, social use of urban space, liveliness, Algiers

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Introduction

Cities are enjoyable places to live when they are designed as meeting places, and provide opportunities for people to socialise and strengthen their sense of community. However, at a time of uncontrolled urban growth, cities are rapidly expanding to accommodate the increasing number of people and buildings, ignoring the human scale and needs of people. For example, the proliferation of gated communities and mass housing units are gradually eating up public spaces, leaving little or no space for community activities, and decreasing the opportunity for communities to coalesce (Wang, 2017; Yigitcanlar et al., 2015).

A city should provide opportunities for walking, cycling and enjoying public life in a safe and comfortable environment; through a human-centered design of streets, spaces and parks, it should increase the presence of people in public spaces, their safety and their liveliness. A human-centred city creates a pleasurable atmosphere for visitors and for those who live, work, and play there. It offers spaces based on human scale that encourage social interaction and social cohesion. Richard Rogers in the foreword of Gehl's book "cities for people" (2010) argues that people should have equal and easy access to public spaces, exactly as they should have to clean water, he also emphasised the importance of socialising, through creating places for sitting, talking, interacting and playing.

It has been widely claimed that liveliness of urban spaces enhances social sustainability within the neighbourhood, through frequent social use of space, which contributes to achieve safety, social interaction, social inclusion, sense of belonging, liveliness to name but a few (Jacobs, 1961; Schipperijn et al., 2010; Worpole and Knox, 2007). Social use of space or life between buildings as Gehl (1987) termed it, refers to outdoor activities, which can be divided into three categories; the first category comprises the necessary activities, which are everyday tasks, like going to work or school, waiting for a bus or shopping etc. The second category regards optional activities like taking a walk to promenade, sitting, standing to watch urban life etc. The third category is about social activities, which are related to the interaction of people in public spaces, like children at play, meetings between people, communal activities, greetings and chatting...

Social activities are the most influenced by both the physical and social environments, whereas the necessary activities are to some extent compulsory and take place throughout the year, under all weather conditions. Conversely, the optional activities only happen when the weather and place are favourable. Social activities can also be termed as resultant activities, as they evolve from the other two categories, so in high quality and inviting public spaces, people tend to stay longer and perform different activities that result in increasing social interaction and social cohesion of the community (Gehl, 2010). Social activities can also happen in residential streets, parks, near workplaces, corners of streets, public spaces and squares, and between neighbours or people with mutual interests or through a simple contact between unknown people. Several studies condemn the modernism era for rejecting the city as an urban space, where people meet, live, work and play. In developing countries, designing human scale cities is complex and neglected; the reliance on modern approaches in designing cities and the importation of foreign born models, led to lifeless and segregated urban spaces (Ahmed, 2017; Rudlin & Falk, 1999; Zhang, Yung, & Chan, 2018).

In order to design socio-culturally appropriate urban spaces, there is a need to understand people's way of life, through observing, mapping and analysing their use of

urban space, to identify people's aspirations and needs. In a time of rapid urbanisation and population growth, it is estimated that by 2030, over 70% of the world populations will be living in urban areas (Komeily & Srinivasan, 2015); therefore, more efforts should be focused on designing liveable, equitable and socially sustainable neighbourhoods around the world.

Many scholars consider the neighbourhood as the most suitable urban element at which sustainability can be applied in order to create sustainable neighbourhoods, and thus sustainable cities (Marique & Reiter, 2011; Sharifi, 2016; Sturgeon, Holden, & Molina, 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). A neighbourhood comprises a variety of spaces, where each space varies in terms of use and accessibility, within a suitable size for studying and strengthening public life.

This research will investigate the liveliness of a public space within a neighbourhood, demonstrating how different activities occurred in the space according to the characteristics of the space (size, land use, urban furniture, and location). The paper aims to present results of the mapping of social activities in a public space, in order to answer the following questions: what are the types of outdoor social activities? How are these activities spatially distributed? Is there a social logic that informs the spatial distribution of the activities? To what context the different outdoor activities contribute to the liveliness of the place? How do these activities contribute to placemaking? Did the activities enhance the social aspect of the space through liveliness?

This paper takes Algiers as a case study; it will highlight the social use of urban spaces in El Houma, which is a word for neighbourhood in North Africa that is characterised by strong social sustainability. The neighbourhood studied in this paper is considered as a true embodiment of El Houma, a place characterised, as several urban sociologists highlighted, by the presence of strong social relations, social practices and positive lifestyles (Bouaouina, 2007; Dris, 2005; Grangaud, 2009; Icheboudene, 2002). Public spaces are a resource in which political and social movements - including political protest, religious activities, etc. - can take place (Mitchell, 1995). This paper focuses on the public space as a space open to the general public, regardless the age, gender or social class, but it does not extend its analysis to political and antisocial uses.

This paper is divided into 4 sections. Section 1 is made of two sub-sections, one includes the research background and aims of the paper, and one where the methodology used in the case study is explained. In section 2, the paper conceptualises the concept of the neighbourhood, and provides definitions and explanations of the concept of El Houma. In the following section 3, the paper sheds light on the literature regarding the correlation between liveliness and placemaking, and their contribution to urban social sustainability. Finally, in section 4, the case study is introduced, analysed and discussion of the findings along with concluding remarks are presented.

Methodology: space-society and mapping

Mixed methods are particularly useful in urban studies; combining the strengths of different methods will help to achieve better results, instead of the limitations of a single approach (Carmona, 2015). By using mixed methods, the research will analyse the relationship between the built environment and the social activities occurring in a square of El Houma as an expression of social sustainability and liveliness through unstructured interviews and social activity mapping. Numerous pioneers of research

and planners have studied public life in urban spaces, in order to provide recommendations to create better neighbourhoods and public spaces, such as Jane Jacobs, William Whyte, and Jan Gehl. This research will build upon their methods and techniques in order to understand the social life of residents in El Houma and identify what spaces respond well to their lifestyle.

This study connects the discipline of urban planning and sociology research methods in order to shed light on the relationship between urban space and social life of Algerians, illustrated through the concept of El Houma. Ethnographic methods of observation will lead to the mapping of social activities and their direct impact on the use of urban spaces. This method is the “snapshot observation”, also known as “activity mapping” that has been developed to understand the social life in urban spaces (Francis, 1984) and people’s activities in urban spaces (Gehl, 1987; Mahdzar, 2008; Shirazi, 2018). According to Groat and Wang (2002), this technique is considered as an ethnographic approach, because it locates the researcher in the real world with the object of inquiry in order to investigate the social life of residents in its natural setting.

The mapping of social activities will allow a better understanding of the social use of space as a way of placemaking and liveliness contributing to the social sustainability of the area.

The observations of the social activities were conducted in an open public space located in the middle of a neighbourhood, which is attended by many people of different ages and gender. The observation and mapping focused on the different social activities happening in the space, such as chatting, playing, strolling, shopping, eating or drinking outside, resting, jogging, dancing, playing music, participating in community activities (Gehl and Savarre, 2013), and any other activities that contribute to social sustainability and the liveliness of the neighbourhood. This open mode of data collection will allow to capture spontaneous and unexpected activities.

The observations of the social activities were conducted during the last days of August 2019, during weekdays and weekends (Friday and Saturday constitute the weekend in Algeria) and at different times of the day, in order to capture the different patterns of social use of space on different days of the week, and the fluctuation of activities during a single day from morning to late afternoon.

The observations and mapping were carried out on many spaces of the neighbourhood, public (open public spaces, main streets), semi-public (secondary streets) and private spaces (residential area or tertiary streets) of El Houma, as part of an ongoing research (PhD). However, for this paper, results that focus on one square will be presented to discuss the social use of urban space as a factor of liveliness in el Houma.

The following section attempts to conceptualise the neighbourhood, which will pave the way towards an understanding of the concept of El Houma

Background paradigms and underlying principles

Conceptualising the neighbourhood

Since antiquity, neighbourhoods held an important part within the fabric of the city, as they spatially formed human settlements and have always been considered the nucleus of community life (Sharifi, 2016; Smith, 2010).

The definition of the neighbourhood could be subjective, whereas it can be dependent on different paramaters, such as the physical design of the place, the availability of

amenities, the residents's perception of the area, population size and the social relations between residents (Barton 2000). However, most scholars agree that a neighbourhood is formed of two interconnected and important components; its physical design and social aspect.

The physical design of the neighbourhood refers to the spatial and functional aspect that is defined by the built environment and the availability of facilities and services, while the social aspect is an interpretation of the neighbourhood as a community held together by social relations, grouping people around a common identity (Barton, 2000; Briggs, 1997; Choguill, 2008; Forrest & Kearns, 2001; Galster, 2001; Hallman, 1984; Jenks & Dempsey, 2007; Martin, 2003; Meegan & Mitchell, 2001; Rohe, 2009; Sharifi, 2016; Smith, 2010; Suttles, 1972).

Neighbourhood and community are overlapping and correlated terms, while each one has a different meaning, they can exist only when they are together; the former is the spatial unit that is made of residential or mixed use development, and the latter is the social construct referring to a group of people with shared interests, support and solidarity (Barton, 2000; Jenks & Dempsey, 2007).

From the early 20th century, several neighbourhood planning theories appeared with the aim to create better and liveable neighbourhoods, the most influential ones started in 1898 when Ebenezer Howard introduced the idea of the Garden City, which stimulated Clarence Perry to develop the Neighbourhood Unit concept in 1923. Subsequently, the Neighbourhood Unit concept was developed further by Clarence Stein and Henry Wright in the planning of Radburn in 1929. From then on, several authors urged planners to opt for a neighbourhood planning that promotes a sense of community and social interaction among residents, like Mumford (1937, 1954), as well as Kevin Lynch, Jane Jacobs and Christopher Alexander in 1960s, who provided recommendations for creating better and liveable neighbourhoods (Fatani, Mohamed, & Al-Khateeb, 2017). Lefebvre (1991) claims that urban spaces are material and functional production of a society; they reflect the way of life of residents who interact with the built environment. Their daily activities are informed by local culture, social life, weather and built environment. Hence, the conception, perception and use of urban spaces vary around the world, as each society produces a distinctive social space that meets its social and cultural aspirations and needs (Lefebvre, 1991).

Accordingly, in Algiers, the social activities that happen in urban spaces are translated into a concept called El Houma, which is a traditional form of neighbourhood characterised by strong social relations. Hence, this research takes Algiers as a case study, discussing the social use of urban space as a form of placemaking that contributes to the liveliness of the area.

Neighbourhood in Algiers: El Houma

Origin of El Houma

El Houma (or El Hawma) is a typical expression for a neighbourhood in North Africa that is defined by social realities rather than territorial divisions as the notion of neighbourhood suggests (Dris, 2005; Grangaud, 2013).

El Houma in Algeria is considered a vital part in the city organisation and the lifestyle of people. It is pronounced slightly different around the country, depending on the accent of the region. In the capital, it is pronounced and written "Houma" or "Huma" by the

residents of Algiers, and both names can be found in many written documents; it is pronounced Hawma in the eastern and western part of the country (Grangaud, 2009). Whilst “El” is the Arabic definite article equal to “the” in English. El Houma is a term peculiar to Maghribi Arabic, and it is only used in North Africa (Dickie, 1994). It is synonymous with Mahalla and Hara in the middle east; it comes from the Arabic word HA-WA-MA which means the environment, a circular perimeter within the eye’s purview; it also indicates a density of an area; main part; bulk; main body; a quarter, a section of a city (Wehr, 1976). The verb is HAMA, which connotes to hover, swarm; circle, to go around.

EL Houma is believed to appear in Algiers since the first settlement and evolved since the medieval ages, where a town was constituted of many enclosed quarters occupied by homogenous communities that are formed of people from the same tribe, family, religion, ethnicity or occupation (potters, jewellers, etc) (Abu-Lughod, 1987). The quarters were closely knit groups, where residents shared mutual rights and duties among each other, which increased the sense of common identity, solidarity, sense of community and security. Each Houma was accessed through one or two gates, which were usually closed at night for safety, the gates marked the boundary between the public and private spaces (Abu-Lughod, 1987; Burckhardt, 2009; Von Gruenbaum, 1958). El Houma was a model of sustainable community where every quarter was a mixed-use development to some extent, satisfying the necessary daily needs of residents. Each Houma was equipped with the necessary amenities nearby such as a public bath, a bakery, a place for prayer, local small shops, and sometimes a local market shared between neighbouring quarters (Bouaouina, 2007; Grube, 1978). With the arrival of the ottomans in the 16th century, the city expanded following the same pattern of homogenous communities to what is today known as the Casbah.

El Houma in contemporary time

A neighbourhood is considered as an expression of El Houma by its inhabitants, only when some aspects of urban social sustainability are present, such as social cohesion, solidarity, trust and sense of belonging etc. These features are a result of sharing life, experiences and events with people within a common place of residence and play. For the individual, El Houma is a social reality as well as a geographic or a spatial one; it is a place where one goes to everyday to play or chat with their playmates, classmates or neighbours who are or have been part of their daily lives for a while creating intricate social ties (Grangaud, 2009). Members of el Houma recognise and support each other in the different events in their life, for instance; when one of them gets married, they invite all the residents of el Houma to share a meal together (Grangaud, 2009). Similarly, when someone dies, people of el Houma gather around their house to show support and solidarity.

People say they no longer have a Houma, when they lose sight and contact of neighbours who had been part of their lives (Grangaud, 2009), or when they move out and cannot recreate a Houma in their new place of residence because of weak or lack of social relations, and not because they are homeless.

El Houma is a socio-spatial concept characterised by strong social relations between residents and the space in which these relations take place; its boundaries fluctuate with the intensity of social interactions (Grangaud, 2013; Gentz and Kramer, 2006). Its physical construct is a support for local socio-cultural practices and social interactions,

while for its social construct, is a community that groups people around a common identity creating a sense of solidarity and belonging to El Houma (Bouaouina, 2007; Grangaud, 2009). El Houma is composed of public and private spaces; the distinction lies in the type of activities performed in the built spaces creating a hierarchy of spaces and privacy, which is important in the culture and urban planning of Muslim countries due to its social and cultural values (Ahmed, 2012; Bouaouina, 2006).

El Houma is a representation of the local social life through the use of urban space; it creates a sense of belonging in the residents that gives them the right to appropriate the space formally and informally. It allows the residents to practice their lifestyle and socio-cultural practices such as: occupying the streets to chat, rest, play cards or dominos, play football, social meetings, gathering around houses to show support in cases of funerals or weddings, informal commerce activities, occupation of public spaces to celebrate national and religious events etc (see figure 1, 2) (Dris, 2005; Gentz and kramer, 2006; Grangaud, 2009).

El Houma today is still apparent in the ottoman Medina (the Casbah) in Algiers, as people built and occupied the urban spaces according to their lifestyles. The Casbah is divided into public, semi public and private spaces, and each space is occupied differently, creating a certain organisation of urban life (BenHamouche, 2003; Grangaud, 2013; Icheboudene, 2002; Grube, 1978).

El Houma is also manifested in the old neighbourhoods of the city of Algiers - the inherited French colonial city- which is the area of investigation of this research. The neighbourhoods were designed according to the nineteenth century European principles of urban planning such as regularity, proportion and symmetry for streets, boulevards, hierarchy of streets, open public spaces with vegetation and fountains, regular facades with arcades at the ground floor, soft edges, and the availability of public facilities (Icheboudene, 2002; Kobis, 2017). These design principles and services ensure the social sustainability and liveliness of the neighbourhood (Gehl, 2010), therefore, apply to el Houma as well. After the independence, the Algerians moved to occupy the inherited French colonial modern city, and because of its flexible urban structure, they were able to adapt the urban spaces to their lifestyle and socio-cultural practices (Dris, 2005).

As it can be seen, the definition and features of El Houma are consistent with the definition of socially sustainable neighbourhoods and communities, whereas urban social sustainability is defined as social equity and sustainability of community (Dempsey et al., 2011; Dempsey, Brown, & Bramley, 2012). A socially sustainable neighbourhood consists of a viable urban social unit that aims to create a sense of community and belonging, common identity, solidarity, community stability, sense of pride, sense of place and place attachment, safety and security, social interaction, cohesion and inclusion, while responding to people's lifestyle (Dempsey et al., 2012; Ghahramanpouri et al., 2013; HACT, 2015; Hemphill et al., 2004; Vallance, Perkins and Dixon, 2011; Yiftachael and Hedgcock, 1993).

Liveliness of public spaces and urban social sustainability

Liveliness of public spaces allow people to walk and cycle safely and comfortably, it encourages and invites people of different backgrounds, age and gender to gather and use public spaces to perform various activities promoting social interaction and social cohesion.



Figure 1. The flexible urban structure of El Houma allows different uses of the space as shown in the picture; the public space can be used to socialise or to celebrate weddings, and other community and cultural events.

Source: Habib Boucetta



Figure 2. Left: Picture shows a gathering of people to show support for their neighbour during the day of a funeral. Right: Belonging to EL Houma gives the right to appropriate the space for informal trading, as shown in the picture

Source: author.

Density and liveliness are interrelated concept; city life requires quality and quantity in terms of number of people, the design of the place and the availability of routes and local facilities. A coherent city design with compactness and reasonable population density, appropriate walking and cycling paths and good quality public spaces, increases the liveliness of an area by allowing various activities to take place. The lively city is a relative concept, the presence of few people in a narrow street indicates a lively place; a crowded place is inviting and welcoming. Conversely, large spaces make people feel lost and insecure, and they are often lifeless; similarly, tall buildings that make streets dark construct psychological barriers discouraging people from passing through (Gehl, 2010). The ground floor of buildings is an important element of the lively city, because it is on human scale, and is the immediate field of vision where indoor and outdoor life interacts. Soft edges along the ground floor provide opportunities for people to interact with buildings and experience city life; they invite people to spend time in the streets, stop to chat, have a coffee or stare at the window shop, all of which ensure consistency of life in the street (Gehl, 2010).

The liveliness of public spaces in a city is fundamental to social sustainability, whereas public spaces are considered as arenas for social interaction and social cohesion. They provide a place for members of the community to coalesce, interact and perform different activities participating in the urban life, consequently, fostering sense of belonging and place attachment, as the users build relationships with the place and the people they see there frequently (Low, 2000).

Social use of public spaces:

Public spaces are considered as arenas of social interaction, they are fundamental in the social life of communities and their social value consist on providing a ground for planned and unplanned meetings between people, increasing liveliness, community cohesion and promoting people's attachment to their locality (Dines et al., 2006; Worpole & Knox, 2007).

The availability of vegetation in public spaces contributes highly to the health and well-being of people. According to several studies, not only it serves as a resource for physical activity, but also helps reduce stress level, mental fatigue and mortality (Schipperijn et al., 2010). Vegetation also cleans the air, reduces pollution, and protects from the hot sun and noise (Ritchie and Thomas, 2008).

Public spaces are places where people can display their culture, through art works, food festivals, music and song performances strengthening the identity of the place and increasing awareness of diversity (Thomas, 1991). They are considered as the nucleus of the community, creating local attachment, providing resources for socialisation and a quiet space away from the hustle of the city, a place where people can read, play cards or dominos, chat or just relax, children can play away from cars while their parents talk and create a local network of mutual support (Mehta, 2014).

The social use of urban spaces increases levels of place attachment and sense of belonging, which in turn encourage residential stability (Ahmed, 2012; Luederitz, Lang and Von Wehrden, 2013), as was discovered by several studies; the more people interact with their built environment through outdoor activities, the more the level of place attachment increases (Seaman & McLaughlin, 2014).

Social interaction between people in public spaces such as streets, parks or other expressions of landscape contribute to unite communities, and grant people a common identity with the place, and vice versa (Ralph, 1976). Whereas, the quality of the place is defined and improved by the presence of people and the variety of activities (Barton, 2000).

Mehta (2014) reviewed the literature to suggest five fundamental elements that a successful public space should have. The five criteria are inclusiveness, meaningful activities, safety, comfort and pleasurability.

Inclusiveness refers to the ability of every member of the community to access and use the public space. The social use of public spaces illustrates the level of democracy within the area, public spaces are considered as a resource for people to come together, interact, and acknowledge the presence and the diversity of each other (Arendt, 1958; Mehta, 2014). An inclusive public space is open and accessible to different members of the society and provides opportunities for various activities to happen in a safe and secure environment (Mehta, 2014). Inclusiveness of urban spaces refers to the notion of the 'Right to the City' initiated by Henri Lefebvre (1991) and recalled by many authors

such as David Harvey (2003). The right to the city refers to the right for the users to re-invent and recreate the physical aspect of the city and in turn recreate themselves and the urban society.

Mitchell (2003) states that the use of urban spaces by people to fulfil their needs makes the space public. Debates on public spaces are often focused on which activities and behaviours are deemed appropriate and permitted in space, whereas, inclusiveness refer to a design that is flexible in order to accommodate various activities and behaviours of its users (Mehta, 2014), whereas the various activities that happen in public spaces promote sociability between the users and contribute to liveliness (Gehl, 2010)

Meaningful activities refer to the multiple and diverse activities, which in turn require flexible urban spaces to accommodate them. These urban spaces are called useful spaces, because they help satisfying human needs in terms of entertainment, socialising, eating, drinking, meeting and gathering (Mehta, 2014). Phenomenology studies suggest that these spaces encourage repeated visits and increase the recurrent use of the space, which in turn generate a familiarity with the space, creating a sense of place and place attachment (Jacobs, 1961; Seamon, 1980).

Moreover, safety is the most important aspect of public spaces, whereas lack of safety reduces significantly the liveliness of public spaces no matter how sophisticated the spaces are. Alternatively, safety promotes a constant presence of people and vice versa (Newman 1972). Safety can be achieved through maintenance of the space, presence of people of different genders, age and ethnic background, variety of activities, availability of facilities nearby, the presence of streetlights and private planting (Perkins, Meeks, and Taylor 1992; Perkins et al. 1993).

Additionally, comfort in public spaces is relevant to numerous factors, such as safety, familiarity with the people and the space, the physical condition of the place, the weather and so on, all of which promotes outdoor activities (Bosselmann et al. 1984).

Pleasurability is related to imageability; spaces are pleasurable when they have a high level of spatial quality, and a recognizable image of the area. In the work on how people navigate the city, Lynch (1960) discovered that people have a mental image of their city, and the places with high imageability are the most comfortable and pleasurable.

The success of public spaces does not solely rest on the architect or the urban designer; it is also achieved by the presence and behaviour of people using and managing the space. People make places more than places make people (Worpole & Knox, 2007).

People make places: placemaking of public spaces

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody”
Jane Jacobs (1961)

Placemaking as a concept has gained attention after it became obvious that urban design should consider the cultural, social, economic, political and spatial aspects as well as people’s perception of the urban space, people’s behaviour and ways of use of urban spaces (Carmona et al., 2010). Placemaking is a collaborative process of re-shaping and revitalising public spaces by members of the community, in order to create better urban spaces. This process promotes solidarity and common identity between people and the

place they share, enhance the physical, cultural and social identities of the place (PPS, 2010).

Placemaking contributes to the social sustainability of the neighbourhoods, whereas it fosters social interaction in a shared space, and social network within the community by encouraging participation in community activities and increasing sense of community (Dixon & Woodcraft, 2013). Placemaking also promotes significantly sense of belonging and a sense of place, as the transformed public space is a result of the imagination, interaction and work of people (Kohon, 2018). It is also vital for well-being, safety and security of the place, it creates a unique identity of the place shared between people of common identity (Aravot, 2002).

Placemaking aims at creating successful urban spaces that are responsive to people's lifestyles and expectations, they are shaped by the residents according to their aspirations and shared interest. Successful urban spaces as was stated in the previous sections, should be inclusive, safe, comfortable, and provide opportunities for various activities and satisfy human daily needs.

Placemaking is not new; ground-breaking ideas were introduced in 1960s by Jane Jacobs, William H. Whyte, and Jan Gehl in 1970s, in order to design cities for people, focusing on the social and cultural aspects and the liveliness of neighbourhoods and public spaces. They encouraged designers to design spaces for the users in order to take ownership of the public spaces through performing different activities creating vibrant public life (PPS, 2007). This research built the methodology upon their methods and techniques in order to study the social use of urban space in a square in El Houma.

Case study: a general profile of the neighbourhood

Algeria is a country located in North Africa, between Morocco and Tunisia; it is the largest country in Africa and is situated on the Mediterranean Sea. Because of its strategic location, the country housed many civilisations as it was exposed to several invasions and colonisations, all of which shaped its culture and built environment (Saoudi & Belakehal, 2018).

The capital of the country is Algiers. It is the most populated city and it is located North, opening up on the Mediterranean Sea. Algiers was founded by the Phoenicians in 1200 BC, then in 944, the Berber Bologhine Ibn Ziri erected the city of El- Djezair (Algiers), which then evolved under the Ottoman Empire from 1516 until 19th century, becoming what is today known as the Casbah or the ottoman Medina. In 1830, Algeria was colonised by France, and a new urban renewal plan was introduced in order to modernise and civilise the city; to change its status of an Arab/Muslim city by building a European city. The planning of the new neighbourhoods was based on the nineteenth century European principles of urban planning; regularity, proportion and symmetry for streets, boulevards, hierarchy of streets, open public spaces with vegetation and fountains, regular facades with arcades at the ground floor, soft edges, and the availability of public facilities (Grabar, 2013; Icheboudene, 2002; Kobis, 2017).

Following the independence in 1962, the Algerian population repossessed Algiers, and adapted the new built environment to their socio-cultural life recreating the concept of El Houma through social use of urban space, social interaction, and participation in community activities as an expression of placemaking (Bouaouina, 2007).

The case study area is a neighbourhood called “Bab El Oued” located in Algiers, in an area of 1.21 km², and a population of 68,364 (Wilaya of Algiers, 2016). It is a neighbourhood built during the French colonisation, and it is based on 19th European urban planning, as it is clear from its homogenous facades of the apartment buildings, the availability of public spaces, and large boulevards and avenues facing the Mediterranean Sea.

The neighbourhood is known for the strong social relations and social cohesion between the residents; sociologists relate this to the social homogeneity of the inhabitants, and to the fact of living together in area while sharing the same space for various outdoor activities. It is a compact mixed-use neighbourhood known for its lively public spaces, be it the main streets, plazas or parks. This research studies the liveliness of a square within the neighbourhood, to demonstrate how social use of urban spaces contributes to liveliness.

Social use of space: analysis and discussion

Taleb Abderahmane square: placemaking process

The square is located in the centre of the neighbourhood, surrounded by mixed-use buildings and streets and separated from the sea front by a vehicular street (see figure3). The square fits well with the surrounding physical design; adapted to the slightly hilly site, it allows visual accessibility and offers panoramic views over the Mediterranean Sea. It also allows physical accessibility through a permeable layout, while providing a resource for various activities of the community. The mixed-use streets that surround the square, offer a variety of functions that contribute to the liveliness of the square namely: restaurant, cafes, ice cream shops, boutiques and a nearby local market. The square successfully delivers social benefits to the neighbourhood, as it is considered as a gathering point -a third place- for the residents and the passers-by. It houses a great variety of activities, age and gender. It contributes to the urban outdoor comfort, being equipped with benches for people to sit, trees, grass, and fountain to provide comfortable microclimatic conditions through shade and natural ventilation.



Figure 3. Location of Taleb Abderahmane square within the neighbourhood and the area studied



Figure 4. The three parts of Taleb Abderahmane square studied in this research

Table 1: distribution of all the outdoor activities in the square

Taleb Abderahmane Square									
Type of activities	S1			S2			S3		
	All	Weekday	Weekend	All	Weekday	Weekend	All	Weekday	Weekend
Sell food / fruits	6	4	2	10	7	3	8	4	4
Sell products				18	8	10	16	12	4
Rest	581	381	200	309	189	120	129	79	50
Talk/chat	106	36	70	94	42	52	52	16	36
Lay down	38	14	24	14	6	8			
Kids play football	13	4	9						
Kids play marbles	29	18	11	26	17	9	14	4	10
Kids play/running around	53	38	15	13	8	5	7		5
People play cards/dominos				106	56	50			
Reading	25	17	8	38	26	12	8	4	4
Eating / drinking	47	32	15	25	19	6	9	1	8
Taking photos	14	8	6						
Cleaning	6	4	2	3	1	2	2	1	1
Gardening	2	2	0	3	3	0			
Taking care of children	2	2	0						
Paid work/shoemaker				8	6	2			

The placemaking in the square is illustrated through the different activities performed by the users, which increase social interaction and social cohesion, building a resilient community characterised by solidarity, trust and common identity which are needed to resist against any potential social disruptions.

The square has various stimulating elements for social activities and social interactions. First, a comfortable microclimate is provided through shade and natural ventilation by means of trees, grass and fountain. Second, benches offer a place for people to sit, rest, read, eat or play cards. Third, the consistent presence of people in the square sends a sign of safety and security and invites people to join.

Table I shows the number of all the outdoor activities in the different parts of the square. The highlighted ones are the social activities used for the analysis.

Although the square is accessible by everyone, it is divided into three areas based on the types of activities that occur in each part, and their implications with the urban design, furniture and users. The park is divided into three parts (S1, S2, S3), and separated by vehicular streets; each part has a different meaning to people, informed by the furniture, the categories of people and the type of activities that take place in it (see figures 4, 5, 6). The lower part of the square (S1), where the fountain is centrally located, has unobstructed views towards the sea and the streets around it. It is an open space that sends a sign of safety unlike enclosed spaces, which look private and unwelcoming. Thus, it is used by people of different gender and age. Families usually gather in this open space, where there is more space for their children to run around play and interact with the fountain, children also play ball games and marbles games in the earthen parts around the trees and the grass (see figure 5).



Figure 5. Different activities performed in Part S1 of the square (chatting, resting, laying down, playing, eating and drinking...)

The presence of children increases the vitality of the area, as Gehl (2010) stated; when children see other children play, they hurry to join them. Kids from the neighbourhood come to play in this square, as it is rare to find an open space with earth and grass where marbles games can take place, hence this square is considered as a place that groups children of the neighbourhood to play and share experiences together, increasing social relations between them, which is important in El Houma. In El Houma, relationships between neighbours are as strong as family ties, because neighbours usually study together, play together and hang out together, with time a sense of community, common identity and trust grow in them and last forever.

The activities of eating and drinking are also common; people can buy food from the restaurants in the surrounding streets, and then sit on benches or on the grass to eat while enjoying public life. The availability of trees attracts people to sit, rest, chat or read a newspaper, whereas in the lower part of the space, people lay down under trees enjoying the fresh breezes coming from the sea.

In S2, the central part of the square, the main activity is playing cards/dominos, it is occupied mainly by mature and old people, who sit there comfortably during summer time and during different periods of the day, benefitting from shade, and enjoying the company (see figure 6). The benches are made of wood, and flexible enough to be adapted to the needs of people; the availability of two seats facing each other allows four people to sit in front of each other. In addition, a removal of the backrest frees the obstruction and allows people to face each other to play cards or dominos. Unlike the benches in the lower part of the square S1, they are made of metal as one element that cannot be modified, so people who play games that require four players facing each other prefer to use the square S2.

In a conversation with some users of this part of the square, which are residents or ex-residents of the neighbourhood, the author sensed a high level of place attachment and sense of belonging with the area by the users. People spend almost their entire day in the space, playing dominos, chatting or reading a newspaper some of them even take naps in the grass under trees. Some of the users, who grew up in the neighbourhood, had relocated in other neighbourhoods, but they still come to their Houma every day to take part in the urban life that was part of their daily life for many years. These users consider this place as their Houma, and their new houses as dormitories. They come to the neighbourhood in the morning, spend their whole day there and return to their house in late afternoon. They are used to the urban life, lifestyle, architecture and urban characteristics of the place, and most importantly, they still have strong social ties with members of el Houma with whom they shared life and experiences together. It was also pointed out to the author, that this place is also crowded in winter, when it rains; people gather in the arcades of the surrounding buildings seeking shelter from the rain, and after the rain stops, they get back to play dominos. According to the interviewees, there is a need for a tent or a structure that protect people from the rain, because this is the only leisure activity that old people have in the area, they unfortunately do not benefit from organised excursions or other activities.

As a sign of placemaking, users of the space adapted the benches to their needs seeking comfort and practicality, however, as this space is only used by people who play dominos, they expressed their desire to have chairs and tables ready to play on, rather than transforming a bench into a table. They also asked for comfortable seats, as the users of this space are mainly old, therefore comfort is essential for them. The author

also found out that young people usually socialise in the main streets, participating in a different urban life. Hence, users of this part (S2) feel identified with the place, and grant themselves the right to use any benches or space within this part freely. Whereas during the observations, the author witnessed a bunch of mature/old people asking a group of youth, who were just sitting and doing nothing to free up a bench for them so they can play their game. They asked them nicely for the bench: “if you are going just to sit here, it is better to sit somewhere else and let us use this bench, because we want to play dominos”.

Informal commerce activities are not present inside the square; however, they are present on the main street that separates S2 and S3, where people sell fruits, toys, clothes or books, aiming for passers.

The space S3, is small and has a hilly triangular shape, it is usually empty because it lacks trees and maintenance. Consequently, fewer activities take place in this space comparing to the other two spaces, which is noticed by the degree of liveliness of the area (see figure 7).

The side of the space S3 that faces the main street offers shaded sitting areas, where people sit there to chat, eat or read a newspaper while waiting for transport, or watching urban life. The upper part leads to a semi-public street, which is usually quiet and occupied by residents of the area. This part of the square is usually occupied by people, who want to have a conversation in a quiet place, sitting on the few benches that exist.



Figure 6. activities performed in part S2 of the square (chatting, resting, drinking, playing marbles, playing dominos...) Source: Author

Overall, the temporal pattern of activities varies during the day; there is a fluctuation of activity intensity overtime. The number of activities is quite low in the early morning, but during the afternoon, the intensity of activities remarkably increases. During the weekend and especially on Friday, when most people do not work, the intensity of social activities increases reaching its zenith and the square becomes very crowded. Various activities take place; they are about double or more than in the other days and last longer and this pattern persists from the afternoon until the evening. The lights are only provided in S1, where families usually hang out, and children play and interact with the fountain, thus, the space is lively in the evening because it is perceived safe and welcoming. Unlike, S2 and S3, which are unilluminated at night, hence they are empty or occupied by homeless or young people (see figure 8).



Figure 7. Lack of activities performed in part S3 of the square due to the poor quality of the space. Source: Author



Figure 8. (left:) the space S2 lacks lights, is empty and lifeless; (right): space S1, is lit, lively and safe

Conclusion

‘Cultures and climate differ all over the world, but people are the same. They will gather in public if you give them a good place to do it.’
(Gehl, 2010, cited in Matan & Newman, 2016: 40)

It is important to acknowledge the various activities that happen in public spaces, which can inform the design of future projects to be responsive to people’s needs and aspirations, as the notion of sustainability advocates. In order to design cities for people, it is fundamental to apply a human perspective, through observing and analysing people’s

behaviour in public spaces. Understanding people's lifestyle will help create spaces that are responsive to the social needs of residents and ensure the liveliness of the urban spaces.

The examined case study showed how the features of the place plus the presence of people define the liveliness of the area and in turn contribute to urban social sustainability. The observations of the social activities during different days of the week and during different times of the day demonstrated how frequent the space is used, and which activities are ubiquitous in the space. Additionally, the unstructured interviews helped gain an insight on how members of El Houma feel about the space.

The characteristics of the square are fundamental in grouping people and allowing them to express themselves through the various and multiple activities, the availability of vegetation provided comfort and shelter from the undesirable climate conditions and the availability of the fountain made the space active.

The design of the lower part of the square S1 as an open public space with unobstructed views ensured the consistent presence of families and children. The presence of different categories of people in the square performing various activities made the square inclusive, safe, comfortable and useful, all of which increase liveliness and community cohesion. Unlike S2 which is used mainly by mature and old people performing at most three activities- reading, resting but mainly playing dominos-, the presence of one category of people and one type of activity limit the inclusiveness of the space, and make the space poor in terms of diversity and complexity, it is true that the space is lively but it lacks diversity and discourage other people from visiting the space as it does not satisfy their needs.

The analysis of the square in El Houma proved how placemaking as a people-centred approach can enhance the liveliness of the area. The observations of the social activities provided an overview of how well the square is responsive to people's needs and aspirations, the presence of people in the square and during different times of the day is relevant to many parameters; like weather conditions, design of the space, day of the week, category of people, urban furniture and types of activity.

The square S1, is very lively during the day and at night as well, thanks to its flexible design which allows various activities to take place; the large area around the fountain allowed the kids to run around, play football, or even ride a bike, while their parents sitting on the benches in front them. The presence of kids sends signs of safety and invites other children to join, thus increase the liveliness. The parents can rest on the benches or the grass around and start a conversation with other visitors of the square, and at the same time watch over their kids, all of which help create social relations between people.

It was noticed that the vegetation in the square contributes highly to the liveliness of the area through providing comfort, as it enables children to play marble games and provide people with a shelter from the hot sun and hustle of the vehicular streets.

People sit under the trees or lay down in the grass while enjoying the view and the fresh breezes coming from the sea.

A strong sense of belonging in the residents was sensed during the observations, accordingly the residents felt the right to customise the space and its use according to their needs. For instance, the part S2 of the square is used by people who have been part of El Houma for a while and feel identified with the area, so they appropriated the space according to their needs. Benches were modified to suit their aspirations to

perform the dominant activity in the space which is “playing domino”. Being part of el Houma not only created a strong sense of community but also place attachment, as the users of square still visit the area despite being relocated to another neighbourhood, therefore, placemaking and liveliness of the square are important elements that highly fostered the sense of community and social sustainability in the area.

The availability of lights in the evening creates a sense of safety and maintains the liveliness of S1, unlike the other two parts of the square. The upper part of the square S3 is rarely used due to the lack of maintenance, vegetation and urban furniture, and being unilluminated at night.

As was demonstrated through this research, social use of urban spaces as a way of placemaking can reinforce sense of community and social cohesion, whereas placemaking as collaborative process allows the community to re-imagine and re-make its public spaces according to their needs. It contributes to the liveliness of public spaces; it enhances their image and inclusiveness, and allows people to participate in community activities, strengthening their sense of community and place attachment. A successful public space is inclusive, safe, comfortable, attractive and lively. It serves as the heart of the community, it groups people in a common place, where they can interact, participate in urban life, and acknowledge the diversity and existence of each other, and it strengthens the identity of the place by allowing cultural activities to take place.

In a hot city like Algiers, people tend to seek shade and comfortable spaces while spending time outdoors. Spaces that are mostly used by people are the ones covered by trees. Urban furniture has also an important role in achieving liveliness, as was demonstrated in the previous sections, people tend to use seats that are suitable for their needs or transform them according to their activities. Safety and security are fundamental in attracting people from different background, gender and age to participate in urban life.

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Prospects of Placemaking Progression in Arab cities

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Abstract

Placemaking is a philosophical ideology that focuses on common and shared values among the different stakeholders aiming at providing better environment for the people. It is a hands-on tool that increases place attachment and yields places that reflect the local identities of the people and so transforms them into active players and local guardians. Several typologies of placemaking emerged overtime, but they are all people driven. On the contrary to public projects ideologies which are not certainly to be people driven at all times. In this regard, the research aims at investigating the different set ups in the Arab region in relation to placemaking philosophy. The study is discussing the two cases of Abu Dhabi and Cairo as two diverse contexts in the Arab region with different inputs and challenges. Despite the potentials revealed for the progression of placemaking in the two studied cities, the research argues that achieving the core philosophy of placemaking is still early in the Arab region. As it requires core and in-depth consideration of public realm production ideologies and its subsequent administrative set ups that would encourage inclusive and democratic process.

Keywords: public space, pseudo-public, alternative publicness, performativity, right to the city, civic pedagogy, tactics

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Introduction

Place making when conducted with transparency and faith from the bottom up, ends up with a place where the community feels ownership and engagement and the design serves the needed function (Project for Public Spaces (PPS), 2012). It highlights the character and distinctiveness of different locations and ensures that policies and programs respond accordingly (Land Use Consultants (LUC), 2009). Thus, realizing that the quality and management of neighbourhoods, streets, and parks are directly related to civic pride, community values or perceptions, and identity is central to place making (ibid). Each place, and each culture is unique, thus issues related to societal norms, climate, and traditions must be all considered (Project for Public Spaces (PPS), 2012). Every culture needs to discover the tools and approaches that shall work for them (ibid). Power relationships is pivotal in the success of participatory and strategic planning process, as it can alter or affect the character of the outcome according to the strongest interests and values (Austin, 2014; Mehaffy, et al., 2018). Economic interests in particular dominate planning and design solution expressed in the persistent expansion of suburbs (ibid).

Research background and problem

In a wider understanding of the built environment and encompassing the physical and non-physical dimensions of the space and the interrelationships between them as well as focusing on structures and mechanisms that govern the relationships and processes, placemaking is an ongoing holistic process (Dempsey & Burton, 2011). It has been noticed lately the effects of the growth of human societies, changes in lifestyles and technological advances development leading to a sense of placelessness where places do not convey any meanings (Najafi & Shariff, 2011). As placelessness is described as culturally unidentifiable environments that are similar anywhere (Najafi & Shariff, 2011). In that sense Relph argues that landscapes should be considered through the lens of distinctiveness and standardization rather than place or placelessness, especially in a globalized era that is continuously changing to similar lifestyles and settings (Relph, 1976, reprinted 2008).

It is argued that there are four types of place making as identified by Michigan state University, where each type suits different places and community needs; standard place making, strategic place making, Creative place making, and tactical place making (Michigan State University Land Policy Institute, 2015). Standard place making mainly aims at creating quality places that people would like to live in, work, and play, while strategic place making mainly targets achieving a specific goal related to raising economic, social, and cultural prosperity of a community, this type mainly targets knowledge workers and tends to be larger and in specific fewer locations (ibid). Creative place making tend to animate public and private spaces through institutionalizing arts, culture and creative thinking in the different aspects of the built environment, and tactical place making is most of the times a phased approach of the process of creating quality places through short term commitments and realistic expectations (ibid).

On the other hand, Project of public spaces categorizes public space projects in relation to the governance structures that produce them into four development types (PPS, 2018). Project-driven spaces, Discipline-led projects, place-sensitive approach, and

place-led process (ibid). The first type, project-driven spaces, emerges most of the times from a top-down bureaucratic leadership that mainly targets on-time, under-budget delivery (ibid). Places created via this approach usually follow general set guidelines with no regard to local needs or desires. Discipline-led projects as the second type on the development spectrum, relies also on a singular vision of experts/design professionals or other disciplinary silos. Although the produced places are relatively of higher value, they still fail to act as a well-functioning public gathering place (PPS, 2018).

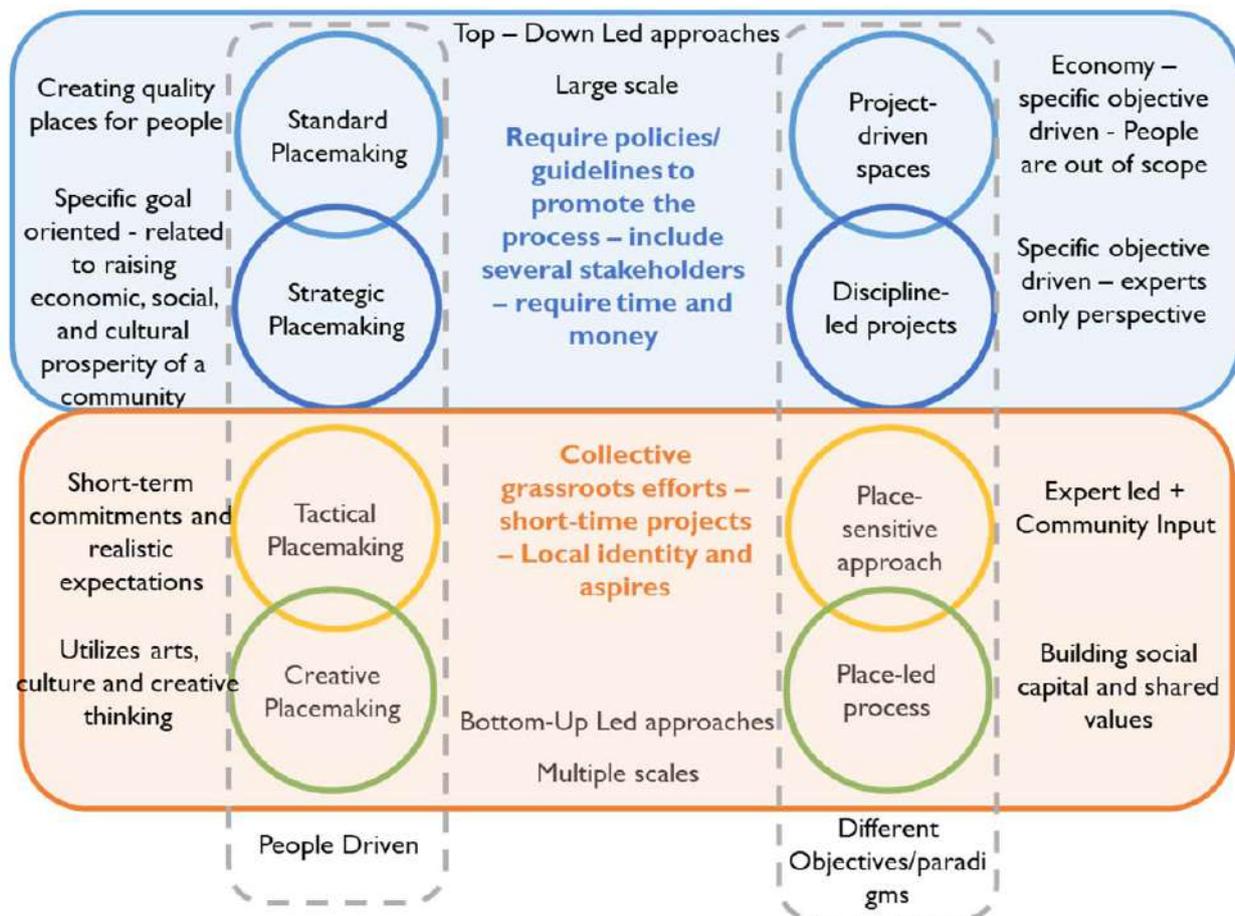


Figure illustrates the similarities and differences of placemaking approaches and public spaces categories. Source: The Author adopted from (Michigan State University Land Policy Institute, 2015) & (PPS, 2018)

While the third type known as place-sensitive approach, is becoming a bit common among some design professionals. This approach is more inclusive in terms of community inputs, but designers and architects still lead the process. The community role in this approach stops at the early stages where they are only consulted for their input (ibid). The place-led process, the fourth type, is more of a process than a project driven approach. Where the main aims in addition to creating places, is building social capital and shared values. In this approach, the local participants are more engaged and feel invested and attached to the resulting public spaces and so are more likely to serve as places' guardians further on (ibid).

Through the comparison of the two frameworks, many common concepts can be noticed, as illustrated in Figure 1. However, it is noteworthy to mention that all placemaking approaches mainly prioritize people's needs on contrary to the other different paradigms where some of them do not put people needs at the front scope. Placemaking has been growing lately as an approach to humanize cities and induce people-oriented cities and policies. It originated from a more 'democratic' contexts or from a specific context (USA & Europe) that has its own challenges and prospects, but when placemaking is seen through different contexts, its theorization and implementation requires further examination and contextualization according to the given social, cultural, economic, and political circumstances. The cities of the global south are expected to face the greatest population boom in the coming decades. Hence it is in a severe need for more people friendly cities and policies to be able to afford the needs of its residents. In this regard, this research is looking into the prospects of placemaking in Arab cities through examining the different opportunities and challenges facing its progression in the region. The research will study the current adopted approaches of placemaking in the region and will analyse their prospects according to the different placemaking approaches and hence their expected outcomes and changes in the daily life environments of the residents.

Methodology

The Arab region is one of the oldest inhabited land in the world, with a long history of surviving, continuously growing human settlements and cities in addition to emerging new cities all over the region. In the light of the current challenges facing cities all over the world (e.g. increasing populations, economic challenges, urban injustice, privatization and marginalization...etc.), the historic growing cities and the comparably newer cities of the Arab region are both affected and contested by these challenges but with different twists. These differences would definitely have an impact on their resilience, flexibility and innovation capabilities while dealing with these challenges in relation to the variant political, economic and administrative capacities. Hence this research shall shed the light on two different and relatively contrasting cities in order to highlight more diverse contexts and approaches for a better and more comprehensive appraisal of the Arab region dynamics. The two selected case studies are Abu Dhabi, UAE as an example of the emerging relatively new cities in the Arab region and Cairo, Egypt as an example of the historic growing cities. The two case studies showcase different placemaking approaches as explained by Michigan state University. Abu Dhabi is mainly adopting standard placemaking where the state and all its municipalities are working towards achieving enhanced livability in the city and providing better public realm to the citizens. Cairo, on the other hand, is adopting/experiencing creative placemaking where the different initiatives, NGOs, and activists are trying to induce arts as a main tool for enhancing the current living situations for the residents in different areas. The two cases shall be deliberately explained and discussed in the subsequent sections as follow. Placemaking in its core is a people-oriented approach that mainly aims at better environments for the citizens through generating stronger sense of place and so attaining place attachment. For these aims to be achieved in modern cities, policies, governmental approaches, and administrative setups from the first place should be public friendly and should be more encouraging and flexible for enablement,

participation, collaboration and innovation. In this regard, the research shall look into the underlying policies and setups of the public realm projects in the selected case studies to highlight the potentials and challenges of placemaking process progression.

Abu Dhabi, UAE context and background

Abu Dhabi has been inhabited with people since the 18th century, but its transformation into a true urban city and being the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was not until the 70s of the 20th century. But its development grew rapidly to be one of the most known global cities worldwide. UAE is adopting sustainability measures in all its policies in order to ensure better quality of life to its citizens and to strengthen the competitiveness of its main cities as global cities. Abu Dhabi as being the capital of UAE, has an ambitious vision as a global city and is working on attaining it through an integrated approach while enduring its Arabic culture through Abu Dhabi vision 2030. In accordance, the open space framework in Abu Dhabi was formulated in parallel and harmony with the public realm design manual, to ensure the integration and synergies between different strategies serving mutually or partially to the welfare of the citizens. Abu Dhabi Public Realm Design Manual was developed to continuously improve the social and cultural aspects of the city, believing in the importance of successful public realm as a world-city capital that provide better quality of life (Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council, 2011). The manual includes a step by step implementation process, once the project identifies the key features of the space, universal and typology design guidelines are applied which guide the project through Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council (UPC) Approvals Process (ibid).

In order to meet the demand of their population, the council began by mapping the current supply/status of the green spaces such that the deficiencies can be mapped to be counteracted in the future plans. Afterwards the locations of open spaces needed to counteract the deficiencies are deduced based on the generated GIS maps overlapping quantity and accessibility deficiencies in addition to the character of the different areas that would act as a factor for increasing/no need for more spaces depending on the land uses and populations. Then 3 levels of network were proposed, national, primary and secondary in which they depend on the linking of the different land use functions. This was aligned with The Abu Dhabi Walking and Cycling Masterplan, Network Design document that identifies the different purposes of Strategic Links throughout the Emirate (Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council, 2017)

Abu Dhabi has achieved an integrated and coordinated set up of policies and strategies where they serve mutually and harmoniously towards the holistic vision. However, the framework still lacks partnerships framework, where none of the community engagement and enablement aspects were mentioned. As previously stated earlier, it could be said that Abu Dhabi is adopting a standard placemaking approach which is mainly top-down led development, but mainly is seeking to provide better environment for the residents. But on the other, from the perspective of PPS public spaces project typologies, the public realm projects erected in Abu Dhabi are Discipline-led projects or in some few cases Place-sensitive approaches. Most of the projects are led by experts with minimal input from the communities, and of course no engagement.

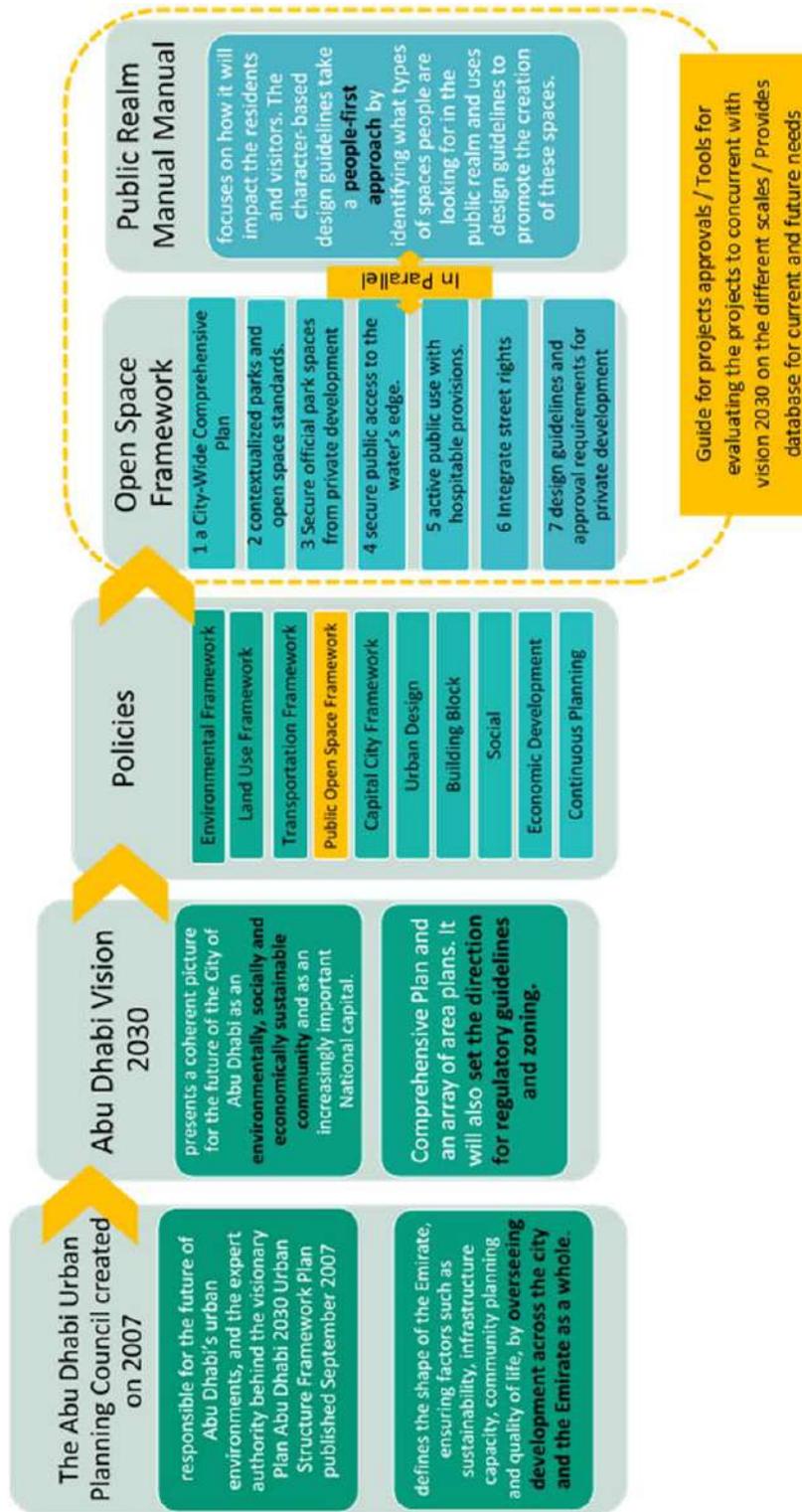


Figure 2 illustrates the cascading of the public realm manual and open space framework in relation to Abu Dhabi vision 2030. Source: The Author adopted from (Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council, 2017) and (Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council, 2011)

This does not in return mean that the output is not lovable or used by the public, but on the other hand, it jeopardizes sense of place and place attachment. Abu Dhabi has also been hosting international conference led by Abu Dhabi City Municipality entitled 'Future Landscape & Playspaces Abu Dhabi Conference' for five years in a row by 2019 (<http://www.futurelandscapeandplayspacesabudhabi.com/Overview-1471>).

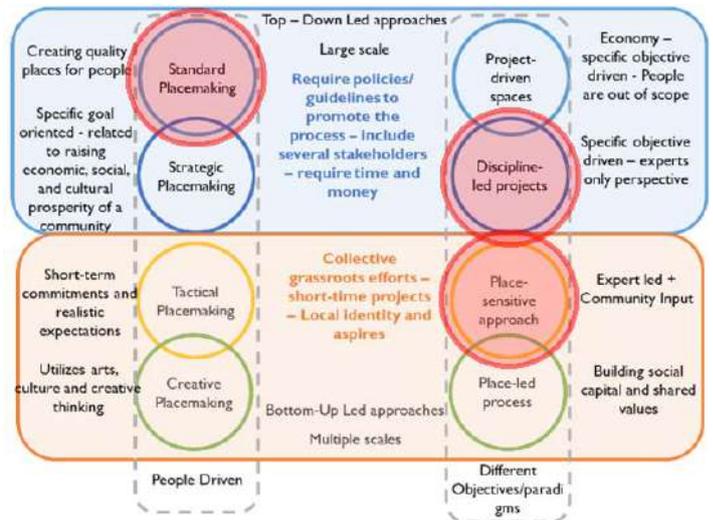


Figure 3 illustrates one of the newly established parks in Abu Dhabi, 'Reem Central Park'. Source: Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/Reemcentralpark/photos/a.316166932443091/316179855775132/?type=3&theater>

Despite that the main aim of the conference is promoting better public realm policies and to further articulate the topic among the different stakeholders, the conference did not mention the public as part of the stakeholders or the targeted group. The government and municipalities in Abu Dhabi adopt an expert led approach when it comes to dealing with public realm projects. This is shown through the implementation strategy of Abu Dhabi Public Realm Design Manual (Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council, 2011), and articulated through the public conference 'Future Landscape & Playspaces Abu Dhabi Conference' even in its fifth year, the public are not seen as part of the stakeholders.

Placemaking process and ideology in Abu Dhabi, UAE

The case of Abu Dhabi, UAE sheds the light on the importance of the cascading of delivery frameworks and guidance of the approaches and ways of achieving the objectives of the main vision and the concluded strategy. The presence of delivery framework is of crucial importance to give guidance of work and to authorities on the local level. However, partnerships setups, volunteering mechanisms and collaborations of the different scales and authorities is still absent in the case of Abu Dhabi. This aspect is of crucial importance as it allows the achievement of placemaking collaborative philosophy and principles where it allows and encourages the engagement of different stakeholders to take part in the achievement of the city's strategy. The manual and the public realm understanding still lacks the community engagement aspect, although it

stresses on the fact that it is a people-driven policy and manual. Integrating the public adds to the city in two ways; it induces a sense of ownership, sense of place and local distinctiveness of the different places according to its dynamics and it ensures that all the efforts of the different stakeholders and the on the different scales fit and add to the overall city strategy.

Through this lens, the case of Cairo shall be investigated and analysed in order to identify its potentials for attaining the aspire of increasing the liveability of the city. Cairo in relation to Abu Dhabi is a more complex case and would require further description.

Cairo, Egypt context and background

Cairo is the capital of Egypt and is one of the oldest cities in the Arab region. The city has been always attractive to people and is continuously growing along the centuries to be now one of the biggest and most populous rapidly growing metropolitans worldwide. Cairo has gone through several political paradigms during the last decades which affected the built environment in a great deal and led to social transformations of the Cairene society that in turn affected the sense of community. The continuous population booming and rural urban migrations to Cairo affected the capacity of the city to accommodate the needs of its residents. Hence the government considered the creation of new cities around Cairo as the way out to provide better quality of life for the residents and to release the pressures on the inner core of the city. The government hands the dwellings to their residents after construction, including the construction of the entire educational, community, and health infrastructures as well as the outdoor and public realm facilities that are almost identical (Ibrahim & Amin, 2014). The landscape characteristics were the same in all the cities without any significant features to distinguish between in the same city or other different new cities (ibid). But most of the new cities failed to achieve their goal and failed in attracting the goal populations.

The social consequence of lack of popular participation in the planning and construction of households and cities reflected numerous problems facing public housing projects in Cairo constructed since the eighties (Hassan, 1984). Isolation, break up in community ties, and suppression of cultural identity were among the main complaints (ibid). The standardization of government supplied housing, and the dominance of private sector for providing middle and high-income housing accompanied by minimal community engagement yielded a sense of placelessness in Cairo and lack of sense of community. As a result of the spatial polarization and loss of sense of community in Cairo, different communities began on searching for new forms and approaches to create a sense of community (de Koning, 2005).

On the other hand, in most cities the planning has become international in scope and got constrained by the wide range of regulations and planning guidelines since the establishment of planning authorities (Selim, 2016). The institutional mechanisms compromising building codes and regulations, environmental measures and regulatory mechanisms help in maintaining the environment by keeping it within certain boundaries of regularity and fitness (Abdelhalim, 1996). Though it cannot assure community engagement in the sustenance, health and quality of the environment (ibid). This led to a wide gap between the planning outcomes and the people's needs (Selim, 2016). In addition to the adoption of mass production policies especially in housing and

neighbourhoods which translated into large-scale house building and standardized neighbourhoods and the exclusion of individuals from decision-making that yielded problematic environments on the long term (ibid). The inclusion of different perceptions, actors, and attitudes is crucial for achieving sound results in shaping the built environment (ibid), whereas with the withdrawal of a single actor from the dialogue, the implementation of the process becomes vulnerable to failure (ibid). Despite the fact that public consultation is stressed in the planning legislation in Egypt, the practical approach to recognizing people's input in the pre-implementation stage remains superficial and most of the times has no weight in the actual implementation of the pre-prepared plan (Selim, 2016 ; UN Habitat, 2011).

Public realm and community revival in Cairo, Egypt

During January Revolution in 2011, Egyptians came down to the streets to protect their neighbourhoods and homes (Agyeman, 2013). Afterwards the Egyptians had a desire to preserve this sense of community developed then and they began looking for ways to face the years of privatization, traffic, and lack of economic resources aiming at creating better public spaces in Cairo (ibid). In this regard, Creative placemaking movements are showing success and potentials lately in Cairo, as several initiatives and campaigns led by arts students mainly are appearing and gaining positive echo in the city. Cairo Dish-Painting Initiative is one of the initiatives that appeared recently that aims at finding ways of collaboration with locals using art to enhance the Egyptian built environment and the current character of Cairo of thousands of dull grey satellite dishes dominating Cairo's skyline (El Shahed, 2014). The initiative gained a great acceptance and momentum from the engaged local communities (ibid). There are other initiatives mainly led by art students and art advocates that aim at changing the frustrating grey image of Cairo and introducing comfort and happiness to the ordinary citizens of Cairo through arts and colours (Alarab, 2015; Khaled, 2014). All of these has gained a great deal of acceptance and encouragement of the municipality, the media and the local communities lately. This proves that there is a great potential that arts and creative placemaking possess in Cairo.

In addition, there are evidence lately that tactic urbanism approach and placemaking can have a significant impact on the livability of Cairo. Numerous initiatives and movements are working towards livability and vividness of public spaces in Cairo through different approaches and aims (Abd Elrahman, 2016 ; Cluster, 2013; Mohamed, 2015). Its evitable that it cannot solve all the problems facing urban spaces in Cairo, however it can offer an opportunity to respond to some needs and raise awareness as well as communal support (Abd Elrahman, 2016 ; Mohamed, 2015). Cairo's context offers responsive, robust and variant experimentation medium that can yield a positive impact rather than waiting for municipalities' development programs and plans (Abd Elrahman, 2016 ; Cluster, 2013). However, municipalities should tolerate the restraints and codified controls in the current legislation set up to encourage more pop-up experiments (Abd Elrahman, 2016). Moreover, people need to gain support from the municipalities so that the initiatives can be pushed further to achieve true changes (ibid).

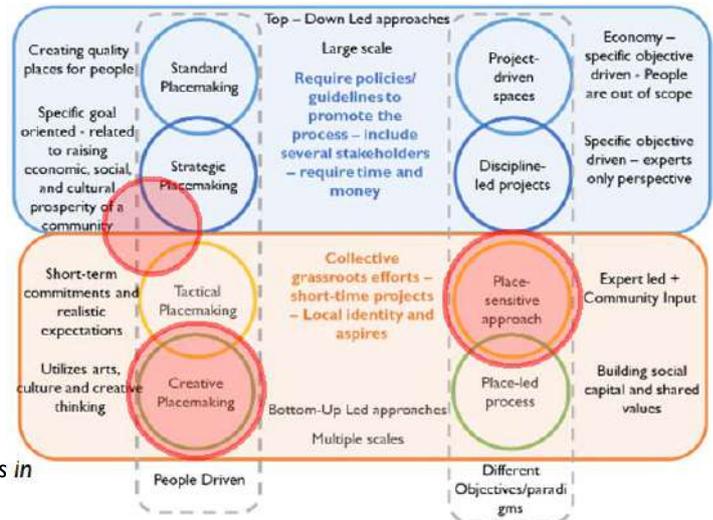


Figure 4 illustrates an example of creative placemaking initiatives in Cairo 'The Cairo Dish-Painting initiative'. Source: <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/life-style/art-and-culture/2014/11/18/Coloring-Cairo-Artists-on-quest-to-paint-city-satellite-dishes.html>

On the other hand, regarding the political and administrative approach in Egypt recently, quality of Life is becoming one of the main aims, as Egypt is seeking global recognition and attractiveness (Egypt Economic Development Conference, 2015). Given that the Greater Cairo Region (GCR) is the prominent metropolitan city for such national aspiration, many efforts are being directed towards highlighting the main challenges and appropriate methodologies and approaches to achieve such aim. The General Organization of Physical Planning (GOPP) in Egypt defines Quality of Life as the quality of urban, economic, social and environmental conditions as well as the quality of health, educational, and cultural services for all the society's groups as well as the quality of transportation and availability of public spaces and green areas (GOPP, et al., 2012). Though, Egypt vision 2030 when formulated, it did not tackle explicitly community engagement in the urban development pillar nor highlighted any prospects in this trend. In addition, the public spaces and realm are barely discussed within the vision.

Placemaking process and ideology in Cairo, Egypt

Cairo, as a continuously growing yet historic city, represents a more complex case, with different dynamics and diverse contexts within the same city which requires further consideration for placemaking approaches' suitability and applicability according to these different areas. It is argued that 'municipal structures, codes, lack of political vision, capacity for community input, and bureaucratic hindrances' all have a role in the creation or not of democratized environments (Agyeman, 2013). The involvement of grassroots voices and the citizens' ability to mobilize within neighbourhoods influence the degree to which equality and democracy is facilitated, advanced, or resisted (Agyeman, 2013). Though, it is agreed that collective action and participation must occur on the grassroots level, its success relies heavily on the responsiveness and tolerance of the state (Tewfik, 1996). In this regard, lack of institutional mechanisms at the community level in Cairo along with the often neglect by local authorities lead to deterioration of the built environment

(Abdelhalim, 1996). On the other hand, the Cultural Park for Children in Sayeda Zeinab, a regeneration landscape project showed positive indicators of a community attempting to have a bigger say in the nature of their surroundings and sustain the impact of the park in regenerating the area (ibid). Participation as a pivotal pillar in landscape planning recently, based on community and stakeholders' involvement is fundamental for attaining sustainable development and multifunctional landscapes (Ibrahim & Amin, 2014). However, the involvement and interaction of the multiple stakeholders occurs in different settings which requires a designing methodology for the best ways of community's engagement and other stakeholders that would ensure the satisfaction of the different functional, aesthetic, environmental, social qualities of the landscape as well as its maintenance (ibid). Tactical and creative placemaking has gained a positive momentum and was celebrated by different community sectors in Cairo. While strategic place making approach is complicated and challengeable, as the specific mechanisms of the different stakeholders' participation is not clearly stated in the political, administrative or operational current setup and on the other hand, the diversity of the socioeconomic and socio-cultural contexts in the different neighbourhoods of Cairo necessitates different engagement models. So placemaking in Cairo context till the current moment is mainly bottom up led approach, with minimal efforts or support from the administrative bodies or any clear political vision. This in return affects the sustainability of the projects and their continued impact on the public realm of Cairo, and so and the placemaking process in general.

Conclusion

The two studied cases in this research showcase two different approaches aiming at achieving the same goal, placemaking, but in two very different contexts and through diverse dynamics and inputs. Abu Dhabi, UAE is adopting a people-driven policy and is working towards enhancing the public realm as the key towards livability to withstand global competition. Despite that, Abu Dhabi is still not able to achieve placemaking as envisioned and publicized by the western contexts, so the full potential of the concept is still not realized. As placemaking philosophy in its core is a hands on tool that depends on building community capacity through action (Future City Group, 2012; Scottish Natural Heritage, 2012) and strengthens community connections to a place (Future City Group, 2012), through creating a shared vision based on the different needs, desires and aspirations (Kramer, 2014; Scottish Natural Heritage, 2012). This is still not the case in Abu Dhabi, where public realm policies and manuals are aiming at physical enhancements of the surroundings. However, this does not in return means that the city will not achieve more than that. Sometimes providing the opportunity for the public and a gathering place, may pave the way for stronger connection and induce sense of commitment towards the place. However, the sooner the municipality include the public, the better outcomes they would yield.

Cairo on the other hand, is faced by numerous challenges and multifaceted situation. Cairo is still lagging behind in respect to public realm strategies and public spaces design. But on the other hand, it has witnessed lots of other initiatives and activities that would highlight different success and failure stories which would pave the way for the city to learn. Also the placemaking activities that took place engaged the public, which in some

way should have created a shared vision for the residents involved and would have provided another alternative to the actual environment they are experiencing. This is in fact priceless, as building community capacity is crucial and this paves the way for better prospects in the future. Further analysis is required for the ways the different communities in Cairo develop a sense of community and identify themselves through it, which is a crucial component and driver for placemaking.

Placemaking prospects in the Arab region show some potentials, but the administrative mind set and set up require a deeper understanding of the concept and more robust inclusive system. In the Global North context, these aspects can be easier in handling a new concept and accommodating different and developing needs. While the systems in the Arab region are highly centralized and is more bureaucratic which requires further reconfiguration of the power structures and relations between the different stakeholders and also a more inclusive and democratic process.

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Placemaking Interventions in Palestine as Demonstration Effects on the Ground

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Abstract

The urban development and rapid urbanization that the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip have recently encountered have adversely affected the quality and availability of open spaces inside the Palestinian urban and rural areas. Public spaces are fundamental in the lives of any community striving to achieve a sustainable and inclusive environment and improve the quality of life of its inhabitants. In that respect, the prevailing planning practices fall short in terms of adequately addressing the provision of public spaces. Laws and regulations are designed to focus on limited physical properties of buildings (e.g. building design, elevation, heights, setbacks, parking, etc.) with little or no attention to the residual space, inevitably, created between those blocks. Lands are chiefly privately owned, and considered of a very high value due to the artificial land scarcity phenomenon resulted from the geo-political classification of the West Bank. Existing public spaces are not welcoming to the general public. Spaces are misplaced and scattered, they offer pre-defined activities and an inflexible environment. Many parts of the society feel alienated to such public spaces, created by a top-down process with minimal integration of their needs and aspirations.

Keywords: Palestine, placemaking, public space

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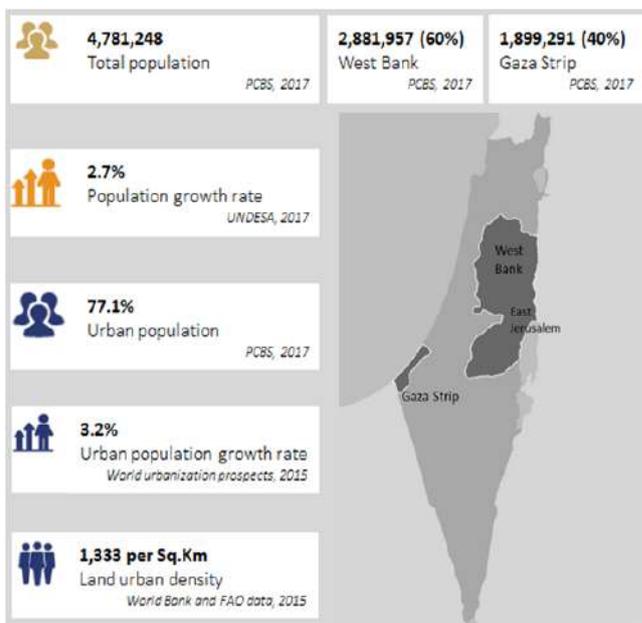
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The urban development and rapid urbanization that the West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip have recently encountered have adversely affected the quality and availability of open spaces inside the Palestinian urban and rural areas (Figure 1). Public spaces are fundamental in the lives of any community striving to achieve a sustainable and inclusive environment and improve the quality of life of its inhabitants (Kent, 2019). In that respect, the prevailing planning practices fall short in terms of adequately addressing the provision of public spaces. Laws and regulations are designed to focus on limited physical properties of buildings (e.g. building design, elevation, heights, setbacks, parking, etc.,) with little or no attention to the residual space, inevitably, created between those blocks. With the scarcity of planning policies adopted by the Palestinian spatial planning system, there is no relevant policy that brings the public realm to the foreground and defines its tangible and intangible properties. The practice of planning, designing, managing, implementing and maintaining integrated public spaces with and for the Palestinian communities still need a lot of advancement and development.



Aside from the quality, Palestinian neighbourhoods and communities suffer from the lack of open public spaces, as it falls deep below satisfactory rates. Alternatives provided by the private sector are costly and inaccessible by the wider public. If we take Ramallah city as an example, according to the masterplan, 22.4% of the city's area has been dedicated to vehicle-roads, where most sidewalks are out of service because of objects blocking the path, including trees, poles, garbage bins, etc., placed at the centre of a pavement with an average width of 1.2 meters.

Figure 1. Factual Information on Palestine
Source: Author, 2019

Other than that, the masterplan identifies merely 0.6% as open public spaces, 7.1% for public facilities and services and merely 0.3% to pedestrian networks. Taking this under consideration, the average open public space in Ramallah city is 2.6 m²/person, while according to the World Health Organization (WHO) open green spaces in cities should exceed a minimum of 9 m² per person.

Land ownership is another major challenge in Palestine to the development of public spaces. Lands are chiefly privately owned, and considered of a very high value due to the artificial land scarcity phenomenon resulted from the geo-political classification of the West Bank (United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2018), hence, it is very difficult to dedicate land for public space usage. In Ramallah city, again,

open public spaces are 0.6% of the city's area which accumulates to 2.6 m²/person. However, in the rural areas where land is vacant and relatively cheaper in terms of market value, it is relatively easier for the community to donate adequate lands for public use. This can be seen in a sample of 36 detailed masterplans prepared in Area C¹, where 6 m² of open spaces per person is adapted to be the minimum. The total rates are as follow; residential (49.40%); public facilities (17.40%); archaeological sites (1.32%); green areas (31.21%); and commercial and industrial (0.67%) (MoLG - Ministry of Local Government, 2016).

Furthermore, existing public spaces are not welcoming to the general public. Spaces are misplaced and scattered, they offer pre-defined activities and an inflexible environment. Many parts of the society feel alienated to such public spaces, created by a top-down process with minimal integration of their needs and aspirations.

Purpose of the paper

This paper aims at influencing local communities, Local Government Units (LGUs), and relevant stakeholders to perceive the significance of urban and rural open public spaces, realize their role and responsibilities in developing and identifying methods to challenge the existing situation (Figure 2). The general public space policy should propose placemaking concepts as a high-level strategy for LGUs to localize relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as opposed to prescriptive interventions. The paper will assist LGUs to develop new public space practices and implementation strategies and guide the development of adequate public spaces within a wider cityscape. In such approach, built on evidences and practices, public space is considered a catalyst for development; it improves citizens' quality of life by ensuring the values of public participation, fairness, transparency, efficiency, accessibility, accountability and equity. These elements are vital to develop implementation strategies for public spaces. The focus of this paper will be on placemaking processes and ways of doing within the planning context of the West Bank, specifically in Area C.

Theory of Change

Placemaking is all about turning 'public' spaces into 'living' places that support the wellbeing of local communities (Toolis, 2017) and that can be managed and maintained by that community (Figure 3). In the context of Palestinian communities in the Israeli controlled Area C, placemaking is best realized as a DIY–Do It Yourself Urbanism approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces to ensure they reflect a clear and broadly supported vision, organic orders, and proper functions. DIY, here is not understood as the antithesis of government, but is meant to reflect the principle of subsidiarity and promote any local Palestinian citizenry action that impacts public spaces with little involvement of Palestinian competent authorities, who lack planning jurisdiction over Area C, and thus would accede to citizen-led initiatives under a steadfastness framework that reciprocates with the practices of Israeli authorities in Area C.

¹ Area C accounts 60 percent of the West Bank total area and is under full planning, administrative, and security role of the Israeli authorities.

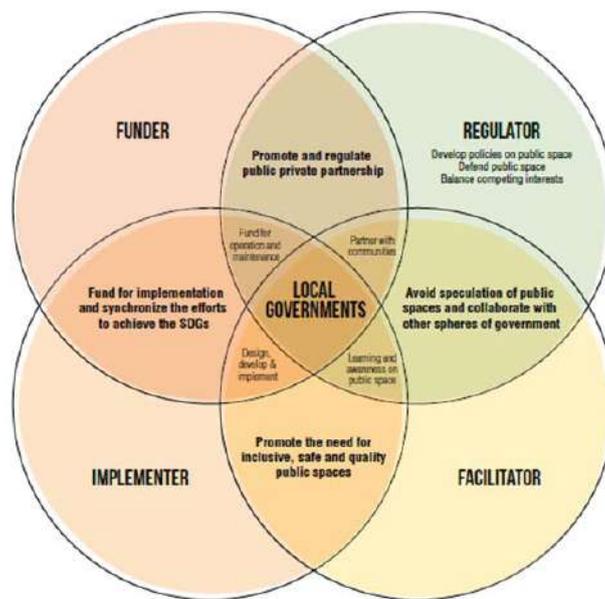


Figure 2. Niche between local governments and stakeholders in the placemaking processes.
Source: (UN-Habitat, Palestine, 2014)

Within the context of Palestinian communities administered by the Israeli authorities, DIY and ‘informality’ are interrelated, and the former could be regarded as a mode of the latter. It is argued that the informal mode of space production (informality), not only reflects a widespread mode of everyday life practices (DIY), but also could be considered a mechanism to unequivocally express the right to self-determination (Jabareen, 2014). This provides an important symbolism and this ‘rights-based approach’ to spatial planning and development is the take away for practice that is foreseen by advancing the concept of placemaking within the spatial planning practices of Palestinian communities.

Placemaking, as such aims at jumpstarting an engaged process to protect the rights and responsibilities of local Palestinian citizens vis-à-vis the prevailing Israeli geo-political planning orthodoxy. The questions of why to adopt such an approach and what is the expected added value are often bedeviling for Palestinian planners and those from technocratic bent. Nevertheless, studying international experiences teach us how relevant such an approach is and what are the parallels that could be singled-out, acknowledging the particular uniqueness of the Palestinian context that is affected by the capricious whims of the prolonged Israeli military occupation. To put it simply, the implementation of placemaking interventions will consolidate the masterplans prepared with and for Palestinian communities. Working closely entails that participatory processes will be sustained, and citizens will be encouraged to partake in the local development processes, and the authorities will be more responsive to future needs and aspirations of the citizens. This will result in improving the conditions of the built environment, foster social cohesion, build resilience and foster tenure security, and enable spatial development. This marks an amalgam between statutory and non-statutory approaches in realizing National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 and the 2030 Agenda in Palestine, noting the prevailing geo-political context.

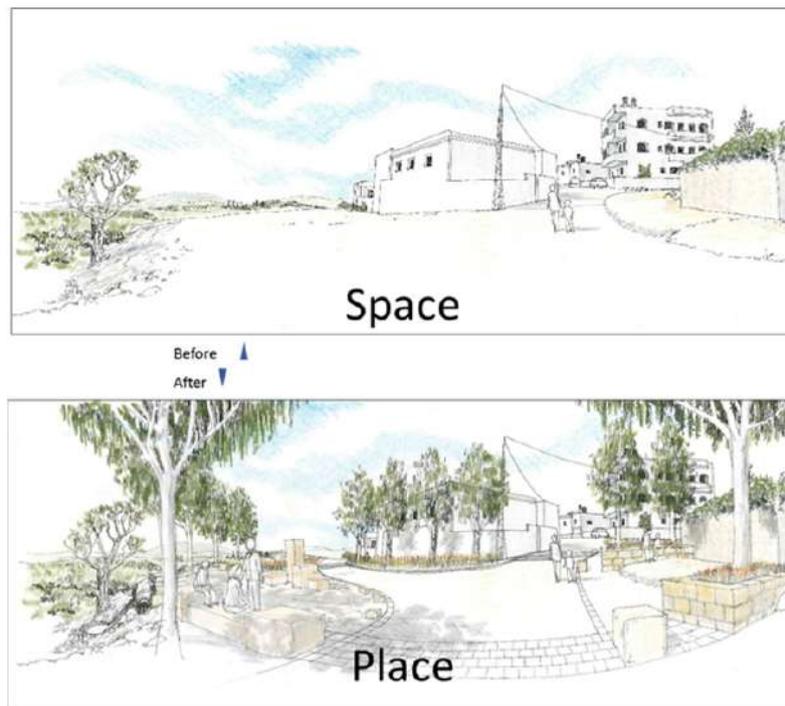


Figure 3. A small public space in Um Lahem, near Bethlehem. The community expressed an aspiration (amongst other things) to have a place for people to gather, a place for children to play and to create a legacy that they could be proud of, that reflected the esteem with which they held their village. They wanted shade and valued the contribution that trees made to the landscape. The community also expressed their concern about traffic accidents. This concept seeks to create a place where people will want to gather, that deters dangerous driving, “wins” previously rarely used land for community life and will enable local people to see their surroundings in a new light. Source: (UN-Habitat, Palestine, 2014)

Methodology and ways of doing

The methodological steps adopted during the Placemaking processes advanced in the West Bank, especially in the rural hinterlands (pervasively designated as Area C) are designed to be collaboratively-based and iteratively build on the previous steps to build-up a shared understanding of the issues, identify a direction and then formulate concrete proposals for implementation projects. More specifically, a number of consultation workshops (minimum 3) per intervention is usually held, in participation of many local inhabitants and stakeholders. The first workshop is designed to explain the concept and the process of Placemaking and make a commitment to the community to assist in realizing a sense of shared ownership. The outcomes usually are elaborated in graphic and geographical terms to reflect the ‘social landscape’ and the ‘design agenda’ (Figure 4).

In the second workshop, the main findings of discussions are presented to the participants for their consideration, amendment, and confirmation. The information gathered in this stage allow for some design concepts to be developed and envisaged in more details. In the third workshop these concepts are tested and explained in relation to how they would help address the issues identified in the first workshop. As a result, a placemaking report is prepared and shared with the community. As such, the interventions identified take stock from these collaborative efforts and build on it in the

implementation of the public spaces. Other tools may be utilized, such as Minecraft, in order to more suitably incorporate the youth, ensure a more inclusive participation and help the community better express their vision. It is important for the LGUs, with support from Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) to take the initiative of such interventions, in accordance with the masterplans, as a way to foster a bottom-up approach (Figure 5).

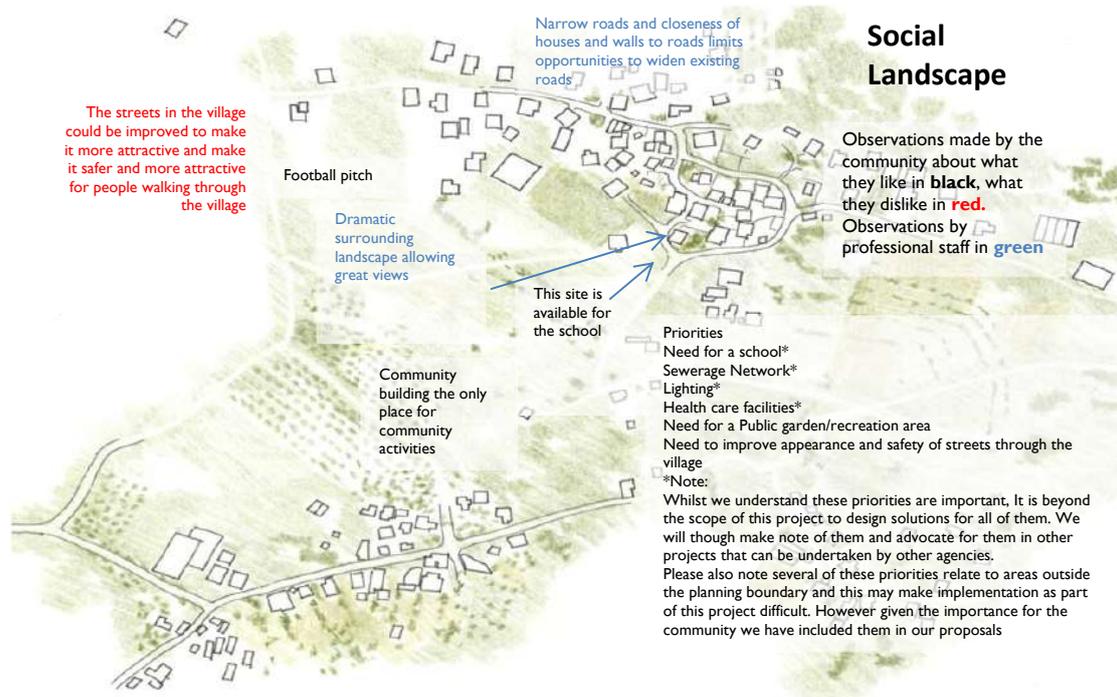


Figure 4. Social Landscape – Ras Tira, Qalqiliya Placemaking Interventions, February 2015.
Source: (UN-Habitat, Palestine, 2014)

There are a number of ways of implementing the interventions on the ground and the eventual model needs to be confirmed with the community. It has been documented that from UN-Habitat's experience within the Palestinian context, 'community contracting' model has been the most fruitful mode of implementation; where the community undertake this work with some technical advice and assistance (UN-Habitat, Palestine, 2014). This can provide an effective way of 'up skilling' locals and giving them confidence in future projects. This can also help optimize the degree to which the community feel a sense of ownership of the eventual outcomes and an ability to take the initiative when things need to change.

One of the issues to consider during the design of placemaking interventions is safety audits. The safety audits are usually performed in the proposed public spaces with the aim at formulating a better understanding of the safety aspects related to the semi-deserted enclosed public spaces under consideration. A good example is the case of Bruqin community, Salfit governorate. Bruqin has a population of 4,047 inhabitants and by and large is located in Area C of the West Bank. The safety audit at Bruqin for the

selected placemaking intervention site and its immediate context was done in September 2018.

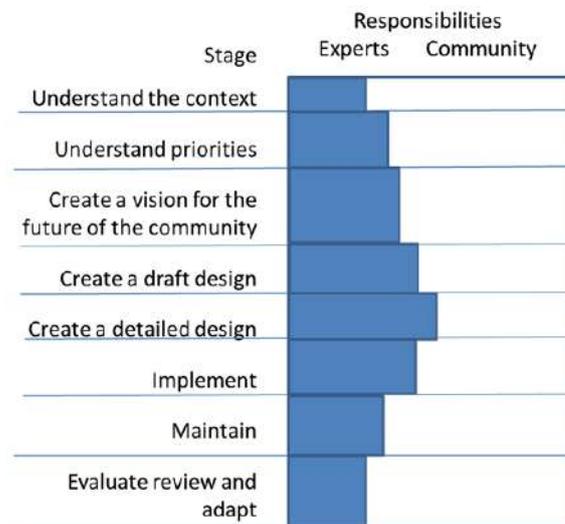


Figure 5. Changing balance of influence between community and designers (bottom-up approach)
Source: (UN-Habitat, Palestine, 2014)

The audit report done with inputs from municipality staff, local residents and urban planning students from An-Najah National University and written by UN-Habitat local experts included the following observations: “The first impression of local residents was the safety of the neighbourhood, its proximity and accessibility. It is an underdeveloped space in a central area of the community. The land is abandoned and full of rubbish; it was clear that no one is maintaining it. There are no designated lights for the target area, however, certain parts of it get lit from the adjacent football pitch. The area in general is poorly lit and feels unsafe at night. Almost no signage is visible in the area, and this can be misleading to visitors. It is a busy area, full of public facilities, such as: two public schools, the municipality building and the main mosque. However, the piece of land at hand, is not used at all, apart from infrequent parking spots” (Figure 6). This shows that the target area was poorly facilitated and underdeveloped, even though it is at a central location and busy area. This shows the potential as well and the impact foreseen and expected after implementing the project as a public space and playground.

Strategic Influences of the Placemaking Interventions

A key aim of the interventions was to have some demonstration effects on the ground by turning the masterplan, or part of it into a reality. Since 2013, UN-Habitat in Palestine implemented in Area C of the West Bank placemaking interventions targeting about 13,350 inhabitants with a total budget of more than USD 280,000, i.e. ca. USD 21 per inhabitant. Studies show that If these interventions didn't meet strategic objectives of the Palestinian Authority or resonate with the agendas of key funding agencies, they were unlikely to affect real change (Donovan, 2017).

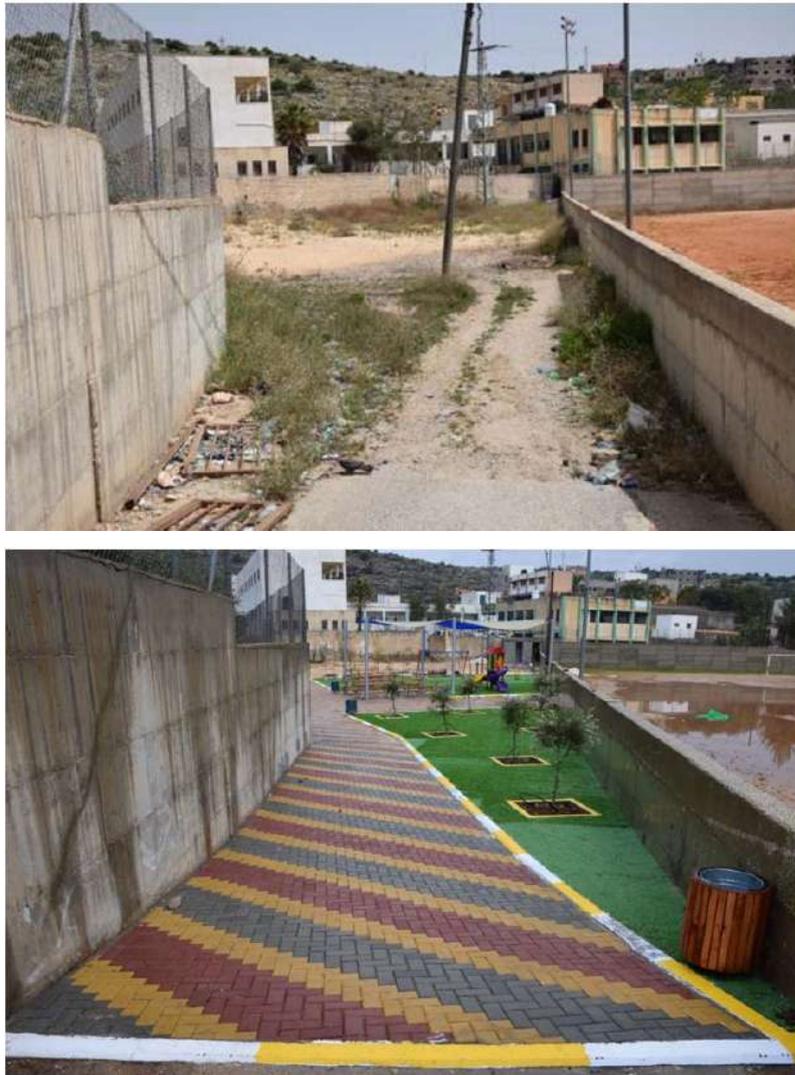


Figure (6): Bruqin proposed site at the time of the safety audit (September 2018), and after implementation (January 2019)
Source: (United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), 2019)

To be specific, placemaking interventions helped in and contributed to empowerment of local communities and self-determination; provided sustainable development solutions; and mainstreamed human rights and democratic governance. In terms of empowerment and self-determination, the placemaking interventions were a mechanism through which local communities could control their built environment and giving them opportunities to exercise a degree of self-determination, noting that placemaking interventions enjoy the administrative protection measure offered by being within the boundary of the Palestinian masterplans, and required a relatively low threshold of permissions through the Israeli planning system. Furthermore, the placemaking interventions contributed to sustainable development by emphasizing the efficient use of local resources and unlock latent economic resources held within the communities, and by implementing them through community contracting their implementation supports local business and provided local employment opportunities. Last but not least, the placemaking process is

designed in a way to be transparent and participatory, where local communities have the chance to inform the decision-making process and substantially promote and advocate for their planning and building rights (Donovan, 2017).

Many Palestinian scholars believe that the placemaking interventions reciprocate with the prevailing land-equalizing and collective ownership system known as Al-Masha that is typically managed directly by the peasants and villagers (Said, 1978). In the recent past, Al-Masha was destined to become a state ownership (Eid, 2016).

Actually, the large swaths of Al-Masha designations have been facing a spatial contraction, since in 1914 during the Ottoman rule Al-Masha made up about 70% of land, while in the 1947 during the British Mandate it made up only 25% (El-Eini, 2006). Nowadays, the official figures of the Palestinian Authority show that Al-Masha makes up less than 2% of the West Bank, most of which designated as Israeli state land that is mainly reserved for future Israeli settlement expansion. In an outlook, it is argued that there is a professed need to readdress Al-Masha land in the West Bank within the geopolitical context that spawns it and consider the panoply of options at hand to use Al-Masha in the best value-for-money approach for the good benefit of the public (El-Atrash, 2014). It is argued that placemaking interventions serve little purpose in this respect.

Concluding remarks

The placemaking interventions have always been introduced as a way to support the implementation of public space interventions for and with vulnerable Palestinian communities to provide a safe, gender-sensitive, inclusive, and resilient built environment that would have a broader positive impact, especially on youth and women, who have been lacking for a protracted period the basic needs in the public realm (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2007). Important to mention that placemaking interventions focus on enhancing safety of local communities, by defining for instance pedestrian spaces in the street including sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, in addition to speed bumps. Relevant safety audit tools are utilized to achieve desired objectives. The implementation of a public space based on placemaking approach as a non-statutory planning tool will complement the work that has been initiated in partnership with local communities based on the statutory planning tool - masterplans - prepared and submitted to the Israeli authorities to respond to the demolition crisis and enable local development of social infrastructure. This planning approach confirms with the policy adopted by UN agencies working in Area C, as outlined in the 'One UN' Approach to Spatial Planning in Area C of the Occupied West Bank (2015) (United Nations, 2015).

The placemaking interventions fit with the Palestinian National Policy Agenda 2017-2022 and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018-2022 signed-off by the Government of Palestine and the UN in Palestine. More specifically, the interventions respond to pillar no. 2, Government Reform, national priority 4, Citizen-Centred Government, National Policy 8, Improving Services to Citizens. In the same token, the interventions respond to the UNDAF Strategic Priority 2: Supporting equal access to accountable, effective and responsive democratic governance for all. On a broader perspective, the placemaking interventions contribute to realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda adopted by State of Palestine. More specifically, the interventions will contribute to localizing SDGs 5, and 11).

Finally, as previous studies have shown, e.g. (Najjar & Ghadban, 2015), there are enough leftover space, junk space, courtyards and enclaves that can be revitalized. LGUs, with collaboration of private and public bodies, should uncover these locations, open them to the public, provide accessibility and formulate strategies on dealing with such neglected areas. This will contribute in providing safe, gender-sensitive, inclusive, and resilient built environment that would have a broader positive impact, especially on women and youth.

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The (No-) Public Space. Reviewing the Transformation of Al-Qaed Ibrahim's Urban Image

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Abstract

Public spaces are defined as places that should be accessible to all inhabitants without restrictions. They are spaces not only for gathering, socializing and celebrating but also for initiating discussions, protesting and demonstrating. Thus, public spaces are intangible expressions of democracy - a topic that the paper tackles its viability within the context of Alexandria, case study Al-Qaed Ibrahim square.

On the one hand, Al-Qaed Ibrahim square which is named after Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque is a sacred element in the urban fabric; whereas on the other it represents a non-religious revolutionary symbol in the Alexandrian urban public sphere. This contradiction necessitates finding an approach to study the characteristic of this square/mosque within the Alexandrian context—that is to realize the impact of the socio-political events on the image of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square, and how it has transformed into a revolutionary urban symbol and yet into a no-public space.

The research revolves around the hypothesis that the political events taking place in Egypt after January 25th, 2011, have directly affected the development of urban public spaces, especially in Alexandria. Therefore methodologically, the paper reviews the development of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square throughout the Egyptian socio-political changes, with a focus on the square's urban and emotional contextual transformations. For this reason, the study adheres to two theories: the "city elements" by Kevin Lynch and "emotionalizing the urban" by Frank Eckardt. The aim is not only to study the mentioned public space but also to figure out the changes in people's societal behaviour and emotion toward it.

Through empowering public spaces, the paper calls the different Egyptian political and civic powers to recognize each other, regardless of their religious, ethnical or political affiliations. It is a step towards replacing the ongoing political conflicts, polarization, and suppression with societal reconciliation, coexistence, and democracy.

Keywords: public space, urban image, socio-urban meaning, Egypt revolution, Al-Qaed Ibrahim/Alexandria

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1. Introduction

The introduction explains the paper framework, including the following: terminologies, as well as gaps and questions, in addition to methodology and case study.

1.1 Terminologies

The term "Public space" is used to differentiate between the "private" and "public" urban areas. On one hand, the "Private spaces" are mostly owned by the local authority and private agencies, where the space is controlled and restricted for specific societal-groups. On the other, the "Public spaces" are "open spaces" where all the inhabitants should have easy access to it without any restrictions. However, public spaces are not only for gathering, socializing and celebrating but also for initiating discussions, protesting and demonstrating. Indeed, the "public spaces" deeply reflect the non-material dimension of society, such as regarding religion, values, beliefs, norms, morals, ethics and all nonphysical ideas. Thus, the "public spaces" generate intangible expressions and strategies of democracy under the form of "the right to the city" which allows more societal interaction, integration, and equality (Assala, 2014/2015).

1.2 State of the Art - Case Study

Since the mid-80s, the concept of "civil society" has been taken a notable path into social science and global policy studies. The public domain begins to see the public sphere as a power that can promote democracy, effective governance, sustainable development, equality and social cohesion (Hendawy, 2014/2015). According to Arnstein (1969), many social scientists tried to examine the civil society's ability to achieve these purposes of openness while taking into consideration that the citizens are the focal scope around which all the associations and relationships arise. The inhabitant contribution is a clear-cut expression for their impact on the public sphere. However, there is a difference between undergoing the practices of contribution and having a real impact. That is in order to have a vital on-ground transformation. Therefore participation without a redeployment of power is a vacant process for the citizen (Arnstein, 1969). Alike did Assala (2014/2015), in his research "whose city?". He realized that the concept of public spaces depends on the citizens' interaction with space, as a democratic communication of conversation and debate. In addition, the citizens' accessibility to the spaces is a matter of mobility, it depends on the individual liberties, under the form of "the right to the city". Both ideologies, the former and the latter emphasize the question of the city image.

In Egypt, the constitution pledges the right of the general public to contact with the government. That is in Article 85 which does not incorporate any responsibility on the authority's reactions with the inhabitant involvement in the socio-political public sphere. Therefore, it is challenging to evaluate whether public users are truly reflected in the on-ground implementations or not (Hendawy, 2014/2015). However, since the 25th of January 2011, when the Egyptians revolted and demanded to end of Mubarak's regime, the public spaces such as "Medan El Tahrir" in Cairo and "Al-Qaed Ibrahim" in Alexandria, turned into a public platform for protesting, discussion, conflict and political contestation, through public initiatives and social movements. As a result, the society started to re-interpret the city's public spaces in a more democratic way, free from the top-down policies and open to the bottom-up revival approach (Hendawy, 2014/2015).

Friday prayers at Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque in 2011 and *Rabaa Al-Adawiya* mosque in 2013, were used as a gathering point to mobilize the “silent masses”. Hundreds of thousands of people from different social groups, affiliation and religion were getting into these squares named after the mosques to express their political position. A unique solidarity was born that extended beyond prayers to maintain a revolutionary fervor alive. According to El Taraboulsi (p. 7) "in a report (April 2012) by the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies on the role of religion in the Revolution, the author describes how "Egyptian mosques, as is the case in Syria and earlier in Yemen, were places for organization and mobilization" for the "disaffected and angry, places to assemble and protest" against the regime".

Therefore, this new approach of thinking of public spaces and square/mosques had a direct impact on the society and the authorities' ideologies in the way of perceiving open squares. The public sphere identification transformed from being an urban governmental image to be a significant aspect of the socio-political transitions in Egypt. As a result, according to Hendawy (2014/2015) and due to the political events starting from 2011, the Egyptian activists began to propose a new configuration of public spaces. They created new visions and representations of the Egyptians' collective perception which was unplanned by the authorities, architects and urban planners. These spatial practices have developed the socio-urban meaning of public spaces in Egypt.

Yet, in order to realize the impact of the political events on the image and function of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square, and how the whole context has transformed into a non-religious urban symbol and now into a no-public space due to its political denotation, it is essential to review the development of Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space. For example, before the 25th of January 2011, Al-Qaed Ibrahim public square was a religious sacred element in the urban fabric; only in the post-revolution period, the meaning of this public space has changed into a non-religious revolutionary symbol, and latter since 2013, it has transformed into an unwelcomed square because of the inhabitant fear of using the space or even to be there—for the sake of being named after the political party that is against the current regime (interviews). It is a dilemma, a pragmatic shift causing remonstrations in the use and image of Al-Qaed Ibrahim "Public" context in the Alexandrian urban sphere.

In comparison with Cairo, Egypt's capital, most of the researches studies either Medan El Tahrir or Rabaa squares in Cairo, the most well-known revolutionary public spaces in Egypt. Thus, there is a lack of studies that elaborate on the other revolutionary squares/public-spaces in Egypt, especially Al-Qaed Ibrahim square in Alexandria.

Therefore, the author who is originally from Alexandria is studying the characteristic of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square/mosque within the Alexandrian context—that is to realize the impact of the socio-political events on the image and function of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square, and how it has transformed into a non-religious "Revolutionary" urban symbol and then into a "No-public space".

The paper researches the "Public Space" theme in Alexandria, with a focus on Al-Qaed Ibrahim square the research case study. The aim is not only to prove the transformation of the meaning of the aforementioned public spaces but to figure out the changes of the inhabitants' societal behaviour and emotion toward the Al-Qaed Ibrahim context.

1.3 Methodology and Research Questions

To methodologically understand the conditions of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square as a case study, the paper will adhere to two theories: the "city elements" by Kevin Lynch and "emotionalizing the urban" by Frank Eckardt. That is with the aim to review the development of Al-Qaed Ibrahim context throughout the Egyptian socio-political changes, with a focus on the square's urban and emotional contextual transformations. How do political events have an impact on the "Public space" meaning? How the use of Al-Qaed Ibrahim public square has changed? And up to which extent do the socio-political events affect the people's emotions toward the Al-Qaed Ibrahim context? Based on Lynch (1960), the city image is quite changeable, it is not constant, but rather partial, fragmentary, and mixed with other concerns. Indeed, the city image deeply reflects the tangible/intangible aspects of society, such as with regard to the urban environment, events, and citizens. The observers "inhabitants" are not just users but they are also part of the city image and they form their own meaning of the space. The tangible and physical urban elements have hypothetical significations. They have a direct influence on the formation of the inhabitant's intangible socio-urban image. Therefore discovering Al-Qaed Ibrahim urban elements allow a general understanding of the square meaning in the Alexandrian urban public sphere.

Moreover, according to Eckardt (2013), the architectural and urban settings convey more than their simple objective meaning and function. They reflect the transformation of the people's sentiments which is not sustained, but rather changeable. Hence, the urban is deriving as a reaction of the transformation of the people's sentiments; it is not sustained, but rather partial, fragmentary, mixed with other concerns such as psychology, neurobiology, cultural and political aspects. Thus, the inhabitants adapt to the surrounding environment in different ways forming their own emotional image of the space.

Al-Qaed Ibrahim urban image is a mirror image of the inhabitants' sociology of emotions and meanings. The intangible psychosomatic significations change due to the individual way of action and interaction with the surrounding environment. The emotion of the urban is the composition of many completing elements such as events, peoples, and space. These are the research gaps that the paper will tackle.

The research is an ethnographic study that undertakes an emic observation approach. It depends on the relation between the "cause" and "effect". The author has conducted 20 in-depth and open-ended interviews with different Egyptian social groups with the age range 20-40. The discussions were mainly focusing on the use of the space before and after the revolution and the change or their sentiments towards the square. That is in addition to their expectation of the future image of the square.

2. Al-Qaed Ibrahim, "Public Space" development

Since 2011, the Egyptian "Public spaces" have been going through various phases, which used to switch between openness "democracy" and closeness "bureaucracy", and therefore affected the inhabitants' emotions toward the public spaces. Thus, this part studies the development of Al-Qaed Ibrahim context, activism, and socio-political changes.

2.1 Al-Qaed Ibrahim Context

Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space is one of the most famous squares in Alexandria, located nearby Manshieh square in Al-Ramlh district. The square has a unique and clear form of space (Moussa, n.d.). It stands in sharp contrast to the general character of the city urban image. Inside the square, one feels always in clear relation to its iconic buildings such as Suzanne Mubarak Regional Center for Women's health, Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque, and the other Residential-commercial buildings. That is in addition to the present of tramline, street vendors, mix-use areas, landscape, and underground parking (observation). (See figure 1 showing Al-Qaed Ibrahim square's land use)

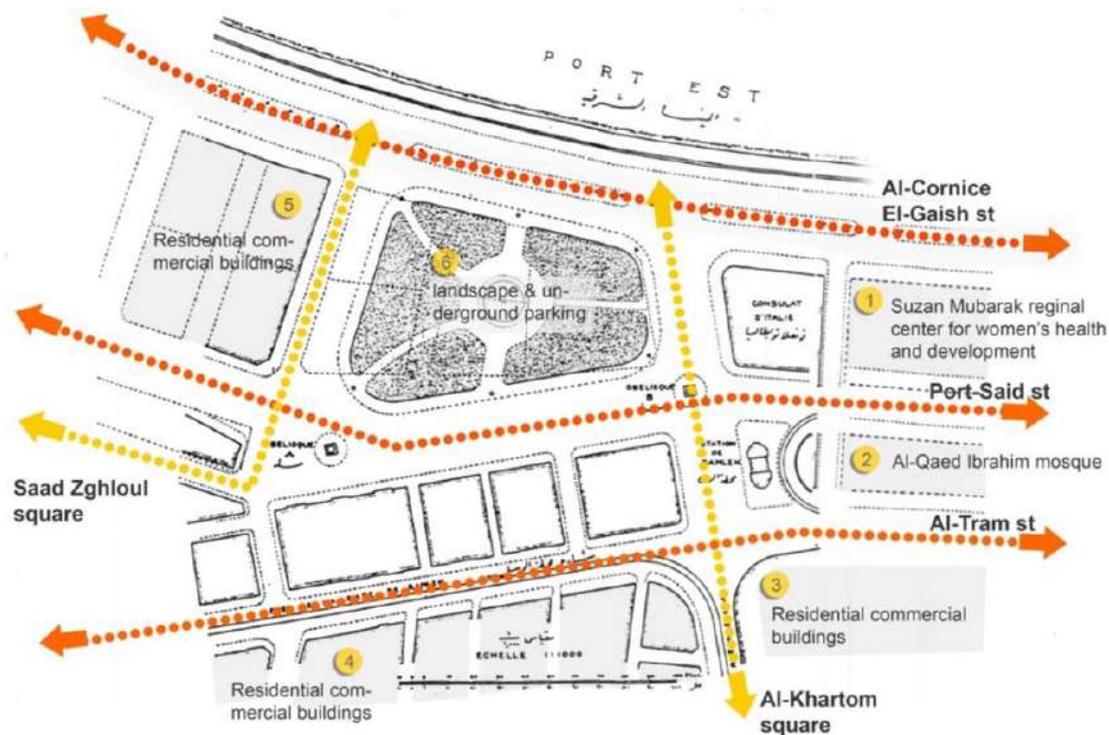


Figure 1. land use of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square (Illustrated by the author based on (Moussa (n.d.)).

On the upright part of the figure, there is Suzanne Mubarak Regional Center for Women's health and development. It was designed, In 1927, by Victor Erlanger, for the reason to occupy the elegant premises. Later, in 1929, the building was established as a house of the Quarantine office of the East. The building's uniqueness came from its architectural style and location, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Suzan Mubarak's building is one of the three such offices in the world; the two others are located in New York and Paris. from 1948 and until the organization moving to Cairo, the World Health Organization Eastern Mediterranean office (WHO-EMRO) has employed the premises. In 2002, the Egyptian government reverted and commissioned the building to its present function as a regional center (Canadian Egyptian Association). In 1988, the old extension of the Regional Center for Women's health and development was added. Later on, in 2000 the whole building was remade. Yet, the building façade has been changed many times with the idea to return it to its original form (Moussa, n.d.).

Next to Suzanne Mubarak Regional Center, there is Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque with the square is recognized after. Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque is a religious symbol in Alexandria. It was built in Ramleh station in 1948 by the Italian architect Mario Rossi. It was built between several high buildings which was a risk of being invisible if Rossi did not elevate it. However, unlike other Egyptian and specifically Alexandrian mosques, Al-Qaed mosque overlooks the sea and has a unique architecture and landscape image. Specifically, with the visibility of its long elegant minaret and the beautiful rows of palm trees— Rossi was influenced by the Ottoman architectural and landscape approaches (Moussa, n.d.).

The square consists of the three Alexandrian main roads, first, Al-Corniche street which connect the whole city streets together, second, Port-Said road which ends by the military zoon (the revolutionary march ending point), and finally, Al-Tram road which is the easiest way to get access to Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space. Indeed, the mentioned three roads tied the city together. They gave the observer a sense of clarity whenever he crossed them. They are well distinguished and have a clear destination. Therefore, they make of Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space a well accessible context (Observation, interviews). (See figure 2 showing the clarity of Al-Qaed Ibrahim context).



Figure 2. Al-Qaed Ibrahim clear accessibility (taken and Illustrated by the author).

Yet by applying Lynch's study of the city elements on the Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space, it helps to understand the area, size, and boundaries of the context. The city image is divided into five tangible elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. Indeed, these classifications of categories define Al-Qaed Ibrahim as a great example of public

space, a clear accessible space with visible edges. The context includes great buildings, green areas, and a water edge which all come down to it. However, there is a strong contrast between the square's buildings. Thus, the surrounding buildings act as a kind of separation that closes the context region from the other regions.

From one side Al-Corniche road is playing the role of edge as there is nothing beyond it, except water. From the other side, the buildings that surround the square are playing the role of edges as well. Such as Al-Tram road, Suzan Mubarak Regional center, the residential-commercial buildings and Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque which makes the context enclosed from inside outside. Consequently, Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space is one of the sharpest points of the city image, an Alexandrian symbol. It is considered as a strategic spot due to its orthographic location and clarity of space form. Inside the square, one feels always in clear relation to its iconic buildings. The square stands in sharp contrast to the general character of the city. It is characterized by its highly typical space, planting, and activity.

Thus, the context is highly differentiated and structured within itself, as being an enclosed space. It gains its importance from being the condensation and concentration of some uses or physical character. The square is divided into two spaces (Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque and Suzan Mubarak Regional center) and with the distinctive city's landmark (Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque). Hence, Al-Qaed square's strength as a landmark seemed to derive from the contrast and irritation felt between its cultural, status and physical invisibility. The public space has a history, a sign, and a meaning attaches to Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque as an object which raises its value as a landmark especially with the visibility of its long elegant minaret. All made of the mentioned public space a symbolic key with a well-identified visual sign for the city. (See figure 3 showing the application of Kevin Lynch's study on Al-Qaed Ibrahim square).

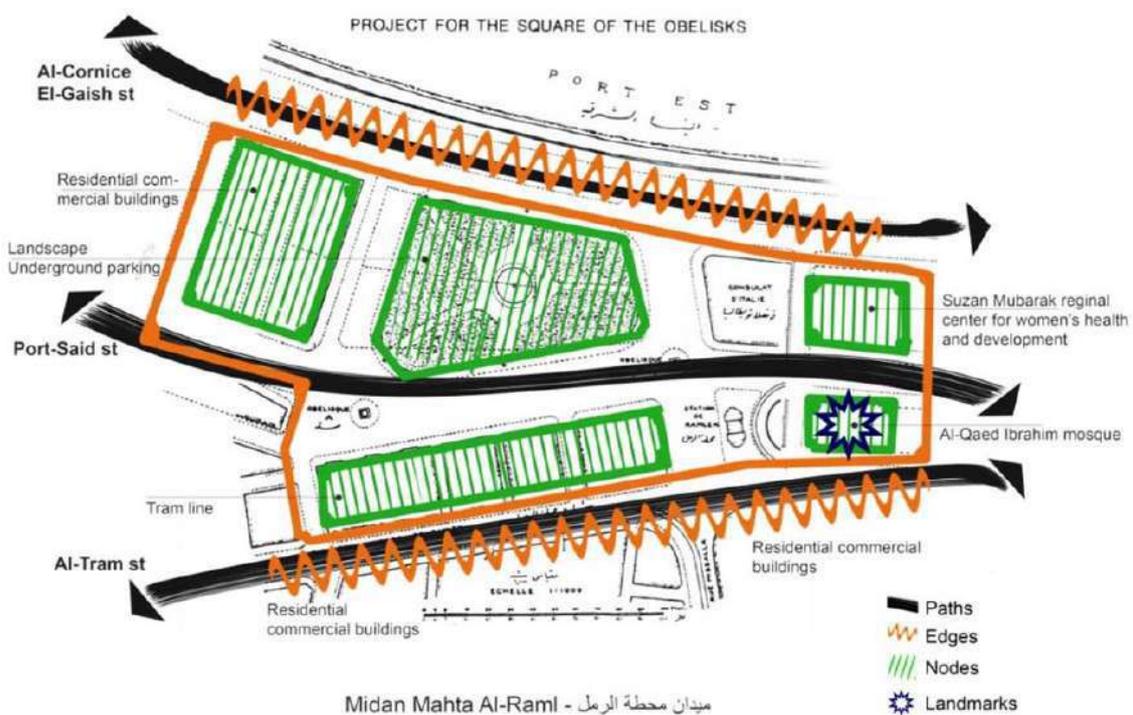


Figure 3. Al-Qaed Ibrahim square analyses (Illustrated by the author based on (Moussa (n.d.)).

2.2 Al-Qaed Ibrahim Activism

Al-Qaed Ibrahim square named after Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque used to be well-known of its "Imam" which was Sheikh Ahmed Al-Mehalawi (an official leader of Muslim brotherhood party). At that time, Anwar El-Sadad was the president of Egypt and due to the political conflict between the governance and the Muslim Brotherhood party, Al-Mahalawi was forbidden to pray with people at the mosque. Thus, the citizens began to argue and question this action, as a lot of people were regular worshipers at this mosque because of the Imam and his way of praying. From that time and because of the political actions, Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque starts to be related to Al-Sheikh el Mahalawi's name and also to his party and that had a direct effect upon the whole square on a socio-political level (Moussa, n.d.).

By 2008, the public space began a new era. Al-Qaed Ibrahim was attracting worshipers from all over the districts in Alexandria. The mosque was well-known for its Tahajjud and Taraweeh prayers during the holy month of Ramadan. Hundreds of thousands of prayers rally around the mosque from the middle of the night and until the early hours of dawn. Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque was usually reaching its peak by the end of Ramadan, especially during the last ten days. As the mosque was overwhelmed with prayers, individuals get to pray outside and around it. The worshipers used to stand along Midan Saeya Zaghoul, Al-Corniche road and also within the surrounding districts and around the Alexandrian library of Mahattet El-Ramehl and Al-Shatbi. The traffic is blocked. In order to fulfill the vast number of prayers, streets and open slots were closed. However, the number of prayers increases until the feast where most of the inhabitants gather to celebrate "Eid".

Next, due to Friday prayer, Al-Qaed Ibrahim square was always full-filled with prayers (Moussa, n.d.). Al-Qaed Ibrahim square continues to be more and more famous until January 25, when the space was converted to play the role of a political window for the entire inhabitant to express their political point of view. As it was used, as mentioned before, to mobilize the "silent masses", the emotion, image, and meaning of Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space start to change. The context function was converted from being a place where people meet for a religious performance a "religious symbol" to be a gathering point for protests and marches a "revolutionary symbol". It is notable that Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque has spontaneously affected the whole context of Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space. It converted the square into an iconic political symbol through the different socio-religious and political events (interviews).

2.3 Al-Qaed Ibrahim Socio-political Changes

In the pre-revolution phase, Al-Qaed Ibrahim square was recognized out of its religious symbolism due to the presence of the mosque. It was the gathering point for most of the Alexandrians citizens in order to communicate and celebrate the Islamic events as mentioned before. Later on January 25, the square was used as the public space where the demand, chants, and tolls to create social justice were reverberating, a feeling of openness without restrictions. The citizens were taking Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space as the starting point of their protesting marches.

According to Assala (2014/2015), In January 2011, Al-Qaed Ibrahim square was the "virtuous city" where the values of altruism, solidarity, fraternity, dignity, tolerance, and coexistence prevailed a social integration towards a common goal. Streets and open areas have been the medium to convey the demands of the citizens. This concept of

freedom in public has been absent from the mind of the Egyptians for a long time. The citizens' emotions toward Al-Qaed Ibrahim square change due to the revolution event. Their feeling transformed from exclusion to inclusion "right to the city" (interviews). Next, the inhabitant, as well as the authority, changed their methodology in the way of perceiving Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space—from just being a governmental and controlled space to be a public/open area under the power of the citizens. The public square was playing the role of a political window. Indeed Al-Qaed Ibrahim square was not only a public platform for discussion and conflict but also a political contestation battleground. On one side the regime embodied by its security forces and on the other the demonstrator and protestor (Assala, 2014/2015).

Since then, the socio-urban meaning of the public sphere has changed. As before January 2011 and according to (Hafez, 2013), the controlling regime contemplates public space as an element of threatening. That is indoor to control the public and maintain power over the inhabitants. Yet, the public squares turned to be open and accessible to all inhabitants, a public platform for discussions, protesting and demonstrating regardless of the citizens' religion, age and political interest. It is an exclusive space where the Egyptian voice can be heard. This perspective of using the public squares as a window to be heard all over the world was an unexpected comprehensible ideology; an intangible expression for democracy. Later, many Egyptian squares have transformed into a contestation battleground between the regime represented in its security forces, and the demonstrators (Hendawy, 2014/2015; Assala, 2014/2015).

In fact, the inhabitants were the most understanding social group of the meaning and effectiveness of the public space in the political sphere. The public domain begins to see the public context as a power that can promote democracy, effective governance, sustainable development, equality, and social cohesion. According to Arnstein (1969), the inhabitant contribution was a clear-cut expression for their impact on the public sphere. Apart from the protesting and demonstrating activities of the citizens against the government, the activists did successfully activate a process of space perception. They enabled the society to re-interpret the city's public spaces in a more democratic way which is free from the top-down policies and open to the bottom-up revival approach (Hendawy, 2014/2015).

After January 25th, most of the Egyptian public spaces have been reshaped. It was the result of the state's vulnerability and the citizen's self-empowerment. Public squares were not only taken as places to share the citizens' divers' ideologies but also to prevent new expressions on the use of open spaces. Due to the security vacuum and vulnerability of the state's power, many informal practices, new urban roles, and informal patterns have emerged (Assala, 2014/2015).

Unlike, after 2011, exactly in December 2013, the Egyptian socio-political situation has changed. Participating in demonstrations and protest-marches might cause three-year jail sentences (Carlstrom, 2013). These strict regulations have been set, as several Egyptians participated in demonstrations and protests against the current regime. However, these policies let the Egyptian citizens to feel insecure and not open as before, they became afraid of the public spaces. It is kind of forbidden to pray or even to gather at Al-Qaed Ibrahim square (observation). Therefore Al-Qaed Ibrahim as many other public spaces in Egypt transformed back into controlled spaces. A denotation of a "no-public" space (interviews).

3. Al-Qaed Ibrahim Urban Transformation

On January 25th 2011, Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space has been converted into a contestation battleground. On one side there was the regime, embodied by its security forces. And on the other side, there was the demonstrator and protestor, who were fighting for their future and the future of Egypt. The urban meaning has been redefined by adapting new urban functions to the square (Assala, 2014/2015). From that point, the emotion, image and meaning of Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space start to change. The context function (known after the mosque) began to convert from being a place where people meet for a religious performance "a religious symbol" to be a gathering point for protests and marches, where the community demonstrates its ideologies through the social movements "a revolutionary symbol".

The above section, Al-Qaed Ibrahim, "Public Space" development gave an insight into the image of Al-Qaed Ibrahim context and socio-political changes in Alexandria. It underlines not only the impact of the socio-political events on the meaning of Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space but also discovers the changes of the citizens' sentiments toward the context. Indeed it deeply reflects the changes in the use of the space. For this reason, this part analyses the on-ground tangible and intangible changes, and current situation of Al-Qaed Ibrahim square. On the one hand, the intangible reflects the transformation of society, the citizens' emotions. On the other hand, the tangible reflects the changes in the urban setting, in terms of practices, such as the newly built walls, public graffiti, and street vendors. Next, each of these intangible and tangible aspects will be separately discussed.

3.1 Intangible Changes

Since the 25th of January 2011, a new vision of national unity has been invented at Al-Qaed Ibrahim square. Even the non-protestant citizens would visit the revolutionary context to watch the creative public seen and be a part of the crowd (Assala, 2014/2015). As observed by the author families with their children were going to Al-Qaed public space to spend the day and enjoy food and sweets provided by the street vendors. Following the intensive days of demonstrating, the citizens obtained more sense of ownership over the Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space which was reflected in their performance way of cleaning after the sit-ins. However, this behaviour represents Al-Qaed Ibrahim as an example that is claimed, owned, and managed by the public to serve their own needs. According to Assala (2014/2015), this "right to occupy space" did clarify how much the Egyptian inhabitants have lacked their simple right in the public sphere (interviews).

However, this state has allowed the citizens to produce vibrant communities, live node to challenge all the physical, social and symbolic barriers (observation). Apart from this, Media such as the radio and T.V stations played an important role in raising funds as well as the citizens' awareness. With the rise of need, there was also a rise in the mobilization of resources to Al-Qaed square. The social media and word-of-mouth were the fundamental means of passing on requests for money, medicine, and food. Additionally, as a method to mobilize resources; the square was an online community recognized in 2011 on Twitter by a group of youth, their mission was to communicate the needs of the field hospitals in Al-Qaed public space to the public. It was requested on Twitter or over the phone (El-Taraboulsi, n.d.).

Furthermore, the citizens' way of interaction with the public space changed; instead of perceiving streets as parking slots or empty spaces run by the authority, they used it as sacred gateways to their homes. The paths of Al-Qaed square were used as shared spaces that guard the citizens to their neighbourhoods. Thanks to this transformation in the urban image, public art became an expression method of freedom, instead of being a political taboo. This was observed by the author. Hence, public squares were perceived as a meeting point or node to protest against the regime instead of seeing it as an impermissible fenced garden. These urban changes came to the idea that the meaning of the public spaces transformed due to political events. It proves that the socio-political events have a direct influence on the people's emotions and way of thinking toward of Al-Qaed Ibrahim context which is an intangible urban change (interviews).

3.2 Tangible Changes

In 2011 and during the sit-in at Al-Qaed Ibrahim square, new spatial uses and typologies have emerged. The space landscape was diversified. According to Assala (2014/2015), new humanitarian aid models were created to provide the protesters' needs of food, shelter, and medicine. The protesters had their own hospital, pharmacy, spaces for medical supplies, rehabilitation, and blood donation and even spaces for public restrooms, kindergarten, barber, as well as sleeping tents (observation and interviews). As Al-Qaed Ibrahim square was the centre of protester's mobilization and clashes broke out in the surrounding spaces, the presence of humanitarian aid was needed. Therefore, Making-shift hospitals within the square were essential to wound the demonstrators. According to El-Taraboulsi (n.d.) "street hospital" was staffed by volunteer doctors. With the donor open-handedness and support, field hospitals and their storage rooms have developed from ruins into well-equipped field hospitals [...] the Arab Awakening has brought to the foreground the nexus between social movements and resource mobilization... heavily influenced by the citizens in both form and content".

Platforms for public speaking, commercial hubs were also created and managed by street vendors. The citizens continued to flourish toward the revolutionary square by their sentiment and by being creative and innovative within the informal realm. Even, the Egyptian youth and artists had the chance to express their social and political views in an artistic approach. Public art became an expression method of freedom—instead of being a political taboo. It was the first time to see this way of contribution from the inhabitant. They went to the streets repainting the curbs with the colours of the Egyptian flag and expressing themselves on the walls with graffiti and artwork (Assala, 2014/2015).

In fact, The Arab Spring events in the Middle East region have created an "urban revolution". New activities have emerged in the public sphere, such as street vendors (Nagati & Stryker, 2012). According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2011), the street vendors represent a major percentage of the informal economy. These street markets are mainly occupied by the rural-urban migration whose needs are not met by the authorities but they are still determined to be urban-citizen. However, these excluded citizens used to act in the face of the top-down planning model (Hendawy, 2014/2015).

Yet, after 30 June 2013, in order to block the demonstrators' marches and movement to reach the governmental institutions, some of the main streets in Alexandria were barricaded by the state (observation). This act reached its peak when the state built numerous huge block barriers, cutting the majority of the roadways leading from and to Al-Qaed Ibrahim square. These physical/tangible barriers, which could be solid or hard intervention such as reinforced concrete or the illegal structures built of more permanent materials, were blocking the mobility system in Alexandria. However, by placing these fences around Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space, the regime is not only crippling the infrastructure of the city but also destroying again the meaning of the public space (Hendawy, 2014/2015).

Al-Qaed Ibrahim context was gated by the rolling regime forces, which was a clear message that the public space is in-control and under the power of the state, not public anymore. Later in February 2014, the Egyptian Minister of Interior had ordered the removal of the concrete walls blocking the streets of the cities. This action created an impression that the public life is returning into normal, but practically, the blocking walls were replaced by steel gates. These fences barriers have been a part of the regime policy to restrict the citizens. That is in order to prevent the inhabitant from crossing the street or simply enjoying the "not-accessible" public spaces (Assala, 2014/2015). Nevertheless, many expressions of such forms of urban protest in the Egyptian cities have been physically redefined. On one hand, the cities have been cut into sections by walls, barriers, and disrupted infrastructures. On the other hand, cities have been reformed through the inhabitant's informal interventions in the public spaces which reflect their resistance and resilience to return back to the silent oppression; mentioned by many Egyptian citizens during the author personal interviews as well as by Heba (2014/2015).

3.3 Current Situation "the No- Public"

From an urban perspective, usually, the location of any democratic action, protesting or demonstrating, tends to take place in streets or squares. It is for the reason that the public sphere is the place where the citizens could get together to ask for their basic social and political rights. Furthermore, the public space is one of the critical measures that assess the city's vitality through reflecting the coagulation of events, activities, objects and people's accumulation. However, after 2013, the Egyptian public squares did merely returned back as being an urban spaces design shaped and produced by the state. The socio-political events have created a way of contestation in and from the public. However, this contestation could be traced between two societal scopes; the citizens, and the authority. From one side, there are the citizens who were calling for their basic rights, and from the other side, there is the current regime who is gaining control over the outraged rebels (observation and interviews).

According to Assala (2014/2015), the inhabitant turned once again to be socially and geographically marginalized and excluded. Consequentially, as a result of the latest political event in 2013, most of the Egyptian cities and more especially in Alexandria witnessed a clear lack of the public domain's participation in the socio-political life. The citizens turned once again being socially and geographically marginalized, excluded and segregated. However, this action was caused by ethnicity, religion, wealth and political affiliations which is produced by the ages of political authoritarianism.

Indeed, the Egyptian population is currently divided into two political orientations. These orientations reflect the Egyptian's social fragmentation which is characterized by two central ideological groups: the military and the Islamic once. They are ideologically distributed with regard to their domains, classes, social groups, as well as their identity and according to the personal social level within the larger community. Due to this ideological fragmentation, the urban public domain has been directly affected. The production of the public domains, gardens, and squares has been divided between the two above mentioned groups. Neither of the two scopes could accept the presence of any of the other scope participants. However, this act has led to a clear production of social segregation.

According to Race Riots in the publication of "Chicago in the red summer of 1919", he stated: "There is no public policy on segregation but there is a de facto segregation. "This is particular true for informal patterns of segregation as for the beaches... that Eugene Williams crosses the "imaginary line" between white and black by swimming accidentally to the other side where will be killed by whites. The police remain inactive although present." However, that is obviously similar to what happened in Egypt, a clear "imaginary segregated line" between the two different political groups. It is easy to spot the similarity between the two cases by comparing the above image in Egypt with the bellow figure in Chicago.

Due to the authorities dislike toward certain ideological classes or parties, and because of the state's social or physical barriers, a part of the Egyptian inhabitant classes has been displaced from the social public spaces and being identified as a threat to the state. Yet, the citizens' use of the urban public domain has been declined. Moreover, based on Levy (1999), streets in Egypt turned again from space for cultural, political and social gathering into a minor space for the public welfare movements. The political powers, who are mainly the controller of the decision-making process, retuned to be the main factor in shaping the public urban domain, as public spaces that represent the power of the state (Assala, 2015). That is a clear production of social segregation. Yet, the citizens' use of Al-Qaed Ibrahim "Public space" is declined (observation), because of the fear and the unwilling of being recognized after a certain party, with a no-public space denotation (interviews).

4. Conclusion

Thanks to the Egyptian revolution in 2011, the socio-urban meaning and use of public spaces have been reshaped. The public squares became the measure of the city's vitality and dynamic. The areas that reflect the coagulation of events, activities and people's affiliations despite their political orientations and ideologies, all collaborate together in order to make the Egyptian dream of freedom (Hendawy, 2014/2015). Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space was transformed into the square where the demand for social justice was spoken. Consequentially, new urban roles and patterns have emerged (El-Taraboulsi, n.d.).

This concept of openness in the public sphere has been absent from the minds of the Egyptians for a long time, causing people to be closed, unaccepting and ignorant towards each other. As before 2011 some of the controlling regimes contemplate public spaces as elements of threatening to their authorities, as a part of the state domain. They persist

in operating and controlling the public sphere with the purpose of maintaining power and control over the inhabitants. That is in order to avoid any political involvement, contribution, and activities, in addition to oppressing the freedom of speech and press. After 2011, apart from the protesting and demonstrating activities of the citizens against the government, the activists did successfully activate a process of space perception. They enabled the society to re-interpret the city's public spaces in a more democratic way which is free from the top-down policies and open to the bottom-up revival approach (Hendawy, 2014/2015). The citizens were the most understanding social group of the meaning and effectiveness of the public space in the political sphere. The public spaces were mostly managed and owned by the public. The open squares turned to be more recognized as spaces accessible to all inhabitants, rather than being strictly abounded from the ruling regime. They are spaces not only for gathering, socializing and celebrating but also for initiating discussions, protesting and demonstrating regardless of their religion, age and political interest. Many of the activists, artists, practitioners, specialists and large segments of society have paved their way to express themselves. It was by stating their own political point of view and acting on initiatives that aim to claim their rights to the city and to the public space. However, due to the security vacuum and the vulnerability of the state's power, many informal practices have arisen (Assala, 2014/2015). Yet, some of these practices have been removed, displaced or sheltered, while some of them are still visible and interacting with the current Egyptian's daily lifestyle.

Yet, yes, the research confirmed that the physical urban transformation and civic emotional changes both play an important role in reshaping the urban public sphere's meaning and use. The paper adheres to two main theories. The first is Lynch's study in order to study the Al-Qaed Ibrahim urban context as a public space, while the second is Eckard's theory in order to investigate the citizens' emotional changes toward the square due to the changes of events. Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque/square is a public space. It seizes a special emotional substance in the Alexandrian society. Thus Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque surpasses its basic religious functions because it provides additional socio-urban roles.

By applying Lynch's study and comparing its city elements (paths, nodes, and landmarks) with the alexandrine context, the paper figured out that Al-Qaed Ibrahim square is an example for a clear open space. It is, therefore, a public space and an iconic symbol in the Alexandrian public sphere. Moreover, the paper unveiled that the citizen's emotions toward Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space have been modified due to the changes in the Egyptian political discourses and power conflicts. In 2011 many activists, artists, practitioners, and specialists started to be free in expressing themselves; that is to claim their rights to the city and space. Yet, a clear segregation between inhabitants in the social and political domains has emerged. Furthermore, the citizens' use of urban public spaces has declined. For instance, the comparison between the number of people praying at Al-Qaed Ibrahim mosque in 2013, 2015 and now underlines that the citizens' emotions toward space have changed. In 2013 the number of prayers was extremely huge in comparison with the current number in 2019. Likewise, Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space has transformed, from being a secure space used for performing religious rituals, into a square where people are afraid to visit because of the turbulent and violent political actions.

The paper draws attention to the fact that the political conflict in Egypt, unfortunately, threatens the Egyptian societal coherence. It goes far beyond polarization, as it ruins the Egyptian positive social harmony. For instance, Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space has transformed into a segregation node—that is destruction to the Alexandrian socio-urban fabric. When socio-political conflicts take place, like in the Egyptian case, neither claiming to have the absolute right nor creating a dictatorship, justifying brutalities and validating discrimination, can create long-lasting public solutions. Through this research, the author calls the different Egyptian political and civic powers to talk and recognize each other. That is for the belief that for the current situation there is no solution, but through the complete societal reconciliation, coexistence, and peace with the aim of establishing freedom, justice and equality. This is to reconstruct Egypt, which should be for all Egyptians.

Finally but also importantly, based on the current situation of Al-Qaed Ibrahim public space, like many other public square in Egypt, the square is theoretically annotated as "public space", but practically it is not, it denotes a "no-public space" image, in terms of meaning and use. Therefore, how to return the use of the space as it should be a "public space" without any restriction? How to overcome the citizens' anxious emotions, feeling and memories toward space and returned again into a "welcoming" public space for all social groups? These are the gaps that the research suggests for future researches.

Acknowledgment

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VIEWPOINT

How People Reclaimed Public Spaces in Beirut during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising

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Abstract

Over the past years, popular uprisings across the Middle East continue to grow. Throughout these movements, public spaces have played a crucial role in allowing citizens to express their demands. Public spaces have brought people together, providing the space for citizens to assert their rights to freedom of speech and demanding basic rights.

Since 17 October 2019, Lebanon has been experiencing a similar civic movement. Expressions and manifestations of this movement have used underutilized public spaces across the country. For instance, in Beirut, the retrieve of public spaces has taken place on three levels:

- Multi-purpose public spaces: where the protestors are reshaping the wide formal streets of Beirut Central District to active and lively urban spaces.
- Open public spaces: such as Samir Kassir garden, which was once a meditative space, is now a vibrant social place.
- Public urban facilities: such as the abandoned Egg¹ and the deteriorated Grand Theatre are being brought to life by becoming respectively a community centre and an observatory.

To date, the act of placemaking and the reclamation of public spaces has been observed throughout the 2019 Lebanese Uprising. It has reconfigured public spaces into ones of unity, thereby reuniting citizens of all ages, religions, gender and walks of life. Some see the uprising as a genuine end to the 1975 Civil War – a war that gave birth to religious, political, and social boundaries – by organically bringing together the country as one, demonstrating under one flag, the Lebanese flag.

Keywords: public space, The Egg, placemaking, uprising, Lebanon, Beirut

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¹ The Egg, an unfinished cinema built in the 1960s, is a landmark urban facility that was closed to the public for a long time. The Egg is located in the heart of the city near the former Civil War green zone line. Designed by Architect Joseph Philippe Karam, work on this unfinished structure started in the 1960s, interrupted by the Lebanese Civil War during which the building was abandoned and suffered major structural damage.

Introduction

Public spaces are places publicly owned or for public use. They should be accessible and enjoyable by all, without a profit motive and contribute to positively defining the economic, political, social, and cultural functions and fabrics of cities. Public spaces can: (1) help build a sense of community, civic identity, and culture; (2) stimulate and facilitate social capital, economic development, and community revitalization; (3) improve mobility and access to basic services; (4) contribute to making the environment safer and crime-free; and (5) can preserve historical and cultural properties and facilitates urban renewal and inclusiveness.

Inclusive, safe and accessible public spaces can play a key function in contributing to sustainable urban development and in promoting a better quality of life for citizens. Cities which recognize this, see the economic benefits offered by such public spaces, and see the worth of investing in them. This thereby increases access to the urban commons and public goods, thus enhancing social equity, community empowerment and enhanced access to institutional and political spaces.

In addition to the potential positive role that public spaces have in defining the overall social fabric of our cities, public spaces are often at the centre of civic uprisings, including the Arab Spring in 2011. A central tenet of these protests was the use of public spaces, especially the central and open ones, to highlight and call attention to the demands of protestors to a broad and public audience. These spaces have served both as a symbolic purpose, as protestors reclaim and infuse them with a new spirit, and a tactical one, as they physically reconfigure the spaces to advance their causes.

Tahrir Square in Egypt serves as a recent, relevant example of this. In January 2011, the Square became the main area of assembly and a space that experienced many phases of transformation in support of the uprising. According to Salama (2013): "The square was gradually transformed into a city within the city." In three days, the protestors reconfigured the square where facilities were introduced such as medical facilities, camping areas, stages, food and beverages carts, restrooms, art exhibits, newspaper booths and so on.

The 2019 Lebanese Uprising is taking a similar form. The civic movement began on 17 October 2019. Several factors led to the citizens protesting in all regions in Lebanon. These include: (1) the government's failure to respond to wildfires that spread over large areas of Lebanon's forests in 2019; (2) almost absent or poor-quality basic urban services; (3) illicit use of public properties which lead to loss of numerous public spaces in Lebanon (4) dysfunction of the country due to a sectarian system since 1989; (5) economic deterioration seen in the high taxes, poverty, and high unemployment rates mainly among youth; (6) corrupt and fragmented governmental framework; and (7) perceived discrepancy between governmental investments and current country priorities and needs. Since the beginning, citizens have been occupying and blocking central public spaces in cities, including squares, intersections, highways and streets in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North, Bekaa and the South. The most recognized and concentrated spaces are in Beirut's Central District, the Chevrolet Intersection, Al Nour Square in Tripoli and Elia Intersection in Saida.

As of 17 October 2019, protestors started reclaiming abandoned and underutilized public spaces across Lebanon. These include multi-use public spaces, public open spaces, and abandoned or unfinished public urban facilities (Fig. 3). The debate around public spaces has been gaining momentum in Lebanon, particularly in the capital Beirut which is

today characterized by a “dense urban fabric with rare breathing spaces shared by an ever-growing population” (Madi, 2014).



Figure 1. Tahrir Square in 2011 (Ahmed Abd El-Fatah/Flickr)



Figure 2. (left) A man stands next to graffiti during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (Nabil Mounzer).

Figure 3. (right) “Reclaim your Public Spaces” seen on one of the walls in BCD (Wael Sinno/UN-Habitat)

Numerous factors have contributed to the reduction of public spaces in Lebanon: (1) the reshaping of these spaces from one political era to another; (2) private, uncontrolled and unregulated development; (3) almost two decades of civil war, starting in 1975, that divided the city and annihilated existing public spaces; and (4) poor planning and regulatory structures – largely absent enforcement of zoning regulations, and lack of awareness about the importance of public spaces. While the World Health

Organization recommends a minimum of 9m² of green space per capita (UN-Habitat, 2016), Beirut – the social, political, and cultural heart of Lebanese society – has only 0.8m² per capita.

This paper aims to discuss four issues: (1) how public spaces in Central Beirut District have been reclaimed during the uprising; (2) the benefits of this transformation; (3) what is the potential future of these reconfigured places and; (4) what might be the role of local actors. (Fig. 4).

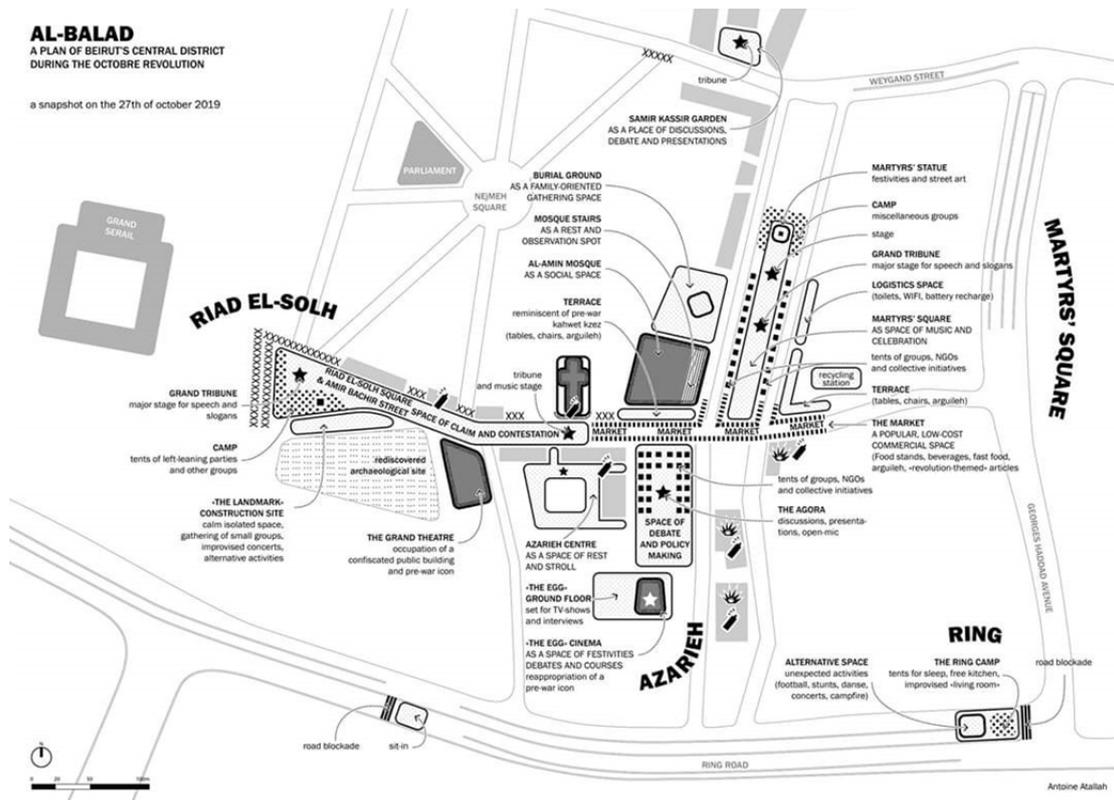


Figure 4. Al-Balad, a plan of Beirut's Central District during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (Architect Antoine Atallah)

The Beirut Central District

Central Beirut, more specifically Beirut Central District, is an area that has morphed throughout time. It suffered drastically during the Civil War 1975-1990 and where the green line, which represented the line between east and west Beirut, segregated the city. The green line passed through Beirut Central District, the previous beating heart of the city, and its most diverse and multicultural space. Ironically, it was during the war, and mostly due to the physical segregation of the line that the city enjoyed the highest percentage of green space per capita in its modern history, reaching up to 12 per cent of the city's area in 1992; by 2010, that number had shrunk to 1.8 per cent (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. The green line representing the demarcation zone between east and west Beirut during the Civil War.
Source: Personal collection of Gabriel Daher.



Figure 5. The green line representing the demarcation zone between east and west Beirut during the Civil War
([Marc Deville/Gamma-Rapho/Getty Images](#))

After the Civil War, the Council for Development and Reconstruction was commissioned to undertake the exercise of reconstructing Lebanon. In 1994, Solidere was officially formed as a real-estate company responsible for the reconstruction of Beirut Central District. Solidere's role was vital in achieving reunification and integration in a city that was one of the largest battlefields in Lebanon. As a result of Solidere's interventions, Beirut Central District now stands as a business hub where commercial, administrative, and financial facilities exist. In fact, according to Bravo (2018), the urban regeneration was translated in a mixed-use rather than zoning, resulting in a disperse public realm and giving the expression of an estheticizing vision. The Beirut Central District comprises of paved and wide streets, large vacant squares, and landmarks that date from the Ottoman, Roman, and French eras. However, there is a significant debate around these spaces and whether they are in fact truly public. Many argue that these spaces were shaped to be open for everyone, while others claim that, because of: (1) the presence of heavy security; (2) the limited access due to the over securitization by political parties; and (3) the transformation of many squares into parking spaces, these spaces are no longer truly public. "While Lebanese heritage is vanishing, new tower developments, promising comfortable, luxury living, are redesigning the skyline of the city, thus contributing to a serious process of urban densification and consequent privatization of the public space" (Bravo, 2018). Before the Civil War and the ensuing rehabilitation of Beirut Central District, the area offered street markets, accessible and inclusive public spaces and an affordable real estate market. The area was identified as a popular public space that attracted and welcomed people from different socioeconomic statuses (Fig. 6). The current Beirut Central District targets mainly the medium to high income population, defined by an expensive and mostly unaffordable real estate market.



Figure 6. Souk al-Franj, Beirut Central District functioned as Lebanon's biggest fruit, vegetable and flower market before the Civil War (www.the961.com)

The Grand Serail, the centre of Lebanon's governing power is also at the centre of Beirut Central District, making this area the epicentre of protests. The following will discuss how the protestors of the 2019 Lebanese uprising, transformed and reconfigured public spaces in Beirut Central District, such as the streets, squares, and landmarks (Fig. 7).



Figure 7. Aerial view of Beirut Central District on 19 October 2019 (EPA)

a) Beirut Central District's multi-purpose public spaces

From wide formal streets to active and lively urban spaces

The Beirut Central District is characterized by wide paved streets with sidewalks, adorned by high-end retail and business facilities. There is minimal urban furniture, entertainment and activities. Despite its public space potential, it is argued that the Beirut Central District does not meet the inclusive needs of the general public due to its exclusive nature. In fact, an example of the spaces is Place de l'Etoile, located in the heart of Beirut Central District and pictured in Fig. 8, which is hardly accessible due to the presence of the army and controlling access and movements. Beirut Central District has witnessed many protests over the years and usually, at the end of a protest, the area reverts to its usual state and functioning. However, this is not the case for the 2019 Lebanese Uprising. Since 17 October 2019, protestors have not left the public spaces and have instead reconfigured, transformed, and revived these often abandoned and dormant spaces. This was echoed across social media trending with the hashtag #ReclaimingThePublicSpace.

Protestors brought their own urban furniture into the streets of Beirut Central District. They installed street food stations with affordable prices serving everyone; chairs and shisha pipes on the sidewalks transforming them into a Café Trottoir – a pop-up pavement café – stands showcasing local businesses; tents as gathering places where socio-political debates were conducted; stands for live bands; tents for children's

activities and first aid tents staffed purely by medical professional volunteers. Protestors also used street walls to express their aspirations through collective art activities. Throughout these actions, the protestors transformed these spaces into collective places of their own. They revived these spaces which became inclusive places welcoming people from all different backgrounds and walks of life, coming together for a common cause. They transformed these spaces into accessible, inclusive, and safe places (Fig. 9).



Figure 8. Streets of Beirut Central District before the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (www.beirutreport.com)

As defined by UN-Habitat (2015), “Placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.” In Beirut, the protestors created a community organization called “Muwatin Lebne” to clean public spaces used by protestors, while adopting the sorting at source methodology in order to promote clean and safe spaces for protestors and visitors. On a daily basis since 17 October 2019, around 5,000 volunteers participated and have collected, during the first month of the protests, around 10.3 tonnes of sorted trash and almost 1.3 million cigarettes butts which were upcycled. More than 2,500 pieces of winter clothing were collected and dispatched to NGOs.

The movement has demonstrated the collective power of people to undertake and deliver services and actions, that the Government has struggled to undertake. The movement, facilitated by the reclamation of public spaces, has also illustrated civic duty and social responsibility, where the usual sectarian divides that have defined Lebanon,

have been shattered in the favour of working collaboratively towards a healthier urban environment. Some maintain that the 2019 Lebanese Uprising is in fact a social demonstration that officially ended the 1975 Civil War. People have come together as one, retrieving and giving life to their public spaces while pointing out their needs and highlighting their rights peacefully (Fig. 10 and 11).



Figure 9. Beirut Central District streets during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (Wael Sinno/UN-Habitat)



Figure 10. Muwatin Lebnene group meeting every day in Martyr's Square to clean Beirut Central District's streets during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (@MuwatinLebnene)



Figure 11. Muwatin Lebnene group cleaning graffiti off the walls of religious establishments in Beirut Central District (Wael Sinno/UN-Habitat)

Martyr's Square: from a parking space to a dynamic heterogeneous place

Martyr's Square in Beirut Central District, the epicentre of the 2019 Lebanese Uprising, is a square that dates back to the Ottoman period and over time, has witnessed significant transformation. Today, this space, surrounded by buildings sites with archaeological findings, stands empty and sometimes functions as a parking space. According to Bravo (2017), "this square is the most emblematic symbol of all conflicts and contradictions of the country, an emotionally moving site for public political

expression”. In fact, during the Ottoman period, Beirut was subjected to measures of modernization following the example of Istanbul. During this period, Shahad al Hamidiyah, today’s Martyr’s Square, was one of Beirut’s main public spaces. In the 1930s, during a revolt against Turkish rule, several Lebanese citizens were executed. This gave the square its current name – Martyr’s Square. During the 1950s and until the Civil War, Martyr’s Square served as Beirut’s bus and taxi station and a popular venue for coffee places, street vendors, well known hotels, and cinemas (Fig. 12 and 13).



Figure 12. Martyr’s Square pre-Civil War during the 1960s (www.the961.com)



Figure 13. Martyr’s Square tramway passing in the 1960s (www.the961.com)

During the Civil War, Martyr's Square and surrounding area became a destitute and abandoned place. Due to its physical location along the demarcation line, the fragmentation of the social connections and rapid deterioration of the physical structures and conditions in the area, the square was annihilated and converted into militia space. This resulted in a huge gap in people's lives and the eradication of a major socio-cultural space and symbol of the city. According to Madi, 2015 "Martyr's Square was left as a void yet with sporadic demonstrations, which retrieved it from memory as a public space in contrast to highly controlled space, not only in the city centre but also beyond its premises." (Shwayri, 2008)



Figure 14. Martyr's Square during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (EPA)



Figure 15. Protesters and activists gathering in Martyr's Square during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (www.the961.com)

Today, Martyr's Square is the epicentre of ongoing protests. At the onset of the uprising, protestors arranged the space. They implemented large stages for events, tents for first and legal aid with medical facilities, camping tents and restrooms, tents as a sheltered gathering spaces for socio-political debates, tents for live cooking and distribution of free food. This is in addition to the collective actions such as art activities, graffiti and sorting of waste. All of this was part of the movement of public space reclamation, adaptation and divergence. As voiced by Hussam Hussein Salama (2013) "This spatial configuration evolved through collective actions that were not planned." The protestors displayed some means to revive Martyr's Square through spontaneous patterns of organized interactions and expressions (Fig. 14 and 15). The possible reconfiguration of Martyr's Square has been illustrated by protestors, while reminding the older generation of its function before the Civil War. In fact, several older Beirut residents are today visiting the square reminiscing of old memories before the Civil War. Here, another vital aspect of public spaces can be highlighted: the collective memory of the individual and the shared memory of society. In fact, despite the transformation of the physical environment of a space, the spirit of the place will always be vivid in the collective memory (Bravo, 2018). The square has today unified a population with longstanding social and political divisions. It serves as a place of community engagement, collective projects, and most importantly freedom of expression and speech. (Fig.16 and 17)

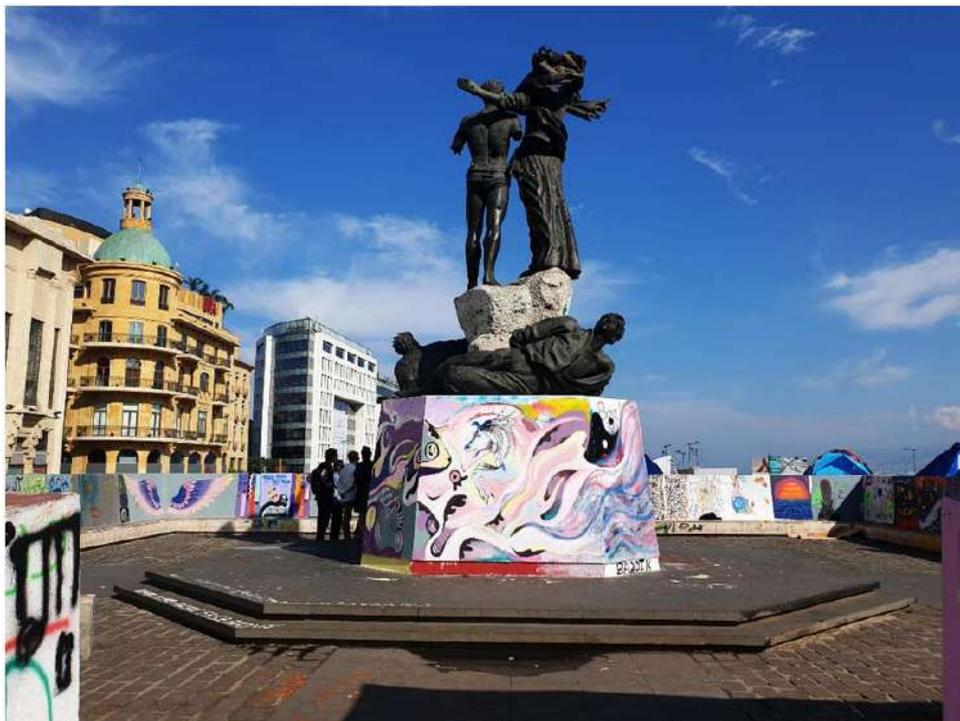


Figure 16. Graffiti on the walls surrounding Martyr's Square monument. (Wael Sinno/UN-Habitat)



Figure 17. Protestors and activists' camping tents with PV installations next to Martyr's Square monument (Wael Sinno/UN-Habitat)

b) Beirut Central District's open public spaces

Samir Kassir Square – from a meditative space into an intellectual place

Samir Kassir garden is an open public space in Beirut Central District. This square is entitled to the memory of Samir Kassir, one of the most interesting and colourful intellectual figures in Lebanon. Samir Kassir was a journalist and an influential columnist at the Lebanese daily, *An-Nahar*, who through his pioneering agenda and beliefs, dealt with the most sensitive subjects related to the Lebanese identity. In fact, his inventive vision pushed Arab intellectuals to find the courage to express their own controversial visions. Additionally, it influenced the Lebanese public opinion by motivating Lebanese citizens to embrace their own Arab, collective, or ethnic identities.

This public space, covering an area of 815m², was designed by Vladimir Djurovic Landscape Architecture and completed in 2004. It represents a peaceful and meditative urban pocket in the heart of downtown Beirut that provides a relief space in the midst of the built-up urban fabric of Beirut (Fig. 18 and 19).

Ordinarily, the use of this open public space is limited. However, during the uprising, socio-political debates between attendees and experts representing multiple generations and from social and political diverse backgrounds took place in this space. Organized agendas for these sessions were shared on social media. The debates and discussions focused on increasing awareness about the main challenges facing the country and clarifying the objectives of the uprising.



Figure 18. Samir Kassir garden before the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (Geraldine Bruneel/Agha Khan foundation)



Figure 19. Samir Kassir garden before the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (Roger Moukarzell/Agha Khan foundation)

The Samir Kassir garden, which was once an almost empty space, was transformed, through these collective and constructive discussions, into a vibrant social place that has empowered citizens. Participants were able to voice their thoughts, concerns, and aspirations knowing that they are being heard, without judgement, by others (Fig. 20).



Figure. 20. Protestors and activists conducting socio-political debates at the Samir Kassir garden (Wael Sinno/UN-Habitat)

This reminds us about the importance of the participatory approach while designing a public space where the users should decide on the shape and function of this space. In fact, it is fascinating that this garden, during the uprising, became a hub, of significant flow of ideas and expressions, that generated an opportunity for citizen involvement, thereby promoting equity and social inclusion and cohesion.

c) Beirut Central District's public urban facilities

The Egg – from an unfinished cinema to a vibrant community centre

The Egg, an unfinished cinema built in the 1960s, is a landmark urban facility that was closed to the public for a long time. The Egg is located in the heart of the city near the former Civil War green zone line. Designed by Architect Joseph Philippe Karam, work on this unfinished structure started in the 1960s, interrupted by the Lebanese Civil War during which the building was abandoned and suffered major structural damage. Today, the Egg stands as an iconic, some would say brutal structure. On the one hand, it represents a space with great potential and opportunities for the younger generation to transform. On the other hand, it stands as a reminder of the painful memories of the Civil War (Fig. 21 and 22).

The 2019 Lebanese Uprising transformed into a social demonstration and a celebration of hope – activists and protestors chose the Egg as a primary assembly point. The Egg was spontaneously transformed to serve as community centre. Similar to the Samir Kassir garden, several lectures and debates were hosted there. The space attracted collective art activities through graffiti and slogans, encouraged women's participation, and fostered discussions on civil and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer

(LGBTQ) rights. Activists staged impromptu parties and photo shoots via live bands, and several acted as guides for site seers particularly expatriates living in Lebanon. The public took over the deserted space by reforming it and giving it a new spirit. They reclaimed public space, making it open and inclusive and a place that brought people together, despite their religion or sectarian division, while giving a space to express their needs.

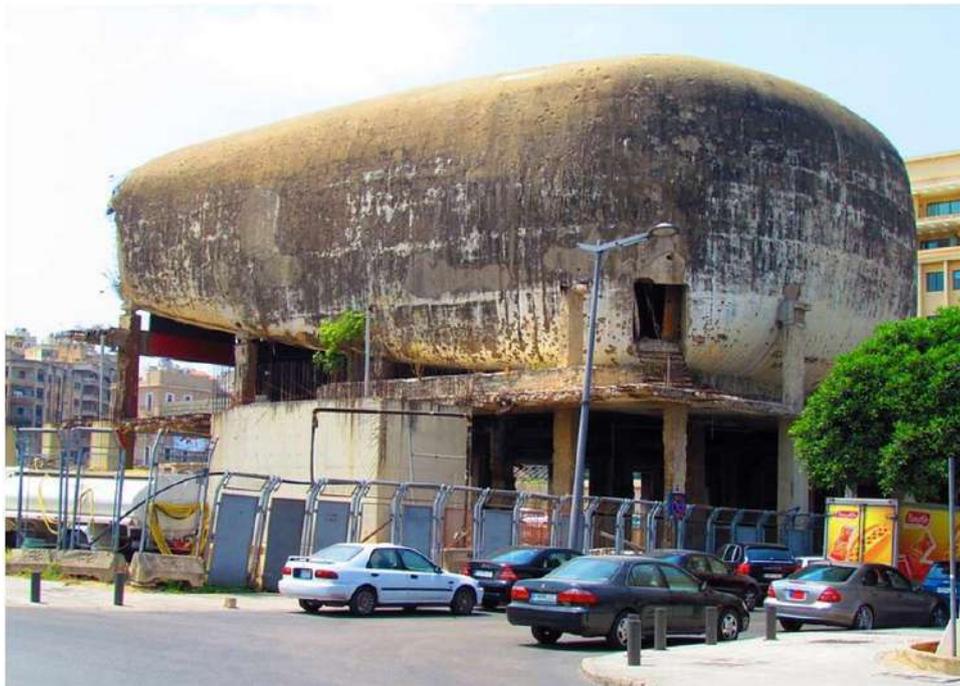


Figure 21. The Egg captured before the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (Flickr).



Figure 22. The Egg's transformation captured during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (Wael Sinno/UN-Habitat)

What is remarkable about the revitalized Egg, is that this landmark, once a symbol of the Civil War, located on the green line, segregating the city, and dismissed as an eyesore by many, is now a place of integration reuniting the Lebanese people. It has become a place of hope (Fig. 23 and 24).



Figure 23. Protestors standing on the roof of the Egg (Reuters)



Figure 24. Protestors and activists conducting socio-political debates in the Egg (Reuters)



Picture by Louay Kabalan.

The Egg, Beirut. Protests 2019, day #6. (Caption by Louay Kabalan). This shot was taken on the 6th day of the protests; I was roaming around Al-Amin mosque in Al-Balad, Beirut and noticed that people were trying to reach the roof of the egg. People were dancing, painting, singing and protesting on it. I decided to take the shot this way so I could depict the shape of the building and the human scale on it. While editing I tried to shed light on the red in my pictures, and everything else in a monotone Black. It's one of my favourite shots.

For the first time in Lebanon's history, the 2019 Lebanon Independence Day, on the 22 November, was organized by the people. Instead of being marked by the customary military parades, a civilian parade was led by the people for the people, featuring different community groups such as teachers, mothers, engineers, environmentalists and more. Notably, the Egg, during this day, was transformed into active outdoor, projecting varying patterns of the Lebanese flag (Fig. 25). Youth reinforced the initial function of this urban facility – an outdoor cinema – reuniting the people in the multipurpose spaces of Beirut Central District to celebrate the Independence of their country.



Figure 25. Projections on The Egg during Lebanese Independence Day (Rami Rizk)

The Grand Theatre – from an abandoned theatre to an observatory

The Grand Theatre is one of the last remaining landmarks of pre-war Beirut. It was built by Youssef Aftimos and Jacques Tabet in 1929, hosting many performances from the Middle East and Europe. The theatre is a cultural and historical icon for the city of Beirut that was left abandoned after the Civil War. Since the end of the Civil War in 1990s, the facility was fenced off by Solidere, due to its structural deficiency, making it inaccessible to the public. There were some plans to revive it, however, only the main faces were restored, and some footings were strengthened.

Protesters reclaimed this urban landmark. During the first day of the uprising, people were observed standing in line on the theatre's stairs to reach the upper floors and explore this abandoned space. The younger generation, representing most of the protestors in the uprising, wanted to explore a city that they never felt truly part of. Protestors painted the walls, spray painted graffiti, gathered and played games. More importantly, the space was used as an observatory from its balconies and the roof provided an extensive view of the crowds pouring onto the streets. It supported activists and protestors to take part and perceive this uprising from another point of view. This space became the auditorium that framed the events that are happening outside (Fig. 26, 27, and 28).



Figure. 26. Protestors and activists standing on the balconies and roof of the Grand Theatre during the 2019 Lebanese Uprising (Mohamed Azakir/Reuters)



Figure 27. Protestors and activists standing on the balconies of the Grand Theatre (Mohamed Azakir/Reuters)



Figure 28. Protestors and activists sitting on the roof of the Grand Theatre (Mohamed Azakir/Reuters)

UN-Habitat and public spaces

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 11, on making cities and human settlements safe, resilience and sustainable, UN-Habitat advocates for the inclusion of inclusive and safe public spaces in cities and human settlements. UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme supports cities in assessing their public spaces in order to prepare strategies and urban development frameworks that responds to the public space needs. The programme's main objective is to promote public space as an enabler of a good quality of life for all residents.

Across Lebanon, UN-Habitat has implemented several public space projects, varying in type and scale. Through a participatory community led approach and in coordination and collaboration with local authorities, UN-Habitat has transformed vacant and deteriorated spaces into safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces (Nazzal and Chinder, 2018).

These public spaces have resulted in an enhanced sense of belonging by the local communities through daily access to the spaces, healthier and happier environments, and social cohesion between residents. A few examples of these projects include: (1) Haddadine Public Space in 2017, located in Al Aswak Sahat al Daftar, Haddadine, Tripoli, (2) A safe, inclusive, and accessible public space in 2016 in Naba'a in Bourj Hammoud, Beirut and (3) the Mina Public Park in Mina, Tripoli in 2019. (Fig. 29)

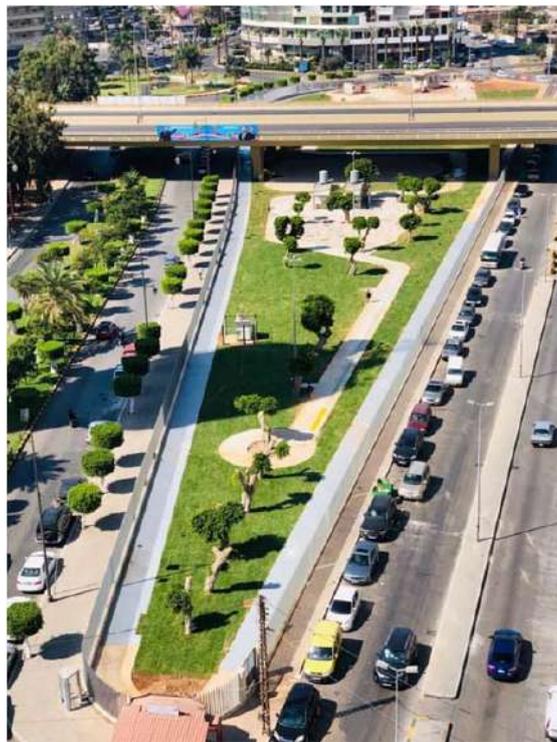


Figure 29. Mina Public Park is the biggest and fully inclusive public space in the Union of Al Fayhaa, composed of Mina, Beddawi and Tripoli, Lebanon (UN-Habitat)

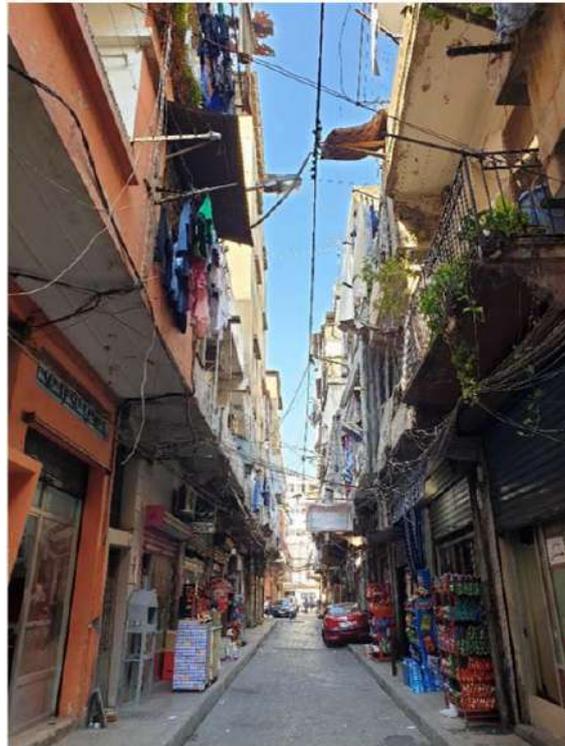


Figure 30. (left) Aerial view of the selected sub-neighbourhood in Maraach neighbourhood, Bourj Hammoud (Bourj Hammoud Municipality)

Figure 31. (right) One of the alleyways of Community-led upgrading project in Maraach (Wael Sinno/UN-Habitat)



Figure 32. Community visioning event on 19 July 2019 (Wael Sinno/UN-Habitat)

In 2019 and 2020, UN-Habitat is focusing on the upgrading of a number of multi-purpose public spaces based on the community-led approach. The overall objective is to improve the well-being of host and refugee populations through enhanced environmental and hygiene conditions and better access to social and basic services in vulnerable neighbourhoods in Lebanon, where re-defining public spaces is a key component.

One example is in Maraach, Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon which is targeting a sub-neighbourhood composed of five alleyways, aimed at enhancing the environmental conditions of host and refugee populations, thereby improving the quality of life, and supporting stability in Bourj Hammoud (Fig. 30 and 31).

The 2019 Lebanese Uprising has seen activists and protestors, informally and through spontaneous actions, adopting their own placemaking methodology. This has been done through: (1) collective evaluation of the existing spaces; (2) identification of the potential ones for reconfiguration; (3) and implementation of spontaneous communal activities based on views, needs, and aspirations, led to the reform and reclamation of the public spaces in Beirut Central District.

Conclusion

At the time of writing this entry, the 2019 Lebanese Uprising, has in addition to its many voices, also been reclaiming public spaces. It remains to be seen what the post uprising phase may offer Lebanon. After the uprisings in Tunisia in 2011, public spaces have remained as places of expression and social cohesion. In other instances, public spaces used for revolutionary purposes, reverted to their original form.

What is the future of public spaces that the 2019 Lebanese Uprising brought to life? Is it possible to sustain them? Is it possible to further transform and improve them with the community and local actors for the greater good of all citizens, leaving no one and no place behind?

While the 2019 Lebanese Uprising has shed some light on the importance of and right to access public spaces, that have been diluted through time, it is hoped that their reclamation will inspire decision makers, local actors, urban planners, and social practitioners to focus on implementing, promoting, and enhancing the accessibility, safety, and inclusivity of existing or newly implemented public spaces. While retrieving and reviving public spaces, the uprising has highlighted to decision makers their rights and needs to have inclusive and accessible places where collaborative actions takes place and reunite people for a better urban future. The maintenance and development of public spaces should form an integral part of city's annual development plan. International actors and entities and local organizations can play a significant role in furthering the public space movement that the 2019 Lebanese Uprising has unlocked. Together with local, regional and national authorities, it is possible to improve the urban quality of life of all citizens, by prioritizing along with other key urban action, the rehabilitation of neglected, abandoned, or privatized public spaces with the community. Lebanese citizens have clearly demonstrated that they are passionate about inclusive and accessible public spaces. They have shown the potential of their country to transform such spaces and that Beirut can be a city of public spaces – and that the involvement of the general public in the decision making of the use of space is crucial in transforming the city into a happier, healthier, cleaner, greener and inclusive one. By improving and creating accessible public spaces, places of opportunities are created, freedom of speech and expression is facilitated, social cohesion, and most importantly a better quality of life for the residents can be achieved. Through the promotion of safe, inclusive, and accessible spaces, you also provide the space for citizens to surpass pre-existing political, religious, and social boundaries. The 2019 Lebanese Uprising has shed light on the rights and aspirations of citizens when it comes to public spaces, and it has clearly fostered a spark of hope and attention paid to the critical role of placemaking for the future of Beirut and Lebanon as a whole.

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VIEWPOINT

Placemaking in Lebanese Cities Hosting Displaced Communities

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Abstract

CatalyticAction is a design studio and charity that works to empower communities through strategic and innovative community-led spatial interventions. They developed their architectural approach in the Lebanese context of displacement where the built environment and wellbeing are being constantly negotiated. Focusing on context specific educational spaces, they have created valuable impacts on the locality, on education, local economy, equality and wellbeing. The projects have been benefiting the most vulnerable groups including children, elderly and persons with disabilities. With this process of thinking and doing architecture, refugee and host communities co-design together and shape their shared built environment at this specific time of displacement, but also work towards a sustainable longer-term use of the spaces.

Keywords: participation, placemaking, displacement, built environment, child friendly spaces

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Founding of CatalyticAction charity

CatalyticAction (CA) started from the collective efforts of University College London alumni who had the goal of merging architecture, research and development planning skills with humanitarian work. The main question that they wanted to address is: How can design enhance current humanitarian practices in relation to the built environment? In 2014, with the Syrian refugee crisis unfolding in its 4th year, Joana Dabaj and Riccardo Luca Conti, co-founders of CatalyticAction, who have a strong relationship to the Lebanese context, started in-depth research about the impact of the Syrian crisis on the neighbouring country of Lebanon, that was hosting at the time over 1.1 million Syrian refugees. Their interest was driven from the urge to act as built environment specialists to empower communities. They developed an architectural approach that seeks to challenge the passive provision of aid by moving towards a more just and inclusive approach to development, where individuals become active agents. They decided to name their team CatalyticAction because they believe that small changes can catalyse positive changes within communities. CatalyticAction is a charity registered in England and Wales, who kickstarted its mission with a project developed to address the lack of safe and recreational spaces for refugee children in Lebanon.

A community-led approach

CA works to empower communities through strategic and innovative community-led spatial interventions. They work with communities to deliver projects that can go on to sustain themselves, therefore catalysing community resilience. They adopt a participatory approach during all the phases of a project, therefore focusing on the process as much as on the quality of the final product. They use participatory methods as a tool to assess needs, implement solutions and monitor their impact.

In each project, CatalyticAction adopts three interconnected phases throughout the development of each project:

- Participatory planning
- Sustainable design
- Community-engaged construction

Their projects are creating valuable impacts on education, local economy, equality and well-being. The Charity has been mostly focusing on developing educational projects, (schools, playgrounds, public parks, etc.) as they have a great potential in their long-term impact.

Throughout all the phases of each project they focus on achieving 6 core values:

Value 1: Revealing and enhancing community knowledge, culture, needs, visions, aspirations and skills.

Value 2: Transferring participatory tools for just decision-making processes.

Value 3: Transferring context-appropriate technology, skills and innovative design solutions.

Value 4: Generating livelihood opportunities.

Value 5: Supporting local businesses by prioritising the use of local materials and labour.

Value 6: Enabling equal engagement in decision-making processes among all community members.



Figure 1. CatalyticAction community-led approach

The participatory approach, combined with the Charity's values, have been proven to generate multiple positive outcomes. For example, using local materials and labour (value 5) together with transferring context-appropriate technology (value 3) can generate financial input for the local community, often supporting small businesses (value 4). This approach enables the local community to develop a sense of ownership towards what they have envisioned (value 1) designed and built collectively (value 6). This approach also facilitates easier maintenance of the project as the community will have full knowledge of the project details (how it was built, where the materials were purchased, etc.), hence will be able to carry out maintenance without the need of external input. Community cohesion dynamics is also something that we have been able to generate through meaningful participatory methods (value 2). CatalyticAction has been conducting participatory planning activities with different age groups, including children. To generate positive impact on child development, it is fundamental to engage children through participatory methodologies. As stated in the *UNICEF Practical Guide for Developing Child Friendly Spaces 2009* meaningful participation gives voice to different sub-groups of children and enables the sense of local ownership

that contribute to programme quality, equity and sustainability. Furthermore, as described in the *Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergency (INEE) Foundational Standards (Standard 1 Participation)*: “Community members participate actively, transparently, and without discrimination in analysis, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education responses.”

CatalyticAction has developed a set of participatory planning toolkits that function as a starting point to conduct planning activities with community members. Nevertheless, the local context (culture, number of people involved, age group, etc.) is always considered when planning these activities in order to maximize their outcomes by reducing possible barriers to equal participation.



Figure 2. Children participatory activity in Bouday child friendly space, Baalbek, 2017

Playgrounds to cope and enhance community cohesion

Since 2011, the crisis in Syria has devastated lives, uprooted families from their homes forcing them to leave their country to find safety elsewhere. Syria’s neighbouring country, Lebanon, has seen a sudden rise of population, hosting those who fled the war. Children are a particularly vulnerable group, and in Lebanon many of them live in substandard housing conditions where safe play spaces are scarce, if not absent. Many humanitarian actors responded to the most urgent needs, but little has been done to provide safe and stimulating learning environment for children. CA investigated Play in the Lebanese context of displacement. In 2015 as an initial strategy CA decided to intervene in existing schools equipping their courtyard with a model playground that allows different types of Play to happen including educational play opportunities. This model was named *Ibtasem*; a modular wooden structure tailored according to the availability of local materials and knowhow.

Article 31 of the *UN convention for the Rights of Children* states that we should recognise their rights to: “rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities [...] to participate fully in cultural and artistic life”. *Ibtasem* playground was designed through a

participatory approach that involved children, teachers and different stakeholders who play a major role in providing education to vulnerable children in Lebanon. The result was a context specific playground that uses local materials and technologies. The play space that this playground offers is a spatial response to the specific needs identified during the participatory assessment phase, it provides active spaces, relaxing spaces and educational spaces. *Ibtasem* playground was designed as a temporary structure responding to the restricted 'spoken of' regulations on what could be built for refugees in Lebanon. This pilot project did not only raise awareness on the importance of safe play spaces for children but most importantly it advocated for the prominence of participatory approach in design and building with children, which reveals the specific needs and aspirations of children rather than simply providing 'off-the-shelf' play items. When children participate in the planning, design and implementation, they develop a sense of ownership towards the playground. They knew that their role was very important; "I am here to build the playground with you, so when I go back to Syria, I can build one myself" (Shahd, 5 years old student). Adding to this, volunteers worked hand in hand with the community to build the playground, learning from one another and crafting friendships. Enrico Porfido, volunteer from Italy reflected upon his experience: "I had the opportunity to join a real participatory process, involving local communities and mixing them up with our personal knowledge and experience. We built the process day by day, together."

With the success of the pilot playground project, other organizations recognized the validity of its design and impact and consequently replicated it; to date 5 playgrounds were built in Syria, France and Lebanon using the design principles of *Ibtasem* playground. "We have been inspired by your design and technical details, for the simple reason that the same materials and expertise were available in Syria" says Marya Zarif co-founder of *Foundation Je Veux Jouer* that replicated *Ibtasem* design prototype in two towns of Syria.

From temporary playground structures CA realised their valuable impact not only on child development but also on social relations between children, their teachers, parents and society. CatalyticAction realised this potential and moved to creating permanent playgrounds that benefit both refugee and host communities, with the aim to enhance community cohesion. In 2016, CA worked on Karantina Play garden, creating play spaces in a public park that was under renovation by the Beirut Municipality.

CatalyticAction were commissioned, after winning a local design competition, to design and produce play items animating the Park through community participation. The aim of this intervention mainly was to create a meeting point for the diverse communities living in the neighborhood. With this project CA aimed at creating identity, creating places rather than spaces, and communities rather than entities. Karantina is a low-income neighborhood located in Al-Mudawwar district, North-East of Beirut. It is a mixed-use neighborhood where communities from different nationalities and ethno-religious backgrounds live. The Karantina neighborhood was cut through in the 1950s with a highway that detached it from the city.



Figure 3. Ibtasem Playground, Bar Elias, 2015



Figure 4. Children participating in painting activities during the playground implementation, Bar Elias, 2015

During the Lebanese civil war, Karantina neighborhood suffered from intense political conflicts that left strong marks in the neighborhood social fabric. Being Beirut's gateway for people coming from Northern Lebanon, it represents a critical location of the constantly growing and overpopulated Lebanon capital. For several years it acted as the backyard of Beirut where only the most vulnerable populations found refuge, and where the city's undesirable services were located (slaughterhouse, heavy industries, etc.). Currently with the increase of rent in Beirut, Karantina area is attracting a new wave of art galleries, offices and recreational hubs that add to its socio-spatial complexity. The role of the Karantina Public Park was more important than ever. The Park as a public space was never a meeting point for residents, a limited group of people only frequented it. According to parents in the area, the park has always been a hangout place for drug addicts and vandalism therefore their children were not allowed to play there. A group of interviewed elderly refused to visit the park because they weren't feeling safe there. This sense of isolation is accentuated by the presence of some of powerful members in the area who still have strong political influence on residents, as they did during the Lebanese civil war. The answer to the present challenge of creating resilient communities - which are able to respond and adapt to changing circumstances - lays in the quality and quantity of such links that participation will create and enhance. Recreational spaces, or more widely public spaces, play a fundamental role in the social life of communities. Public spaces have therefore the capacity to bring communities together by providing public facilities that can trigger or enhance communal activities. The Karantina Park represents a main opportunity space to resolve the conflict residing between the several community groups.



Figure 5. Children envisioning their new play garden, Karantina, 2016

The participatory engagement strategy for this project attempted to target all generations by arranging weekly workshops across the different communities. To accomplish this, CatalyticAction collaborated with three local groups: The Chain Effect, Recycle Lebanon and Urban pins. The introductory workshops carried out by

CatalyticAction included a series of drawing and model making to introduce the children to the project and engage them in the initial design process. As bicycles are a core element in the neighborhood, especially among children, the workshops with the Chain Effect aimed at enhancing this characteristic, raising awareness about the role of cycling, and looking at the potential of bicycles beyond movement, sport and leisure. The intervention was stretched out beyond the fence, with a mural in front of the entrance painted with residents of the neighborhood, the aim of the mural was to raise awareness on bicycle use while adding a colorful landmark. The workshops carried out with Recycle Lebanon aimed to teach the children about the importance of the environment, this included sorting collected garbage from the neighborhood. Noticing that scavenger hunting for leftover materials to build primitive structures is a common activity among the children of the neighborhood, an idea developed with Urban Pins to teach the children how to use these leftovers to make musical instruments. A concluding workshop saw the implementation of a second mural; after seeing the mural at the park entrance, residents living a bit further from the park requested to have a mural in their street as well, so in order to create a sense of equality amongst the several communities the intervention reached to this further location, where children, youth and adults painted their colored the wide factory wall.



Figure 6. Children and youth paint the mural on the factory wall, Karantina, 2016



Figure 7. Children and youth paint the bicycle awareness mural at the entrance of the park, Karantina, 2016



Figure 8. Karantina Play garden, Karantina, 2018

After working within existing schools and creating places of encounter in the public realm, in 2017, CA designed and implemented *Basma Playground* in Ghazze, West Bekaa,

Lebanon, in a school but serving the public as well. This project was implemented in partnership with the Social Support Society (SSS) NGO, an organisation that provides education for Syrian refugee students as part of their Relief and Educational Assistance project. The Social Support Society partnered with Al-Maqassed school that was set up in 1950 to provide education for vulnerable Lebanese. The school simply extended its operating hours in order to create a second shift for Syrian refugee children, while the morning shift remained for Lebanese. As part of their partnership, the SSS refurbishes and upgrades the school premises, *Basma* playground constituted one of those needed improvements. The playground space aimed at providing safe play spaces for all age groups attending the school, Syrian and Lebanese, including toddlers and young children. The playground was designed through a participatory process that engaged the students, teachers and other school staff as well as the municipality. The playground offers spaces for structured play, free play, imaginative play, as well as spaces for outdoor classes and multiple relaxing spaces. *Basma* playground is also open to the public where residents of town can access it during weekends and public holidays.



Figure 9. *Basma* Playground, Ghazze, 2017

The playground design is a permanent recreational and educational space for the school and the town of Ghazze. The choice of the materiality of the playground design was affected by CA's values, such as: supporting local businesses by prioritizing the use of local materials and labour. A skilled welder shop from Ghazze worked with CA team on the realization of the project, this did not only boost the local economy but also through such process the local welder experienced with new design prototypes, learning new skills and creating something new for his own town that he was proud of.

The quality of the steel work was exceptional in this project, proving that it is important to do a market research of available skillset and knowhow during the design phase. While purchasing local materials CA team and volunteers met the local residents living in Ghazze, Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians. One of the most memorable experience was when a young man from the town was inspired by the participatory implementation that involved International and Lebanese volunteers, that he decided to volunteer himself. He is a Syrian refugee living in Ghazze, he worked at the hardware store where CA bought some building material, he used to join the team on site after his work shift and on his days off, he worked hand in hand with the team to complete the project. He was also excited to learn and practice English language with the International volunteers. When asked why he decided to volunteer, he answered that “this playground has such great positive impact on the lives of Syrian children. Drawing a smile on their face, after all the suffering they have been through, means the world to me.”



Figure 10. Volunteers from Chile and Ghazze join hands to build the amphitheatre, Ghazze, 2017



Figure 11. Children paint the walls of their school entrance, Ghazze, 2017

Inclusive placemaking

Inclusive public spaces in Lebanon are scarce and often not considered a priority in the public works plans of local municipalities. Inclusive public spaces are spaces that are accessible by everyone, including women, children, elderly and people with disabilities. Vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities greatly benefit from using accessible and inclusive public spaces where they have the opportunity to play with their parents, relatives and friends. In Lebanon, these spaces would represent a medium for equality in a country where social segregation and tension are strongly present as presented in the Karantina Public garden. Yet, most public spaces do not offer safe and welcoming spaces for everyone. As a result, vulnerable groups often struggle to find incentive to use public spaces either because of physical barriers or psychological (i.e. women do not feel safe). In addition to this, there is also a widespread misconception that inclusive playgrounds are very expensive as play items need to be imported from abroad, which keeps many municipalities, NGOs, schools, etc. from investing or even considering to implement such interventions. The inclusive parks project aims to raise awareness on the importance of inclusive public spaces by adopting a practical approach, engaging and empowering local community members and different municipalities in the design of an innovative inclusive public space. The project aims to practically demonstrate that inclusive spaces can be done by using local materials and skills, hence benefiting the local economy in the process and empowering local communities.

The project was implemented in 2019 in 3 locations of Lebanon: Arsal, Hermel and Barja, it is in partnership with Terre Des Hommes Italy and UNICEF under the action “*Child protection support for the most vulnerable children of North Bekaa and Mount Lebanon*”. The sites of interventions were identified by Terre des Hommes Italy in close collaboration with the local municipalities. Existing public parks were chosen as the ideal location for these interventions, as the parks were already used by families and known within the local communities. This gave an added value to the projects, as through the implementation of inclusive spaces existing social dynamics were enhanced. All design interventions share the same design objective of creating accessible spaces that allow children of all abilities to come together and play. The spaces are also designed to allow different age groups to play simultaneously. Spaces for parents (i.e. shaded seating area) were also allocated as this was identified as an important element that would allow parents and children to visit these public spaces.

CatalyticAction’s process was adopted for the design and implementation of these spaces. Participatory design activities were conducted engaging people from different nationalities, genders and age groups (children, youth and parents). CA also conducted participatory activities with persons with disabilities in collaboration with the local organisation *Balsam*. This was particularly useful to understand their specific needs and aspirations in relation to public spaces.

Arsal is a border town in the North East located in the Baalbek district of Baalbek-Hermel governorate, Lebanon. Arsal hosts 32,606 registered Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2018) the highest in the governorate, according to the mayor of Arsal, Bassel Al-Houjairi, the number of Syrian refugees in Arsal reached 120,000, in a town that originally had 30,000 residents. Arsal was “a base for anti-regime fighters, a trans-shipment point for explosive devices” and a threat for Lebanon’s security apparatus (International Crisis group, 2016). “In 2014 a battle between Syrian Jihadis and the Lebanese army put Arsal on the map as a national threat in the minds of many

Lebanese” (ibid.). The mayor of Arsal shared his relief that Arsal insecure and threatening days are over (2019) and how with such projects enhancing social relations that the whole country will look into a brighter future.

The design of Arsal child friendly space focused on two main elements, making the public space accessible and creating an inclusive playground. The design concept can be summarised in two spatial components: ‘playful ramp’ and ‘playful stations’. The ‘playful ramp’ offers a play experience for all children, while at the same time it allows persons on wheelchair to access the upper level of the existing public space. The ‘playful stations’ offer different play experiences such as active play, imaginative play and sensory play. The ‘playful stations’ mimic the landscape of Arsal, which is mostly characterised by scattered buildings placed on a mountainous scenery. These ‘playful stations’ have coloured sloped roofs which appear to play with the mountains slopes and colours.

The park was also equipped with an accessible toilet, which was built by transforming the existing non-accessible bathrooms in a fully accessible one.

Fayad, the contractor representative in charge of the construction of the project, was extremely proud of to have such innovative project in his home town. All the laborers who worked on the project were from Arsal, they have learned new skills especially how play items can be locally manufactured. Fayad, who is also an architect learned a lot from this project especially on what design can do for play spaces for children.



Figure 12. Children enjoy different types of play, Arsal, 2019



Figure 13. The access ramp and the natural surrounding guided the design, Arsal, 2019



Figure 14. Children, both boys and girls, play basketball, Arsal, 2019



Figure 15. Architects, contractor's team and animators enjoying this new friendship and place, Aرسال, 2019

Aرسال's Mayor expressed how this new public space is very educational and it represents a safe space for child development. He said that through the games provided children are happy and they also learn new skills. He also spoke about how participation, equality and friendship are enhanced in such public space and that this is something that is missing in Lebanon. According to him having more spaces like this would help to resolve conflicts. He pointed out that you can see people claiming this type of spaces now during the revolution. In fact, in many cities people are taking over the streets making them public squares where ideas are shared. He then said that when children learn how to use a space together, they learn how to respect each other which brings hope to a bright future. He added that mutual respect among the different groups living in Lebanon is something that is really needed at this point in history. Hermel is a town located in Baalbek-Hermel governorate of Lebanon, it hosts 6,100 registered Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2018). The public space chosen as a site of intervention is the oldest park in the town, known for its big trees and greenery. During the participatory assessment, it was fascinating how the parents shared memories of play in this space and were excited that this project will activate the space again allowing their children to create new memories there as well. The design for Hermel child friendly space focused on maintaining the natural character of the space, while introducing play spaces and relaxing spaces for everyone. The site was divided in three main areas: family area, playground and football court. These areas are connected to each other with a new concrete path, which allows accessibility to all play facilities and spaces. Families use the 'family area' for picnics, which is a social and leisure activity that the intervention aimed at enhancing by providing permanent tables and chairs that embrace the natural

elements of the parks. In addition to this, play facilities were placed between tables so that toddlers and young children are able to play near their parents. The playground includes three play stations, each one providing different games and experiences of play such as active play, imaginative play and sensory play. The football court was set up on an existing space where children played football. Again, through the intervention existing uses and social dynamics were enhanced.

A young Syrian girl playing for the first time in the park, also participated in the participatory design activities. She was very happy to see that the park turned out to be even better than what she had envisioned. She said she will ask her parents to bring her to play there again. This is very empowering to young children, to learn that their role was important. A concluding set of activities was planned to finalize the space, where children painted together colorful animal figures. Ahmad, the contractor representative in charge of the construction, was very appreciative of the efforts that engaged the locals of his town to realize this project. All the hired workers were from Hermel. He brought his wife and newly born child to show them the project he was a part of; the family enjoyed their day at the park.

Barja is a coastal town located in the Chouf district of Mount Lebanon Governorate. It hosts 7,126 registered Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2016), the highest number in Mount Lebanon Governorate, and considered one of the most vulnerable localities. The site of intervention chosen for the child friendly space is a section of a parking area adjacent to an existing public space completed in 2016. The project saw the transformation of the parking into a stimulating child friendly space that links to the existing public park.

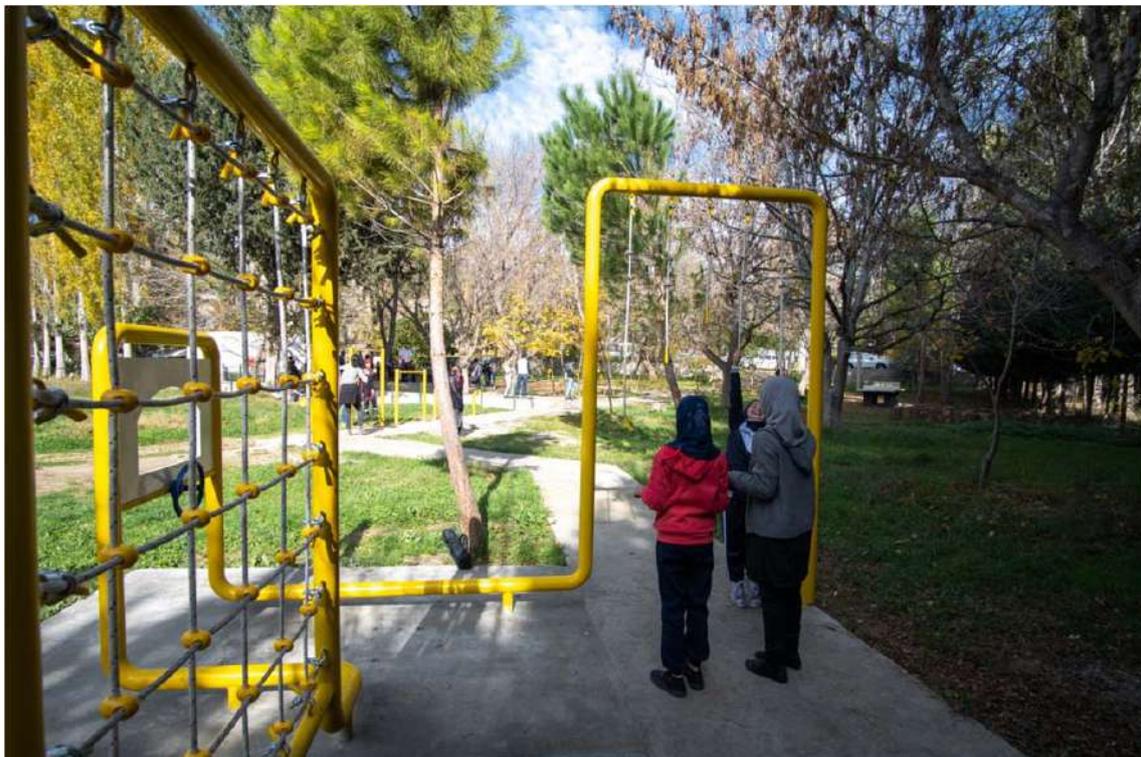


Figure 16. Children enjoy the musical games, Hermel, 2019



Figure 17. Nine children enjoying the nest swing together, Hermel, 2019



Figure 18. Children fascinated by the spinning circles optical illusions, Hermel, 2019



Figure 19. The inclusive play stations allow children of all abilities to play together, Hermel, 2019

The design in Barja CFS focused on creating a compact, accessible, dynamic and stimulating play space. The sea view was an important element that greatly shaped the design. The playground is therefore developed along an accessible ramp which leads to a raised platform that points towards the sea, hence offering a clear and peaceful view of the sea. Different games were incorporated in the playground structure, which offer different play experiences such as active play, imaginative play and sensory play. The games are placed in a way to generate multiple opportunities for inclusive play. The playground structure has a distinctive shape and has been built by using steel and timber as main materials.

The mayor of Barja, Raymond Hamieh, showed interest in doing similar projects in other public spaces in Barja. He really appreciated the educational aspect of the playground spaces, which is a main factor for him to have such space in other locations. Young children (age 2-5) were very happy with the educational play items (such as the musical chimes) as well as the imaginative play items (such as the steering wheel). The small play house under the ramp was very successful as it represented a safe and quite space which is inside the playground but away from the crowd and the parents, its scale also represents an attraction for children as it suggests a space that is designed only for them and not for adults. Planting activities were organized to finalize the project, where children learned and enjoyed planting, while leaving their own contribution to the playground.



Figure 20. A young boy plays the xylophone while his mother and sister rest, Barja, 2019



Figure 21. Children racing to climb up the climbing net, Barja, 2019



Figure 22. Children racing to climb up the climbing net, Barja, 2019



Figure 22. A compact playground design allowing different types of inclusive play, Barja, 2019

A street as a social hub

Streets are important public spaces where different communities interact and engage in everyday life activities such as shopping or walking to get a taxi. With this project, CatalyticAction proves the potential of a road as a crucial public space for community cohesion. CA has been working in refugee hosting cities of the Bekaa valley in Lebanon since its initial activities on the ground, in 2014. In particular, they have worked in Bar Elias, central Bekaa since their first pilot project *Ibtasem*. Over the course of 4 years they developed and nourished their local networks and understanding of this context. In 2018, they collaborated with the RELIEF centre, a centre for research and learning focused on inclusive growth and prosperity. As part of this research partnership, CA developed the Participatory Spatial Intervention (PSI) with professor Andrea Rigon from the Bartlett Development Planning Unit at UCL. This project was implemented in Bar Elias, Lebanon, which according to the UNHCR Interagency Coordination Sector, is one of the most vulnerable localities in Lebanon (UNHCR, 2015) due to the high presence of refugees and vulnerable populations combined with the lack of access to basic needs and livelihoods opportunities.

The overall objective of the project was to reduce vulnerabilities and improve wellbeing through spatial interventions, and to do so through the active participation of the local community. Throughout the process new ways are tested through which residents (refugees and hosts) co-produce the city and help understand how wellbeing is constructed and negotiated and how resilience is formed, imagined and practiced. The interventions are located in different locations on the main entrance road in Bar Elias, Bekaa, Lebanon. The project was implemented in close collaboration and coordination with Bar Elias municipality, this was very key towards the success of the project and its maintenance in the future.

Bar Elias PSI was developed and brought to completion through an extensive participatory process. Local researchers (citizen scientists) were recruited following an open call disseminated amongst key local stakeholders. Seven local researchers were selected, they are men and women from Lebanese, displaced and refugee communities Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians. Local researchers were trained throughout the different phases of the project on: social research, research methods, ethics and data, participatory research, design thinking and human-centred approaches, and public engagement. The process of working with the local communities on how to research their built environment was a very enriching experience. Over the course of a year, local researchers were able to look at their town differently, questioning matters that in the past they took for granted. For some, this participatory approach represented the first opportunity of dialogue between the different nationalities living in Bar Elias, to produce a shared vision and a place for all of them.

Local researchers played a major role in a Development Planning Unit summerLab workshop “Public realm and spaces of refuge”, in which they worked together with local and International participants and experts to investigate public spaces in Bar Elias. This workshop was an important step to help PSI team to identify the space of intervention for the activities of PSI. After visiting and investigating several public spaces, the identified space for the PSI was the entrance road of Bar Elias, one of the few public spaces of great importance to the city and used by most residents and visitors of Bar Elias from various nationalities.



Figure 23. Local researchers and an architecture student from Birmingham discussing their intervention, Bar Elias, 2018



Figure 24. Bar Elias entrance road, Bar Elias, 2018

After identifying the space, an extensive participatory planning workshop was conducted in Bar Elias where local researchers participated as well as 12 local participants from different nationalities and age groups. A Syrian woman stated that the workshop was opportunity for Syrians to give back to society so that they are not perceived as only

exploiting their host. A Lebanese man participant added that “there is no trust in society between people, no respect for the elderly”, he expressed the need for a committee that brings people together, “the society is disintegrated, an old saying /story says that in life 3 things are important: chance, serendipity, learning. It is the good chance that brought us together, we shouldn’t waste this unique opportunity.” The workshop aimed at identifying the issues that the spatial intervention should address. The focus of the workshop was not about producing solutions but rather thinking what could the solution be. Different research methods were used: observation, participatory mapping and semi-structured interviews. It was important that in each method used to make sure that different groups of participants were involved: men and women, children, adults, elderly, passers’ by, residents, shop owners, workers, street vendors, persons with different abilities, different nationalities and occupations.



Figure 25. Workshop participants design their street interventions, Bar Elias, 2018



Figure 26. Final design consultation, Bar Elias, 2018

Participants concluded that safety, accessibility, leisure, and safe play spaces for children were key issues. The design was therefore developed to respond to these issues. A public design consultation was also conducted to get further feedback from the local community on the proposed ideas. This was developed into a final design, the municipality approved all the interventions design, the mayor was particularly keen on the new bench and shading area in front of the polyclinic and how this whole project will give a good appearance to Bar Elias's entrance. CA negotiated different conditions of implementation that required full cooperation of the municipality.

The last phase of the project was the community engaged construction, during which CA with the support of local researchers outreached to the needed subcontractors in Bar Elias, the main construction team was formed of: a Palestinian concrete foreman who runs the business with his family, a Syrian welder whose shop is located in Bar Elias and lives in the nearby town of Ghazze, a Lebanese carpenter who was born and lives in Bar Elias with his family and a Syrian gardener who lives in the nearby town of Ghazze. 15 general construction labourers were Syrians living in Bar Elias, assisted in various activities of construction. Adding to this, 7 women from Bar Elias (2 Palestinians, 3 Syrians, 2 Lebanese) assisted in various activities of construction. Local community members, including children, also joined for different implementation activities such as painting the mural, benches and floor games.



Figure 27. Local researchers participate in the mural painting, Bar Elias, 2019

The implementation took place during the month May 2019 coinciding with the holy month of Ramadan. From the Clock Tower to the main road's intersection with the Beirut-Damascus Highway, the spatial interventions were scattered in a harmonious

manner. The timeline of the project was structured daily to include construction tasks and community activities. Four members of CA team were leading the implementation phase, present daily to ensure supervision, daily coordination with various subcontractors, with the municipality and other key stakeholders, as well as conducting community engaged activities. For example, collecting and reusing plastics to form the smaller shade structures, painting the benches and painting a mural. The mural that transformed a previously rough wall into a colourful wall at the entrance of the road.



Figure 28. Access ramps created along all the sidewalks, Bar Elias, 2019



Figure 29. The municipality installing the speed humps together with one of the local researchers, Bar Elias, 2019



Figure 30. People enjoying the single seats at night, Bar Elias, 2019



Figure 31. The main shade and seating area in front of the polyclinic, Bar Elias, 2019

An important aspect of the intervention was the joint learning, as well as sharing skills. The intervention has built the capacity of the local researchers and other residents to analyse problems, has encouraged other members of the community to participate in this work, think about diverse identities, and negotiate collective solutions. This project has led to the creation of a social infrastructure which is a public good for the entire city. The PSI in Bar Elias acted as a catalyst showing the potential of small participatory interventions; as the project resumed the polyclinic located on the road continued the intervention with their desired additions of benches, planters and pavement. The main shade and seating area became a landmark for the town, being used for public events and celebrations such as the prophet's birthday and Eid festivities. Adding to this, with this project process from inception to implementation women and elderly felt empowered voicing their own ideas and opinions, in a cultural context where their role is usually limited within their house. A Syrian woman realized with this project that she has a lot to say, she is not just a housewife with children, not just a mother with a role at home but she could give back to society and be part of it, "I am important, someone is interested in hearing what I have to say".

Conclusion

With the presented projects CatalyticAction shows the involvement of their placemaking approach in Lebanese cities hosting displaced communities. The impact of this approach is multifaceted, impacting: the diverse communities and stakeholders who participate in its process; all other users of the places created; and neighboring communities who witness and inspire from the positive change placemaking brings. One of the key impacts is changing mind-sets in such challenging contexts, where with placemaking, displaced communities are not passive receivers but rather active agents who want to give back a lasting positive change within their host communities, and where local stakeholders such as local municipalities learn the value of engaging with their residents in decision making. It is crucial to note that with participatory approaches a lot of challenges are faced, in each project the challenges are different and relate to its context. Throughout their various projects, CA learned that partnership, context specificity and dialogue are key elements to overcome challenges and ensure a successful placemaking project. In Lebanon, the small country with a unique history of displacement and socio-cultural differences, placemaking becomes crucial for a prosperous future where community cohesion and integration allow, most importantly, children to grow in a safe environment.

VIEWPOINT

Double P! Public Spaces in Dubai: a Paranoiac Panopticon

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Abstract

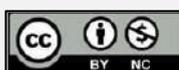
Despite the crisis of the metaphoric growth of its superficiality to its deadening sterility, Dubai stands as an attractive destination in the desert simulating a collage of cultural images from around the world with a centrally-planned free market capitalism attracting investors and developers. This paper is part of my master in architecture thesis at Politecnico di Milano titled: 5km/hr Manifesto and it outlines the problematical aspect of Dubai DNA: Dubai public spaces. The city is metaphorically analysed, as a collage city of exogenous fragments and a system city resembling a biological cell with defects in it's the so-called public spaces that are designed as a model of a virtual panopticon of social surveillance forged by a set of do's and don'ts. Built up rapidly over the past few years on the wealth gotten from oil, public spaces in Dubai have no depth of history or indigenous culture, no complexity, no conflicts, no doubts, nothing to stand in the way of its being shaped into the ultimate wonderland. The Arab notion of public has been dramatically ignored in the planning of the city and has been replaced with a collage of regulated western modernist spaces that have failed to create pockets of interaction and communication bringing in mind a problematical situation and an utopic question: How to demystify the panopticon effect and make Dubai more liveable? This leads to the recall of the qualities of the endogenous Arabic Public Space: The Souk. A set of characteristics has been concluded and if integrated, might really change Dubai public spaces from a paranoic panopticon to a more liveable space. Enclosure and privacy, human scale and density, the stage and back stage effect were essential conditions in the souk and are elaborated in this paper presenting a set of new design guidelines for claiming back what is supposed to be public and might develop into further future research.

Keywords: public spaces, Dubai, panopticon, surveillance, souk, design guidelines

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I. Introduction

Only a few years ago, the world became familiar with Dubai. The instant global metropolis with a continuously changing skyline enchanted the world with record-setting skyscrapers, fake lakes, indoor ski slopes and an impressively multi-cultural population. Through its patchwork of free zones, Dubai had integrated the extraterritoriality concept where the same people would be governed by different legal codes depending on where they were within the city. The free zones made traveling from neighbourhood to neighbourhood, in a legal sense, like moving from country to country. (Brook, 2019) This was at the essence of its free market capitalism economic boom and one can understand somehow how this influenced its urban design of patches and gated cities in one whole master plan with open possibilities. These fragments of investments can be metaphorically compared to a Lego set where there is never ever “nothin’ to do”. In addition to that, Dubai is a city where everyone and everything in it - its luxuries, workers, aesthetics, accents, even its aspirations - were flown in from someplace else. As the locomotive built Daniel Burnham’s Chicago, the jetliner built United Arab Emirates Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed’s Dubai. (Brook, 2019) And, despite the crisis of the chaotic and metaphoric growth of its superficiality to its deadening sterility, Dubai stands as a an attractive destination in the desert simulating a collage of cultural images from around the world striving to become a global business hub and attraction centre in the middle east and gulf region.

Many high profile and iconic projects were developed in Dubai, designed to achieve a global city status and image. Burj Khalifa for example in Downtown Dubai has become the signature icon of Emaar Properties. The Dubai fountain and its artificial lake, is another landmark attraction that offers a spectacular waterfront to the tallest tower in the world with 828 meters in height, surrounded by pseudo-Arabian architecture adjacent to the world largest mall. Artificial islands and a myriad of international monuments replicas shaped the rapid growth of the city. One could argue that this is a perfect example of a “Debordian” spectacle in a desert context remote from any contextual relevance (Elsheshtawy, 2010).

Dubai is using “the spectacle” as a way of impressing the world and placing itself on the map of globally significant cities. It all started with Burj Al Arab that was the first iconic building in the city, the second series of projects were the islands, the fake archipelago, especially Palm island, the third is the ultimate icon, the world tallest building, Burj Khalifa. Here the notion “hegemonic Dubai”, a city that declares itself both regionally and globally, is evident. A city-state without income taxes, labour laws, or elections, it is ruled by a corporate oligarchy of hereditary rulers, accountable only to themselves and their investors. A city designed to be a landmark as a whole and in its parts attempting to draw the attention of the world. The French Philosopher pointed out in one of his essay that The society of the Spectacle that the spectacle externality with respect to the acting subject is demonstrated by the fact that the individual’s own gestures are no longer his own, but rather those of someone else who represents them to him. The spectator feels at home nowhere, for the spectacle is everywhere. (Debord, 2019) Quite a model for the global future!

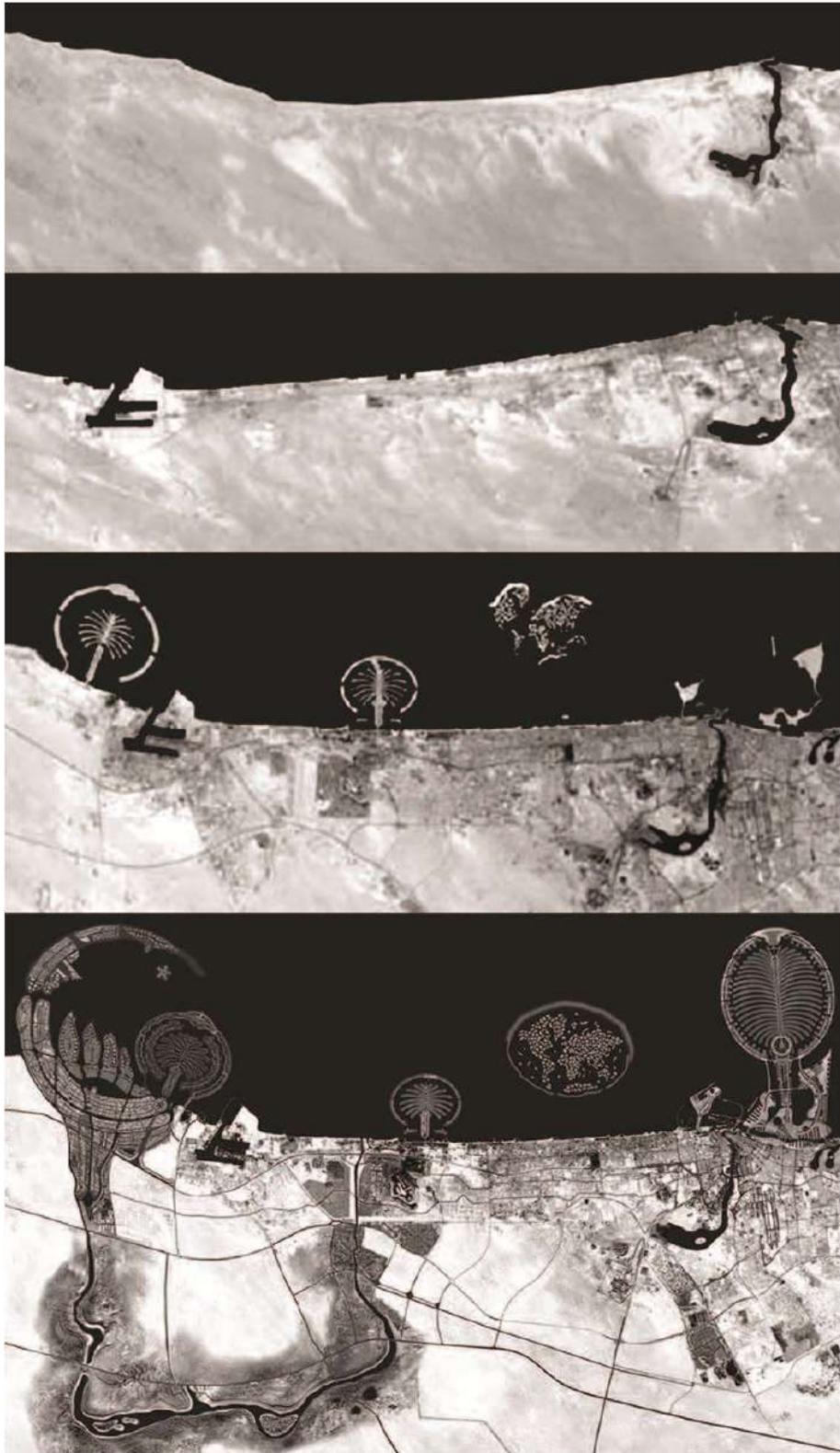


Figure 1: Dubai Aerial view evolution year 1950, 1975, 2007, 2025 – photos retrieved from Google Earth.

2. Dubai Metaphor

2.1 Collage city

Postmodernists Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard have declared that the genuine experience of life has been replaced: “In societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles.” Baudrillard comments on the implications of such simulation: “It is no longer a question of imitation. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double”. (Baudrillard and Turner, 1989) Reflecting this on Dubai context, all one can encounter is an accumulation of artificial representations.

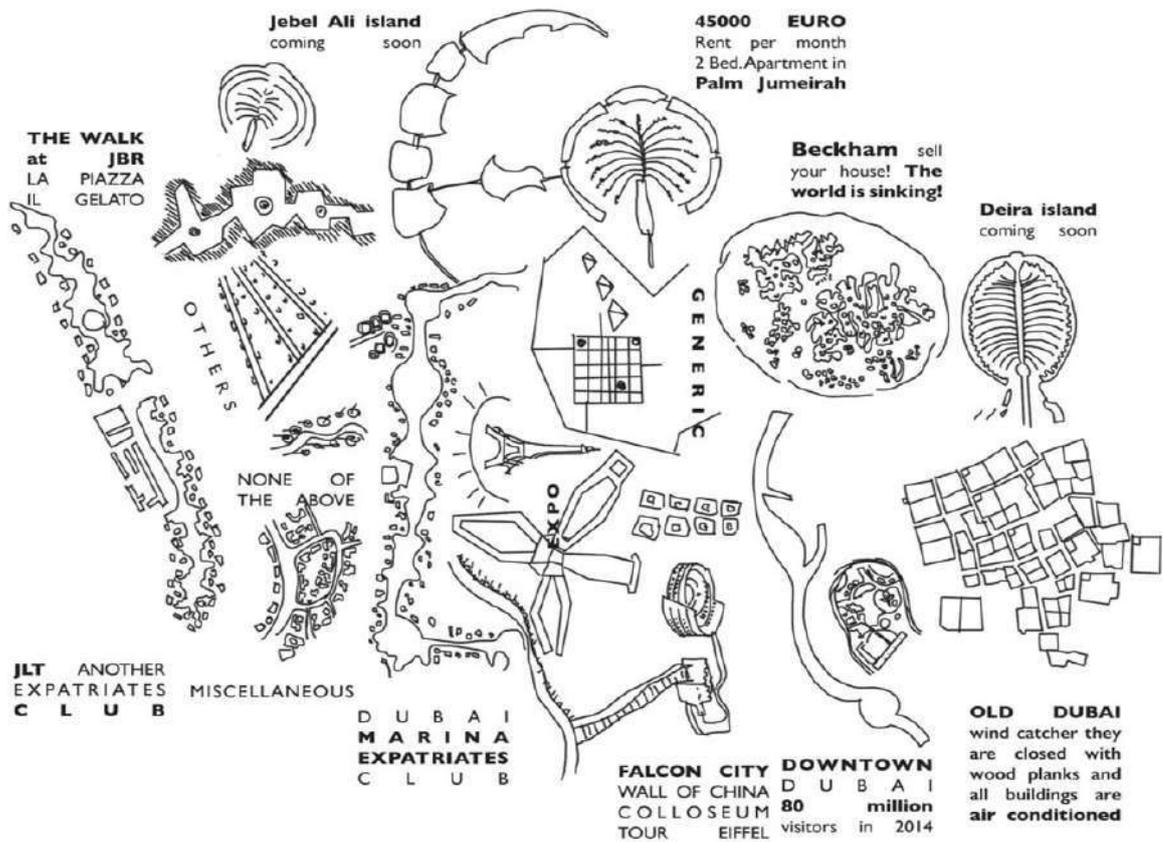


Figure 2: Dubai as collage of fragments - work by author (2015)

The copy has replaced the original. And this is the case that might be distorting realities of things and presenting a delirious urban status that one might get used to at the end and starts to believe in it as the natural model of a city. Historically, a Collage city would offer the poetics of Utopia to the city, virtues and spatial qualities by the juxtaposition and layering of smaller designs into a whole with a chronological and historical order, rather than a totalitarian, fresh slate approach, bringing in all the spectacles at once, that wouldn't allow the city to evolve through the politics of utopia and time. (Elsheshtawy, 2010) Dubai, in its accumulation of artificial representations and fragmentations has lost

the value of time, of memories and history that usually characterizes resilient cities. The copies have substituted the original without accidentally creating any poetic urban pockets. Everything is planned from the top down and critically presenting a “bricolage” of exclusive and gated cities and clubs, a continuous attempt to draw the attention of the world without accounting for its urban life.

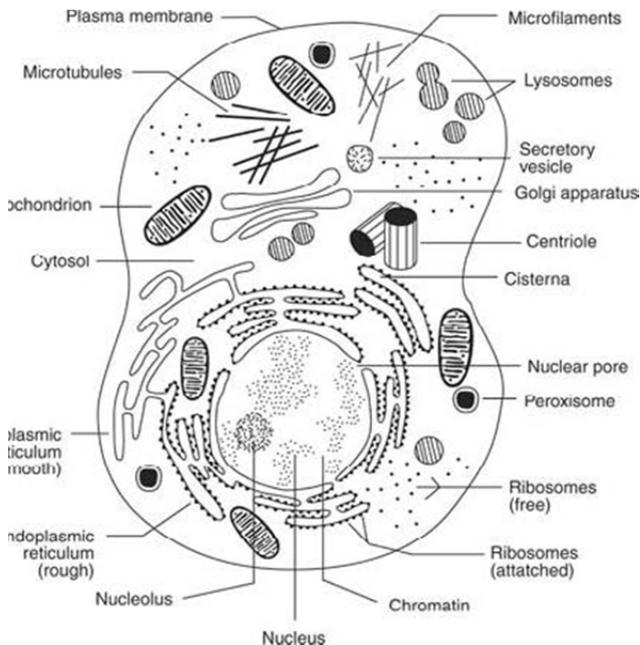


Figure 3: Cell elements (google.com)

2.2 System city

From an urban perspective, and due to its highly organized planning and zoning approach, Dubai can be compared in its elements to a biological cell elements as follow (Google.com, 2015):

The cell membrane: the ring road,

The cytoskeleton: the transportation system

The Cytosol: the Streets

The Cytoplasm: the People flow

The Lysosomes: the Recycling plants

The Mitochondria: the Power station

The Nucleus: The cell city's metropolitan center and public spaces.

The Endoplasmic reticulum: The Industries.

This is a personal metaphor of Dubai to be able to identify its morphology and functionality as a whole organism and in order to spot where Dubai has some nucleus, some public spaces. It can be clearly seen that it is a linear city, decentralized and out of human scale with a network growth all along its transportation system. Like a series of spectacles spread all along the coastal city highway creating an impressive skyline to be captured in a tourist photo!

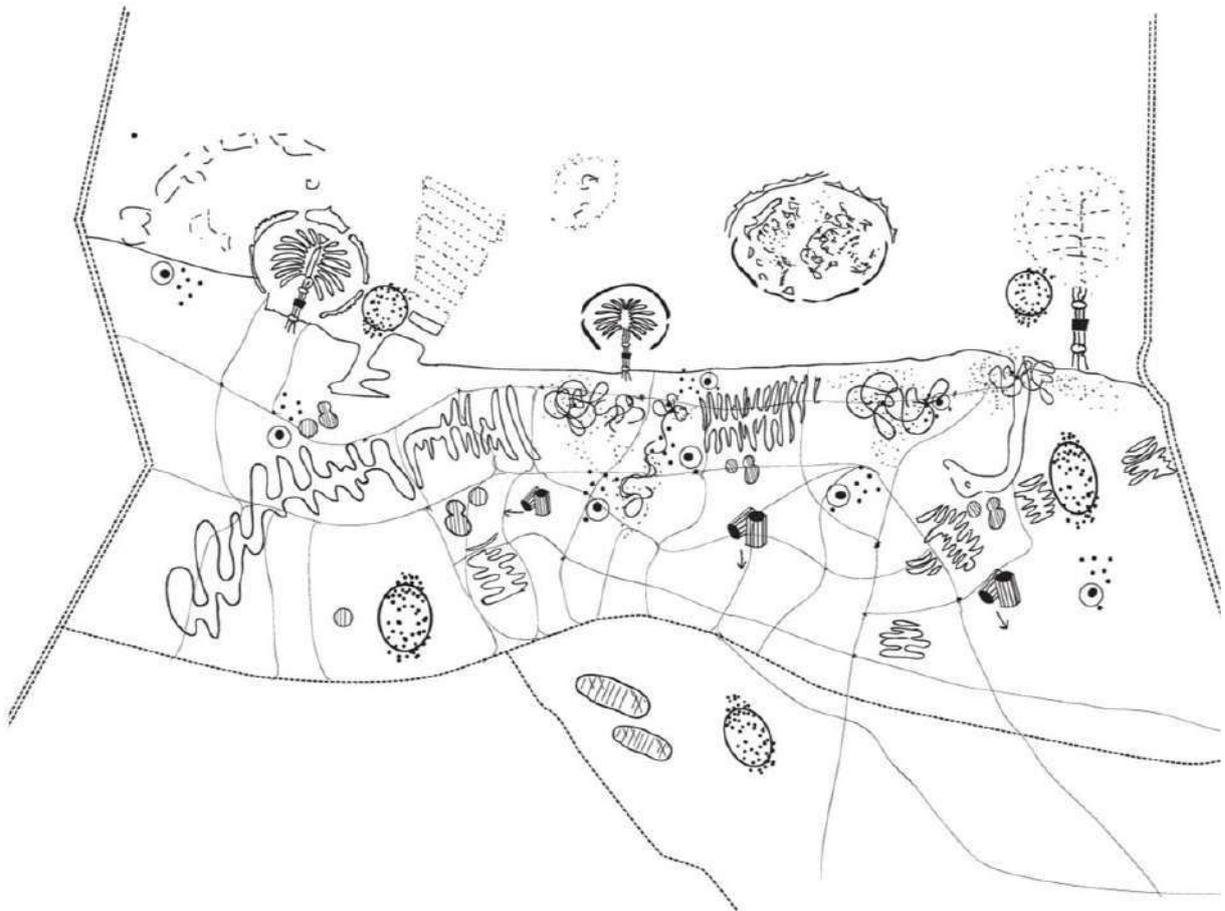


Figure 4: Dubai metaphor as a system city - work by author (2015)

3. Defects in the urban DNA of Dubai

Public spaces are crucial to the sustainability of cities for political, social, economic, public health and biodiversity reasons (Banerjee, 2001). However, Dubai public spaces weren't given that importance due to the processes of privatization taking place that has given rise to a city form less and less docile to the daily co-presence of a diversity of urbanites. And the existing public spaces in the privatized patches of Dubai are a collage of spaces and fragmented presenting many defects that are controversial with the functionality of a public space.

As globalization neuters local cultural differences and identities, the traditional Arab notions and configurations of the public realm and the urban circulation network have dramatically given way to Western modernist models in Dubai. The American superhighway and the Le Corbusian superblock have joined with the European roundabout to make for both difficult vehicular and pedestrian circulation, with a dearth of popular, pedestrian-scaled outdoor public spaces and with a "shadow" private transit system for its large foreign labor force, as well as continuing tribal hierarchies and a pervasive mobile phone and email culture. (Elsheshtawy, 2010) The defects in these main public spaces present a set of problematical aspects that might go unnoticed by

citizens or tourists. Dubai vibrant public spaces are in the Downtown, the Marina Walk, in Jumeirah Beach Resort, in the Mall and many other places that are very significant for the city as they are “heaven for the city multi-ethnic community”.



Figure 5: 1: Jumeirah Beach Resort JBR "PIAZZA" diagram – Fake Emulation of Piazza del Popolo of Roma work by author (2015)



Figure 6: Jumeirah Beach Resort JBR "PIAZZA" - photo by author (2015)



Figure 7: Dubai Marina Walk – Emulation of canal city concept - work by author (2015)



Figure 8: Dubai Marina Walk – Emulation of canal city concept – photo by author (2015)

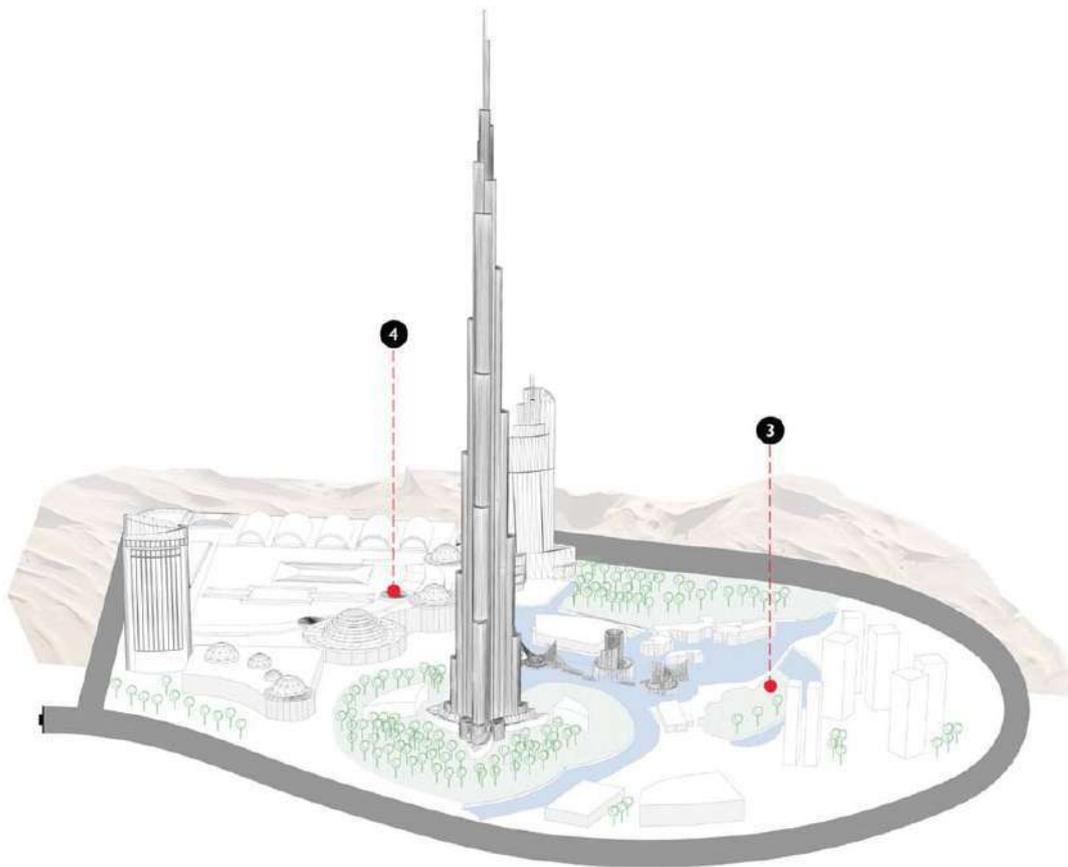


Figure 9: Downtown Dubai – Emulation of Las Vegas dancing fountain – work by author (2015)

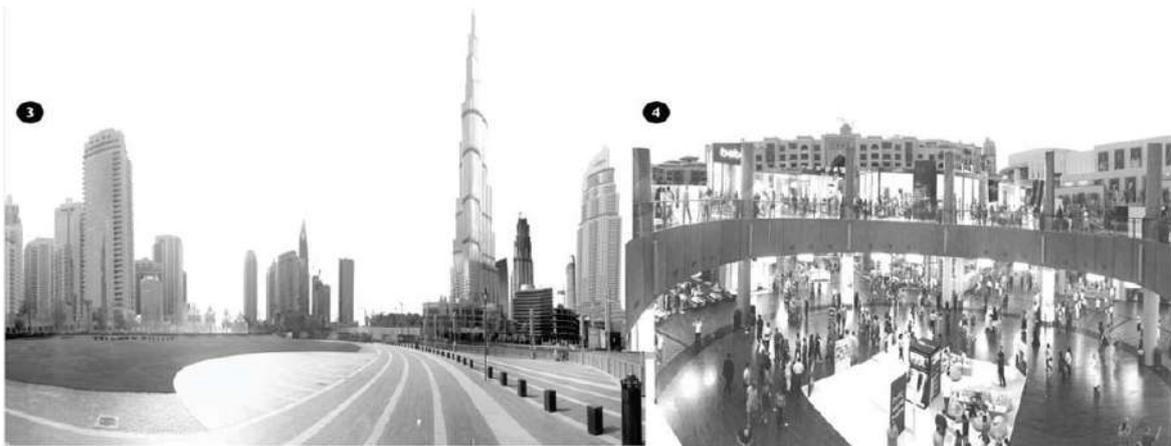


Figure 10: Downtown Dubai green space and Dubai Mall – photo by author (2015)

3.a Panopticon effect

Dubai is a city with very few public spaces, which means that with this scarcity concept, public spaces have monetary value and are unavailable to the masses anytime. Having money becomes essential to be part of the city and to belong to it.

Dubai is usually referred to as “a global city”, “a city-corporation”, or “Brand Dubai”. Large corporations such as the construction company Emaar, Dubai Holdings, Nakheel, Emirates Airlines, the Investment Corporation of Dubai or the retail development company, Dubai World, were funded with the goal of employing a strong influence on not only the economic, but also the public and social spheres of the city. (Rodriguez Roldan, 2013)

Thus, public spaces has become part of the luxury and showcased by the developers, a gated space, where you stand behind its vitrine to contemplate it while being under surveillance, very similar to a model of a virtual panopticon of social surveillance forged by a set of do's and don'ts. A paranoid panopticon defying the notion of public! As Michel Foucault (1984) states: "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere"

Since large corporations and real estate development companies operate in Dubai providing property development and management services, they set of restrictions and Do's and Don'ts or what is formally called Master Community Rules. For example in Emaar Rules report for the Marina and Downtown, it is clearly mentioned that "Community rules are for the benefit of owners and residents and are designed to create an environment in which all owners and residents can maximize enjoyment of their homes and the various common areas and facilities. It is also the intent of these Rules to create a serene, attractive and safe environment for the residents, and guests of the Community and Master Community. Adherence to these rules will maintain, preserve, enhance, and protect the property values and assets of the Community. Violation of any of the Community Rules will be uniformly enforced, with a Notice of Violation and applicable Violation Penalty." (Ecm.ae, n.d.)

In addition to that, the variety of semi-public spaces in Dubai are also managed by private-public or entirely private partnerships and thus, questions the notion of public space inherited from a legal perspective.

Every bit of land in Dubai is regulated by the laws of property and by the harsh weather conditions making it difficult to consider anything as common without encountering an entitled owner and manager.

"He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (Foucault, 1995)

3.b The exogenous spaces

The European notion of public space as the Greek agora and the Roman forum to the Renaissance square, until the nineteenth century railway station, taken as ideal models of public arenas where the public affairs of the city are discussed among an assembly of equal citizens is totally different from the Arab notion of public space where the street, the souk and the market have gathered the daily interactions of the citizenry.

The Dubai Mall Courtesy Policy

Mall Timings:
 Sunday - Wednesday
 10:00 am - 10:00 pm
 Thursday - Saturday
 10:00 am - 12:00 am

Please Wear Respectful Clothing
 Shoulders and knees should be covered
 Thank you for your cooperation

BEACH INSTRUCTIONS

تعليمات الشاطئ

PARK INSTRUCTIONS

تعليمات الحديقة

Marina Walk Courtesy Policy - Timings:
 Saturday - Wednesday | Thursday - Friday
 10:00 am - 10:00 pm | 10:00 am - 12:00 midnight

Figure 11: do's and don'ts - work of author (2015)

Besides the surveillance issue, the debatable act is the one of injecting exogenous spaces such as the piazza del Popolo or a canal city or Vegas fountain in a cultural context historically developing a democratic anarchical system based on the souk concept. Facing the present situation that cannot be undone, maybe for political and power statement reasons, standing from an utopic perspective, one can question how to break down the fixed and known into particles of the unknown from which a new “public” quality may emerge. And, how to detach the "public" space from the rules of control without breaking any single rule, how to create pockets for social interaction claiming the right to the city respecting the developers’ regulations in the public space in order to make Dubai more livable?

4. The endogenous qualities of Dubai

Old Dubai developed with a very effective and sustainable design of the houses to deal with extreme temperatures. Density and proximity were a way to reduce the effect of

the heat, the houses were built very close together forming narrow passages shaded as much as possible during the day. The narrow passages are opened to small squares with a panoramic view the surrounding. This arrangement increased airflow in the street, a technique used by Arabs for centuries. (Zeballos, 2010)



Figure 12: Security guy in the green "public" space of Downtown Dubai - Photo by author (2015)

4.1 The Souk: the public space

While historic Arab cities show a variety of origins and growth patterns, they were nonetheless established by a common set of social, geographic, and religious factors leading to similar morphological principles developing the urban fabric. The traditional Arab city was built at a pedestrian scale and was based on the pedestrian movement, as such, was an extremely dense cityscape with a very high degree of complexity. The public space was the street or the souk, the main exchange linear market place or the corridors between residential buildings. The sequence established a clear hierarchy and punctuated changes through transition, and with it, changes in social behavior and norms.



Figure 13: Old Dubai, Al Bastakiyya restored district - photo by author (2015)

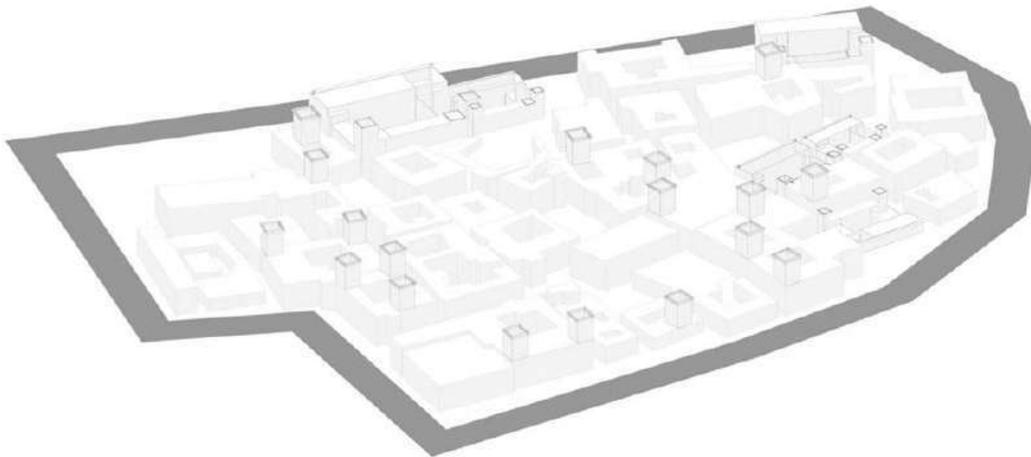


Figure 14 Old Dubai, Al Bastakiyya restored district - work by author (2015)



Figure 15: Old Dubai, Gold Souk covered with Persian influence - photo by author (2015)

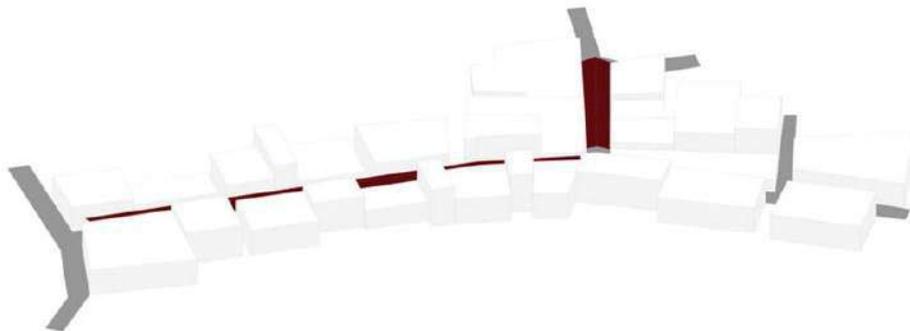


Figure 16: Old Dubai, Gold Souk covered with Persian influence – work by author

4.2 Design guideline 1: HIDE for Enclosure

The Souk's enclosure and privacy are an essential condition for its existence at first place. A design language implementing these notions will aim to break down previously known thresholds in the city of Dubai and create change in the way people perceive,

use, and experience an open and meaningless space. It would create pockets of uncertain and unpredictable interaction and uses. It would seek to answer not only to blur the boundaries that create separations between public and private spaces, but also how to bring the rich civic and communal lifestyle to exist on the ground.

4.3 Design guideline 2: DIFFUSE for Human Scale

Density is a way to create pockets of “private” activities, escaping psychologically the Panopticon effect. Power and social surveillance will exist, however when the collective flow is brought into a dense space, the civil inattention will increase and thus the probability of interaction will increase as well. Imagine one person walking alone in an open piazza knowing that he is being watched continuously, and imagine twenty people in the same scenario. Density is a way to provide a comfortable psychological attitude to the public space of Dubai.

Density must be to human scale, anarchical and modular; and should allow people to have control of the space especially in out of scale context such as the Marina Walk or Dubai Downtown.

4.4 Design guideline 3: BUFFER for Open Possibilities

Introducing the Spectacle and Stage Backstage effect with a buffering approach stimulates the creation of different level of public and semi-public interactions. Buffering a public space from another public space by adding an in between public space! This will create pockets, hidden from the surveillance, and will increase psychological comfort in the space. Creating gaps in between spaces for open possibilities and future space of exchange that keep changing on daily basis is just like the Souk effect.

4.5 Design guideline 4: CONTINUE to Change Real Time

In Dubai, the spatial experience in a public space is limited by the Panopticon effect. Testing the change on one public space should continue to another, testing again and again. Ephemeral installations and experiments can help to complete the feedback loop and insure the continuity of interventions encouraging a continuous flow of people, of atmosphere and of events.

5. Conclusion

After showcasing the delirious spectacles of Dubai urban mesh and its metaphorical representations and after highlighting the problematical issue in the conception of its exogenous public spaces that represent a Double P scenario of a paranoid panopticon, we can conclude that the presented design qualities in the guidelines are worth to be put into action. Since it is a city of experimentations, of trial and errors with the objective to be the best, it can bear a series of interventions that might make it more livable. And here comes the social responsibility of the architects in charge, they have the tools to integrate smooth design guidelines for public spaces and negotiate the regulations of the developers to end up with a win-win situation.

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VIEWPOINT

Pedestrianization as a Strategy for Placemaking. The case of the Wakalat Street in Amman

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Abstract

Borrowing western strategies for organizing public spaces in Arab countries may have negative impacts. The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) has public spaces interventions in different parts of the city. This paper discusses the development of the Wakalat Street as a public space, which is located in the Swiefieh District in Amman-Jordan. Tracing the newspapers and articles about the Wakalat Street shows that there is a debate with and against the transformation of the Wakalat Street from a street to a plaza. The actions and reactions of GAM regarding the development show also uncertainty and a pragmatic approach. Methods of research for data gathering and analysis are based on qualitative approach; literature, articles, interviews, and field observations. The paper discusses issues and conditions for making successful pedestrian places through review of literature, principles and theories, and then analyses the pedestrianization of the Wakalat Street on the local context. The Jordanian experience on pedestrianization in the case of the Wakalat Street will be discussed based on the transformation decisions in relation to theory and best practice in the field. The key findings present the importance of analyzing the expected impact of pedestrianization on the economic and social aspects. The pedestrianization of the Wakalat Street has bad impact on the character of the street as a place attracting international brands; it is no longer the street of Wakalat (brands).

Keywords: pedestrianization, public spaces, social, economic, sustainability

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Rehabilitation of the Wakalat Street

The development objectives and strategies

The urban rehabilitation strategy concerns pedestrianization of the Salem al-Qudah Street that is known with Wakalat name respect to the existing international brands. As stated in the project document, specific issues were considered in urban analysis and rehabilitation strategies of the Wakalat Street. The analysis shows that the street was not mainly a family oriented; people target the area for specific purpose. Women are the majority users like shopping there. Outdoor fashion shows were conducted there. Shoppers are mostly of high class income. The street is known by stores for international brands (GAM, 2007). The main objective of the project is:

“Creating a "Workable Street" that encourages pedestrian life in Amman. A Street that is inclusive welcoming people from different walks of life and various socio-economic strata of society. A vibrant urban space that brings public Ammani life back to the Streets... Creating a street that wins back public life from Shopping Malls and the Strip. A potential for a workable and pleasant shopping district for Amman (a recreational promenade). A smart Shopping district that challenges the doctrine that pedestrian spaces are bad for business... This project represents a break away from the emerging gated communities in Amman... different activities such as walking, eating, listening to a band, children playing, eating, a place to see and to be seen”
(GAM, 2007)

The project aspires to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for different socioeconomic strata. The Urban design qualities and guidelines are designated to ensure a good quality image for the physical context (GAM, 2007).

“It is part of an overall strategy to create urban public spaces within Amman and has become a popular meeting place for Ammanis and city visitors. Located in Sweifieh, Wakalat Street is the beginning of a pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood” (GAM, 2008)

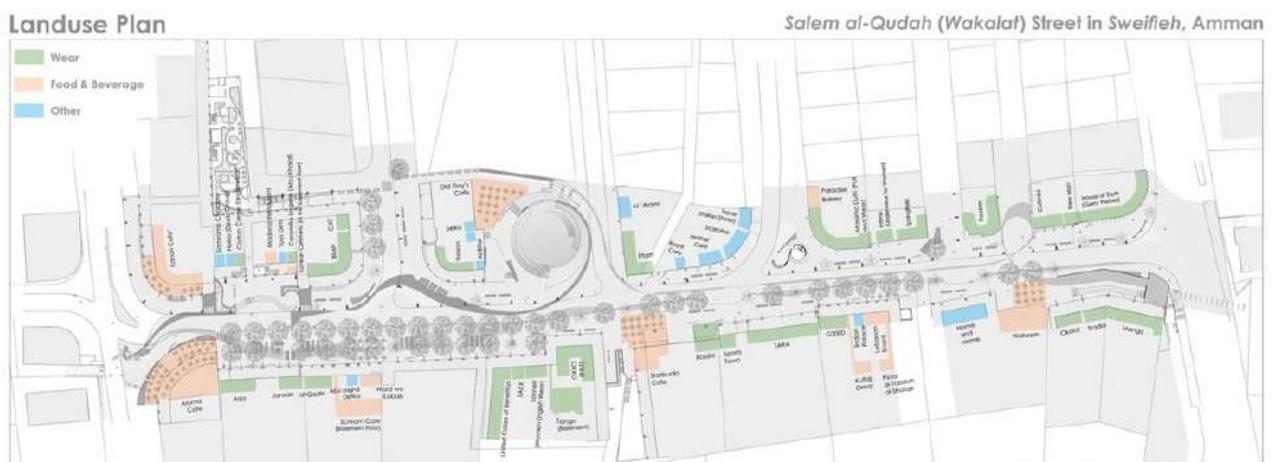


Figure 1. Design Layout of Wakalat Street, GAM (2007)



Figure 2. The Wakalat Street before pedestrianization
Source: GAM (2007)



Figure 2. Pedestrianization of the Wakalat Street
Source: GAM (2007)



Figure 3. Reopening the Wakalat Street to vehicles, 2014
Source: Almadena-news (2014)



Figure 4. lighting arcade
Source: by author



Figure 5. Wakalat in 2019
Source: by author



Figure 6. lighting arcade at night
Source: Petra (2018)

Exploring articles shows many feedbacks and issues that exist at the Wakalat Street as follows:

- (Maani, 2007): Pedestrianization of streets for walking and shopping is a successful experience
- (Alqosos, 2009): Wakalat Street is a model for public spaces in Amman
- (Ain-news, 2012): Wakalat Street in Sweifieh. Beauty amid contradictions
- (Assawsana, 2013): Wakalat Street. dim lights and immorality
- (Alrai, 2013): Mayor of Amman: Re-study the conditions of Wakalat Street
- (madenah-news, 2013): Mayor of Amman studies the conditions of Wakalat Street to stimulate tourist traffic
- (addustour, 2014): Amman Chamber of Commerce commends efforts to revitalize the Wakalat Street
- (Nasr, 2015): The Wakalat Street in decline again
- (khaberni, 2014): Wakalat Street with asphalt pavement soon
- (Rum-online, 2016): Wakalat Street in Sweifieh: empty courtyards and children's playgrounds
- (Ahdath, 2016): Sweifieh: financial losses for shop owners in Wakalat Street
- (Petra, 2018): GAM carries out decorative lighting works in Wakalat Street
- (Assaid, 2019): The Wakalat Street has lost its luster
- (Salahat, 2019): Traders accuse the Municipality of Amman of premeditated "murder" of Wakalat Street in Sweifieh

Literature Review

Literature show that a full pedestrianization of streets (pedestrian malls) is not preferred. The success of pedestrian malls is limited to many factors such as the provision of adequate parking and transit systems serving dense residential areas as in the European experiences, or developing pedestrian malls where high levels of foot traffic and people seek to shop and eat, such as near offices or financial cores in large cities, university towns, and areas of tourist attraction as in the U.S. experiences. Mixed malls allow limited use of automobiles during certain hours, or transit malls that allow only public transit to pass through the streets are more encouraged. In addition, two-ways roads system is better for the economy. It increases traffic flow that has good impact on the number of businesses, property value and the enhancement of pedestrian friendliness.

There is a debate about pedestrianization, its successful and failure. Both Alexander and Whyte argue that public spaces, particularly pedestrian areas, need to be located within the heart of a community or in a downtown where the highest level of pedestrian traffic exists (Alexander et al., 1977; Whyte, 1988) as cited in (Bates, 2013). There are three types of pedestrian malls: street as plaza-pedestrian, mixed malls and transit malls. When street is closed to traffic, it functions as a plaza. The pedestrian malls compose many blocks along shopping street, modified pavement, eliminating or narrowing the pre-existing roads, increased planting and other street furniture, may include amenities such as food sources, vendors, public art. Traditional pedestrian mall is a completely closed to traffic. Mixed mall allows limited use by automobiles during certain hours. Transit mall allows only public transit to pass through (Marcus & Francis, 1998). The pedestrian mall is a strategy to create a more friendly-pedestrian environment. The first

built pedestrian malls as traffic-free zones were in Essen, Germany, in 1926. After the Second World War, more malls continued to develop with increasing traffic congestion in the relatively dense city centres. By 1966, there were over sixty pedestrian malls in Germany (Caves, 2005). The pedestrian free zones or malls were developed due to increased urban growth, affluence, a large number of cars, and the dense fabric with a relatively high residential population. The sixty pedestrian malls in West Germany were developed as ad hoc response to urban congestion in a number of narrow shopping streets. By 1973, about 214 malls were developed, and by 1977, there were 340 malls, and by the end of 1980s there were 800 malls. The length of the malls also has increased from 7.5 km in 1960 to 24 km in 1973. Some of these malls had a variety of pedestrian zones, and other of a single pedestrian mall, and some had a series of interlocking streets, squares, and others unconnected areas. Bremen, in Germany has a central core with public buildings, the cathedral, railroad station, and it became pedestrian oriented, while traffic turned around the old city. In Hamburg, the pedestrian areas were improved through using shopping arcades of buildings blocks. As responding to the development of the suburban shopping centres in Germany in 1971, the pedestrian malls were developed as clusters of specialty shops, entertainment and restaurants to avoid the impact on shopping areas as what happened in the U.S. By the mid of 1970s, the concern was about the contribution of the pedestrian malls to upgrading the general environmental quality of an area. More focus was on integrating diverse buildings and streetscape that led to expansion of smaller malls. Recent proposals introduced *“coexistence for both pedestrians and automobiles, integrated systems of circulation for urban areas that balance the need for local as well as long distance traffic”* (Rubenstein, 1992).

“Providing quality urban spaces including plazas and pedestrian malls encourages use of the city and stimulates a relaxed atmosphere for casual strolling, window shopping, and browsing”. The success of pedestrian malls could be achieved with provision of convenient and economical parking and transit systems, in addition to linking spaces as in some European cities of major pedestrian areas with a variety of shops and activities, the building architectural style with the surrounding piazzas articulated a sense of scale to the urban environment. Spaces should be inviting, encourage people to interact with open spaces, outdoor cafes for gathering, relaxing and eating. The design of festival marketplaces in the United States provided a sense of place for developments. *“The idea of the marketplace with its mixed uses, activities, and amenities relates back to the ancient Greek Agora where the concept for these urban spaces began to develop, and continues to serve the same human needs today”* (Rubenstein, 1992).

The German experiences of pedestrian malls were imported to the U.S. where two hundred pedestrian malls were developed between 1950s and 1960s to counter the growth of suburbanization. Downtowns closed the street to traffic, but the shoppers complained of lack of parking and crimes. But in 1990s the streets opened access to traffic. Now, most of the built pedestrian malls are no longer traffic-free zone (Caves, 2005). Pedestrian malls are where the main vehicular artery is closed. Most of the American downtown pedestrian malls have been unsuccessful. Closing roads would have impact on surrounding streets, failing to accommodate large volumes of automobile traffic, and so it was unattractive for visitors. Pedestrian malls are successful when high levels of foot traffic and people seeks to shop and eat, such as near offices or

financial core in large cities, university towns, and areas of tourist attraction. Traffic management could be through using shuttle bus to reduce the mall and downtown's parking demands, partial closures weekly or annual closures to encourage walking. The street must be both automobile and pedestrian-friendly. Walkability would be enhanced by creating pedestrian-friendly environments. This would increase open spaces and improve a sense of community (Schmidt, 2010).

A report prepared to help preparing strategies for the future of Downtown Fresno's Fulton Mall corridor, discusses the trends of the American pedestrian malls over the last 50+ years. The pedestrian malls were developed in 1960 and 1970s. The report shows that about 89% of pedestrian malls (streets open for pedestrian and closed to vehicles) failed. The 11% successful pedestrian malls are located in areas of populations under 100,000, attached to a major anchor such as a university or a major tourist location such as Las Vegas. The streets shopping have more investment, higher occupancy rate and more pedestrian traffic. About 170 other U.S. cities reopened the streets to vehicles. *"The problems of pedestrian malls include a deteriorated retail mix, lack of visibility and access for retail, an uncomfortable and threatening environment, an area that attracts loiterers, disrupted neighbourhood traffic flows and a fear of crime"*. Several problems the pedestrian malls have: lack of convenient parking, the exposure of shoppers to bad weather, public perceptions on crime and less shopping diversity. When few people live in downtown, the malls became lifeless after work, attracting crime and loiterers, rather than large crowds. The pedestrian malls experience a general isolation, including a lack of eyes on the street for perceived safety and comfort, lack of visibility amongst landscaping and difficulties of parking and access. Thus, in most cases pedestrian malls in North America have experienced negative economic results from the original conversion. With reopening streets to vehicles, 90% of cities see significant improvements in occupancy rates, retail sales, property values, and private sector investment in the downtown area when streets are restored (Judge, 2013).

According to Karras (2014), strategies to make downtowns vibrant are: Turn one-way streets into two-way streets, *"one-way streets are great if your only goal is to channel traffic through your downtown, but they are bad for pedestrian activity and retail opportunities. Two-way streets create a more comfortable pedestrian environment and have been shown to increase property values"*, establish a regularly occurring public event with showcasing the downtown merchants, music, and food, create more land for development (landfill into a body of water, remove land from a floodplain, take back land from a freeway, etc), make under-utilized public land available for private sector development, consolidate regional economic development partner organizations into a single downtown location, create a permanent public market, open a downtown satellite campus of a local university, build a streetcar line connecting your downtown to an adjacent urban neighbourhood, create an awesome downtown playground to make your downtown more kid-friendly and family-friendly, create a branded downtown entertainment district, establish maximum parking standards for new downtown developments, or at least remove minimum parking requirements for new buildings, and set up a downtown bike share program (Karras, 2014).

The Transit-combination pedestrian malls allows for both pedestrians and some type of transit, such as light rail, bus, trolley, or taxi. The multi-modal component in these spaces have allowed for greater economic viability of the area, greater access and connections, less confusion and actually, more pedestrian traffic. By combining various

modes of transportation, these spaces allow for greater access, connections, eyes on the street, and choice for the user. This hybrid approach allows for a pedestrian-dominated space, while incorporating the vital elements of access and connectivity with the rest of the urban grid. This approach requires partnership with local transit organizations, taxi companies, downtown organizations, and other stakeholders. Management of the district can often include a budget to cover maintenance, operations and repairs for the transit-pedestrian mall. Often, these are expensive endeavors (Judge, 2013).

Discussion

Reviewing literature provides a framework for the impact of pedestrianization strategy on different aspect of life; social, economic and accessibility dimension, in addition to identification of factors contributing to the success of pedestrian malls, refer to Table 1. The framework guides discussion of these aspects on the pedestrianization of the Wakalat Street in relation to the location, urban design principles, accessibility, and economic, social dimensions.

Table 1. A framework for analyzing pedestrianization

Impact of pedestrianization	Factors for successful pedestrian mall
<p>Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - congestion at the surrounding - lack of convenient parking - disrupted neighborhood traffic flows - lack of visibility and access for retail <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low occupancy rate - Low pedestrian traffic - deteriorated retail mix and less shopping diversity - retail sales - property values - private sector investment <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an uncomfortable and threatening environment - an area that attracts loiterers - a fear of crime 	<p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At the heart of a community or downtown - In dense residential areas - where high levels of foot traffic and people seeks to shop and eat, such as near offices or financial core in large cities - attached to a major anchor such as a university or a major tourist location <p>Urban design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - linking spaces with a variety of shops and activities - Spaces should be inviting, encourage people to interact with open spaces, outdoor cafes for gathering, relaxing and eating - provision of convenient and economical parking and transit systems - Providing quality urban spaces - Pedestrian malls were developed as clusters of specialty shops, entertainment, restaurants to counter the attractions of the suburban malls

Location

The Wakalat Street is not the right location to develop a pedestrian mall. Although it lies in a mixed use center in Sweifieh that is considered one of main commercial centers in Amman, it is not a central one or a downtown, and neither located in dense residential area, refer to Figure 8. Although there are many office spaces in the street, they are inadequate to generate enough foot traffic to support activities such as restaurants and cafes. The Wakalat Street has not been attached to a major anchor such as a university, a major tourist location or historical attractions. Therefore, pedestrian traffic is low. In addition, there are other competitive commercial corridors and centers close to Sweifieh.

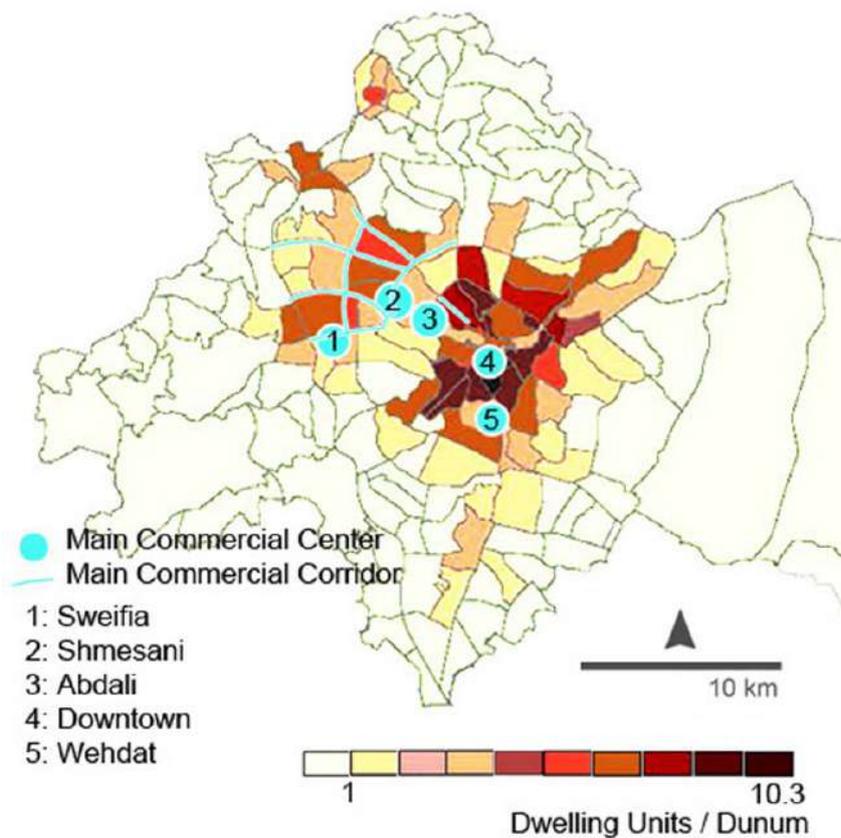


Figure 7. Neighbourhood Housing Densities and Main Centers in Amman
Source: based on GAM (2008)

According to Eng. Siham al Hadidi, the development of malls in western areas of Amman specifically the City Mall in addition to many malls in Sweifieh has bad economic impact on the Wakalat Street (Hadidi, 2019). Indeed, the proximity of Galleria mall to the north of the Wakalat Street has attracted some shops, where better security and environment controls. Some brands like sunglass hut and Mango moved there. The proximity to the mall could be considered competitive to the Wakalat Street, in another way, it may become an anchor that attracts people to the area. The malls in

Sweifiah are not of better conditions than the Wakalat Street; vacancy rate exceeds 30%, and the tenants there complain of low sale rates.

Urban Design

The physical characteristics of Sweifiah may affect the foot traffic to the Wakalat Street. Analysis of the slope indicates a difference in level of over 35m between the main market area and the Wakalat Street, refer to Figure 9 & 10. Although the distance is walkable, around 1,200m, the steep slope makes it unwalkable. A grid pattern of roads organizes the mixed use area of Swiefieh, the urban form of a hill and disconnected frontages due to vacant lands and residential areas have affected the place character and continuity of activity.



Figure .: A photo shows the discontinuation of commercial activities with the upper market
Source: the author

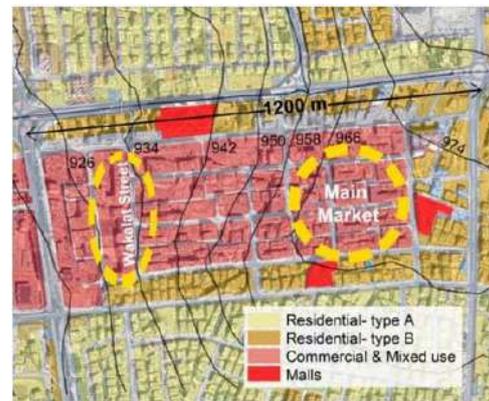


Figure 8. Sweifieh- Land use Map
Source: based on maps from GAM and Google Map (2019)

As the Wakalat Street was famous with quality goods and brands, the used landscape material such as pavement of concrete tile, is below average. In a retail street, clear signage and visibility are important for the success of business. The buildings arcades, the sky lighting on metal frames, in addition to trees have reduced the stores visibility.

Accessibility

The road network of Sweifia is a grid system. The pedestrianization of the Wakalat Street disconnected the grid. At these ends car parking lots are provided. They create congestion at the entrances of the street and affect the continuity with the surrounded commercial streets, in addition to their visual impact. Most of people who are targeting the area use cars. According to the retail owners, people do not have the culture of walking, and they prefer valet parking, or parking in front of shops. GAM promised them to provide free car parking that was not achieved. Provision of convenient parking is essential to the success of the street. Most of the surrounded parking lots are for rent, free parking lots are limited. According to Eng. Siham al Hadidi, in responding to the shop owners complains, GAM decided to open partially the street of 4m width (Hadidi, 2019). After reopening the street to cars, pedestrian traffic has reduced, families consider it unsafe place. As clarified by the shops owners the current situation of the area is neither a street nor a plaza. It is inconvenient to cars or pedestrians.



Figure 9. The circulation as per design in 2007
Source: GAM (2007)



Figure 10. A person use walkways to turn, 2019
Source: the author

Economic

There could be many reasons for the economic decline of the Wakalat Street; the pedestrianization strategy, the establishment of the new mall in front of it, the general bad economic conditions in Jordan last years. The pedestrian traffic is low, and during weekend it is the highest. Based on the field survey, the occupancy rate at the Wakalat Street is around 60% to 70%, and the office rent prices in the Wakalat Street is about 60JD/m². It is a competitive price in comparison with other locations in Amman, refer to Table 2. The economic conditions and investment policies in Jordan could have impact on the business development in Amman. As stated in news, in 2016, many international franchises have closed stores in Amman. They complained that taxes and operation costs are very high. The closed companies were employing around 2,000 people. The minister of the trade and industry has failed to convince them to stay in Jordan. The number of registered stores has decreased in the last two years (Alghad, 2016). Nael Kabariti, President of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, assures that investment and tax laws have many more negative impacts than benefits, a consultation with the private sectors had to be done, and laws shall be revised (Majid, 2014). International brands such as Mango, Gerry Weber, Pull & Bear and Gap moved out of the Wakalat Street. However, many brands still stand in Amman's market at other locations such as the city mall and the Abdali mall. Thus, better locations attracted these brands. Interviewing the shops owners show different views on the impact of pedestrianization on the business. For some retailers, no changes on their sale; the customers keep targeting the shop. For others, the people gathering outdoor is nuisance for shoppers, and this affect sale. With respect to the food and beverage shops, the foot traffic is low, and their businesses in other locations gain more profits.

According to many retail owners, shopping street requires a marketing strategy including defining a good tenant mix to keep attracting shoppers. As clarified in the literature review, two-ways roads system is the best strategy to the success of commercial streets. Success of pedestrian only street requires special configurations. Asaad Al Qwasmī, a member of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce, has been involved in all issues related to the conditions of the Wakalat Street. He assures that when the Wakalat Street was open to cars in two-ways roads, it was more successful. He proposes reopening the street, providing car parking, minimizing the walkways width, providing security controls, and lowering the rent prices (Qwasmī, 2019).

Table 2: Rent prices of offices in Amman's main centers

Area	Price (JD) / Sqm.
Shmeisani	65-80
The Abdali Project	130-150
Abdali District	80
Abdoun	130
Swafieh	70-90
Khalda	90-100
Zahran	70

Source: <http://www.century21jordan.com/offices-for-rent>

Social

The street has become uncomfortable and threatening environment. Currently, many visitors say they are afraid to enter the Wakalat Street at all, so as not to be attacked or bothered, because many teenagers and other loiterers abuse the street so that some immoral actions are practiced by these people. In addition, the atmosphere in Wakalat Street is not friendly for visitors, especially families, in which they walk, rest or communicate, because the street itself is not friendly designed. Another factor that makes the street unattractive is the lack of fashion brands and clothing houses that normally attract people so that more time is spent there.

The solutions for these problems should be considered in administrative and urban design directions. First of all, when it comes to people's fears, the Amman municipality has to intervene by security staff all day long preventing misbehaviour people from doing bad deeds to reach the optimal level of security that definitely calms people down and makes them feel good. Secondly, the Amman Municipality must definitely reconsider its policy, in terms of the typologies of shops in Awakalat Street. It would be more successful if the Amman Municipality to find a strategy dealing with the preferred tenant mix through management and guidance. Regarding the economic situation before it was closed for the cars in 2009, it turns out that it was more successful and living place than after the closure, and the reason is that the Alwakalat Street owned many clothing stores and fashion brands that are missing now. Those were responsible for the visitors spending more time walking along the street and viewing the stores in quiet. The municipality has to work at this point again by lowering the rental costs and improving the conditions so that many of the owners of clothing stores and fashion brands come back after being forced to move out due to high rental costs. Other shopping streets

and centres in the city were cheaper in terms of costs, so that for many owners in the Wakalat Street the conditions were not attractive enough and they had to move out. The other thing that should be seen as a major factor in developing the street and making it socially attractive as well by reviewing its urban and architectural design in order to become more prepared for visitors and families to spend more time and to reinforce the quality of the Wakalat Street as a public space. Some of the important issues in public spaces that raise the urban and architectural value such as lighting, circulation paths, green spaces and resting areas with their elements like seats, protective ceilings, garbage containers and smoking ashtrays are not studied or missing in the Wakalat Street.

Public lighting that is very important for example, in street furniture like bus stops, illuminated signs and for managing traffic, it makes the spaces in the city more attractive. In the case of the Wakalat Street it is completely the opposite. As the Figures 6 & 7 show, it is firstly uncomfortable that visitors are permanently exposed by LED cable light that turns on and off in different colours, that cannot reassure people, especially the old of them. In addition, the entire lighting system is mounted on a huge steel frame along the street, so that the visibility of the users is not always guaranteed. Concerning the movement system, it lacks clear circulation paths by using of special tiles in different colours for example and LED lighting to better illustrate the paths.

Vital and social friendly pedestrian public spaces have good quality of physical elements that make people welcome, comfortable and create strong sense of community. The ignoring of these elements in the Wakalat Street has a great impact on the discomfort of many users because there is no opportunity to sit comfortably and enjoy the activities of the street. The fact that these physical elements (fixed benches, waste and cigarettes containers) were taken out from the Wakalat Street, this also led to its devaluation as a public gathering place that attracts people socially. As clarified in News and assured by interviewing shop owners, the provision of the public seats had become nuisance for the shoppers and the property owners. That pushed GAM to take out the public seating. Then people started to sit on ground bringing with them shisha and playing cards. By reopening the street to cars, people park at the street and sit inside their cars. From this experience, provision of public seats in a mainly retail (clothes) street cause troubles where people sit and monitor patrons while shopping. Seating in cafes and restaurants is more appropriate at a retail street. Thus, the Wakalat Street is no longer that public space where low income people would find public seats and enjoy the plaza for free.



Figure 11. A photo for the Wakalat Street before removing public seats and benches. Source: by author

Conclusion

In the case of the Wakalat Street, there is a conflict between two themes; one is the creation of public spaces and the other is transformation of a shopping street into a pedestrian mall. The project aims were to create a place that is “inclusive welcoming people from different walks of life and various socio-economic strata of society. The experiences at the Wakalat Street development prove that public seats and social mixing cannot be achieved at a location where services and products are designated for a specific class of high level income. The project design objective aspired to celebrate the Wakalat Street character as a place of fashion and flowers. But the outcomes on reality show that the brands are moving out of the street. The social objectives of creating a place where women would do shopping, children would play and husbands would wait their wives in a public space have not been achieved. Decision making on which street could be a successful free car zone shall be taken with considering the type of functions and activities there. For mainly a retail street, public spaces are not appropriate. Sustainability is about balance between different aspects of life; physical, environmental, economic and social dimensions. The physical aspects of the urban design at the Wakalat Street were the main focus of the rehabilitation. While the project aimed at achieving social advantages, the project had bad social and economic impacts. Planning shall consider the economic impact on the existing business, its type and market. Analysis of economic, social and physical characteristics of the local context and culture is essential to determine the right strategy for placemaking.

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VIEWPOINT

Placemaking for Coexistence: Child and Community Friendly Space HOUCH YGAMAANA Project, New Damietta, Egypt

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Abstract

HOUCH YGAMA'NA¹ is a participatory 'design and build' project piloted in 2014 that aims to create age and gender inclusive child-friendly spaces that foster children's imagination and enhance their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. This paper focuses on the narrative of the project implemented in the Central Public Park of New Damietta, Egypt. The project entailed applying a set of urban and design practices centred around a socially engaging mobile installation all aiming to bring the users of the park from the Egyptian community and newly settled Syrian community together to collaborate in reshaping and developing their outdoor environment with the overarching aim of Integrating the local Syrian population in their host society and linking them to one of the active local associations in the area :Terre Des Hommes . The project is a manifestation of the socio-spatial dimension to placemaking where the produced public space is "both a product and producer of change"(Gottdiener M., Hutchison R., 2011); as the created space is not only a collaborative effort by the local community, but also a tool within the overall process to achieve the project's overarching goal.

Keywords: placemaking, social integration, co-design, socio-spatial, temporary installation

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¹ HOUCH YGAMA'NA: Figurative translates from Arabic as 'A schoolyard for all'.

1. Introduction

HOUCH YGAMA'NA is a participatory 'design and build' project that aims to create age and gender inclusive child-friendly spaces that foster their imagination and enhance their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and ties. The project was initiated and funded by the UN refugee agency in Egypt UNHCR Community Support Programs unit (CSP) and Terre Des Hommes Egypt and designed and implemented by Ecumene Studio in collaboration with a variety of governmental bodies, universities, architecture students and local civil associations. The project extended from 2014 till 2017 where it was implemented in a total of nine schools (hosting both Syrian and Egyptian students) in Gamasa, Alexandria, Borj El Arab and El Sheikh Zayed and one public park in New Damietta in Egypt. The latter implemented in 2014 will be the focus of this paper.

The New Damietta version of the project entailed a set of urban and design practices centred around a socially engaging installation all aiming to bring the users of the park from the Egyptian and newly settled Syrian Community together to define and participate in reshaping and developing their environment. Through the activities of the project and as a result of the implemented spaces, social bridges are created between the different stakeholders and in particular between the Syrian and Egyptian communities. In addition, The local Syrian community is introduced to one of the active international children rights associations in the area : Terre Des Hommes

2. Project's Context and Motivation: The "Where" & "Why":

New Damietta is located in the North of Damietta governorate and is bound by the Mediterranean Sea from the north, (see figure 1). According to the Ministry of New Urban Communities, the population of New Damietta is 135 thousand inhabitants from a total estimated population of 500 thousand. In addition, New Damietta hosts about 8% (10,923 refugees) of the total Syrian refugees in Egypt, according to UNHCR refugee report in 2014.

Hence, the motivation behind the project was to catalyse the integration and coexistence of this displaced population in their new environment. Furthermore, This version of the project was embedded within Terre Des Hommes's (TDH) program titled "Community Based Child Protection and Psychosocial Support for Displaced Syrian Children and their Families in Damietta". The project brief entailed the design and implementation of a temporary child-friendly outdoor space in a time frame of two months to be a physical component of TDH's outreach strategy for the newly settled Syrian community in New Damietta For the purpose of outreach, The Central Park in New Damietta - of approximate area 54 feddan² - was chosen as the location for the intervention. The Park is publicly and equitably accessible and hosts around 10,000 visitors on public holidays as reported by park administration and is the main gathering point for the residence on a daily basis.

² 1 feddan = 1.037 acres

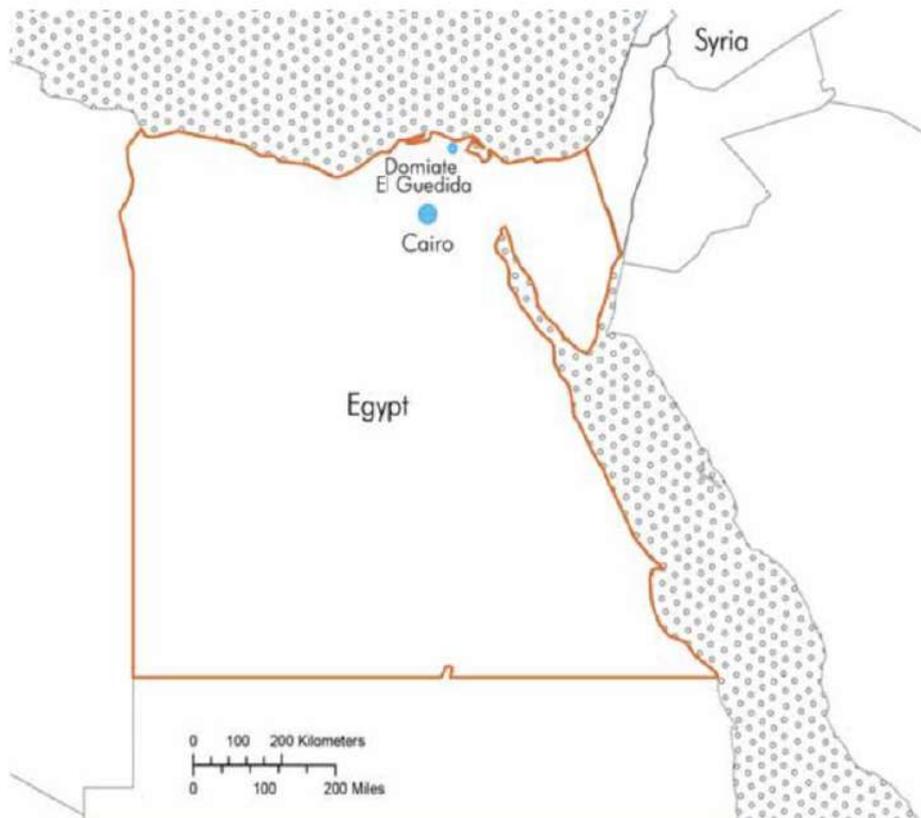


Figure 1. Geographic location of New Damietta city, by Author



Figure 2. Aerial view of New Damietta's Central Park, Google Maps edited by Author

3. Project Methodology: The “How”

An outreach strategy was developed, so the TDH team could connect with the Syrian community in the city. Brainstorming sessions and site visits were conducted at the beginning of the project to identify stakeholders more likely to be involved in the project and to update the project’s plan to determine any needed changes. Through this phase, it was possible to evaluate the needed input from different stakeholders, their interests and how they could contribute to the development of the project.

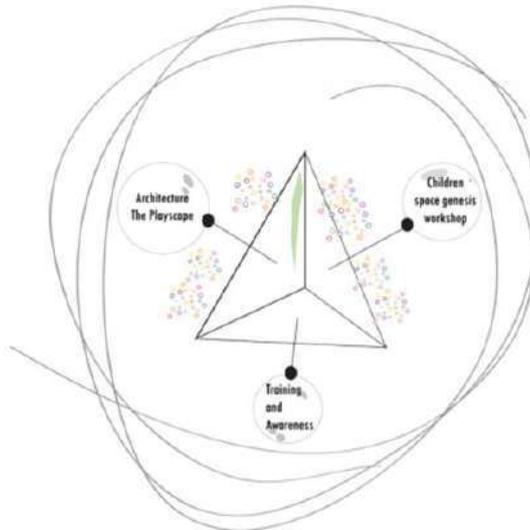


Figure 3. The main components of the project, by Author

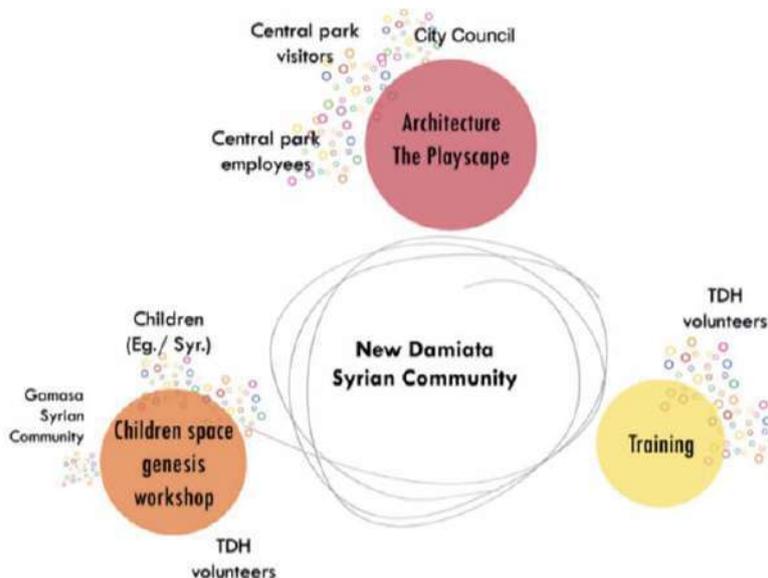


Figure 4. Repartitioning of identified stakeholders according to their interests and mapping their inputs within the project components, by Author

The participation and support from the local community and users such as children's guardians, families, TDH staff, city council, construction workers, and volunteers was the backbone of the project. This participatory approach manifested itself in a series of workshops that took place through the lifetime of the project:

1. An architecture design and landscape workshop: This workshop was held in participation with the design team, TDH personnel, local craftsmen, the park staff and the city administration. The aim of this workshop was to define the design brief, materials used and the proposed site and location for the project.(Figure 5) .



Figure 5. Extracts of the architecture design and landscape workshop, by Author

2. A training and awareness workshop: which took place with the TDH staff and local volunteers with the aim of training them to moderate the space geneses workshop with the children.(Figure 6)



Figure 6. Extracts of the training and awareness workshop, by Author

3. The children space genesis workshop :Including children in plan-ning and design is not a new trend to the field, espe-cially that the UN convention states that “children have the right to be involved in decisions which affect their lives including the empowering ex-perience of contributing to the design of their local environments”. In this three-day workshop the children experienced, experimented and re-appropriated the designed space to create a space of their own in the heart of their city. In additional to the physical and social outputs of

this workshop, TDH personnel had the opportunity to interact with the local Syrian community and became acquainted with the main challenges facing them which would act as a base for several future meetings between both parties (Figure 7).



Figure 7. The children space genesis workshop, photo credits: Manal Fakhouri

4. Project Approach and Design Concepts

Play may often be looked upon as an unimportant activity or an immature act, (Whitebread, 2012) while play is the only activity by which children can achieve mental, physical, emotional and social development. It is through play that children learn to” solve their own problems, control their own lives, develop their own interests, and become competent in pursuit of their own interests.”(Gray, 2010) . Furthermore, DeVries (2006) & Wilson (2009) classified the various types of play to :Physical play, Play with objects , Symbolic play, Pretense or socio-dramatic play , Games with rules and state that each type aids in the development of certain skills for children. This variety in types of play emphasizes that children should practice all the previous types of play in order to have a healthy childhood experience and be equipped with a set of skills needed for their future life.

*Playscape*³ - *Play + Landscape* - is the result of both tangible and intangible items. “Tangible” refers to physical elements, objects, frames and/or structures. Whereas “Intangible” refers to how these physical elements are used, changed, deconstructed and/or experimented (through learning, playing, movement, etc.). The symbiosis of these two spheres is: the space. Thus, the combination of both physical interventions and activities is essential to create a friendly, healthy and safe space for children, where the child is the only actor to eventually define it. With the aforementioned alterations in mind, the Houch Ygamaana installation was constructed taking the following design concepts within consideration:

a) *One space “suits” all*

The space was initially designed for children of age 6-12 who are the main participants in the project’s Workshop. Yet, the larger spectrum of ages handled by TDH (3- 18) and the context in which the installation exists, called for the design to integrate a larger variety of users: infants, children, youth, parents, the physically challenged and TDH personnel. In the light of the variety of users and the limited space, the single use of a design element was not an option. So, the anthropometric, form, materials, safety measures and distribution of the designed elements, had to serve several purposes. This was achieved through:

- Increasing the width of the seating elements allowing for a variety of ergonomics, positions and activities in addition to seating.
- Adding slopes and adequate space between the elements to act as sliding or jumping platforms.
- Positioning the seats in a setting that allows conversation, community gathering or outdoor learning.
- Placing a large sandbox by the seating area where toddlers can play under their parents’ supervision.
- Providing ramps rather than steps as entrances and exits to the installation, with dimensions that accommodate wheelchairs, skates and skateboards.
- designing platforms with varied heights to be challenging for certain ages and fair for others.
- Creating an enclosure that can act as an exhibition, education or a gathering space and also provides space for privacy.
- Adding building blocks, mobile elements and soft ground cover options as an extension of the space when needed for larger groups.

³ <https://www.definitions.net/definition/playscape>

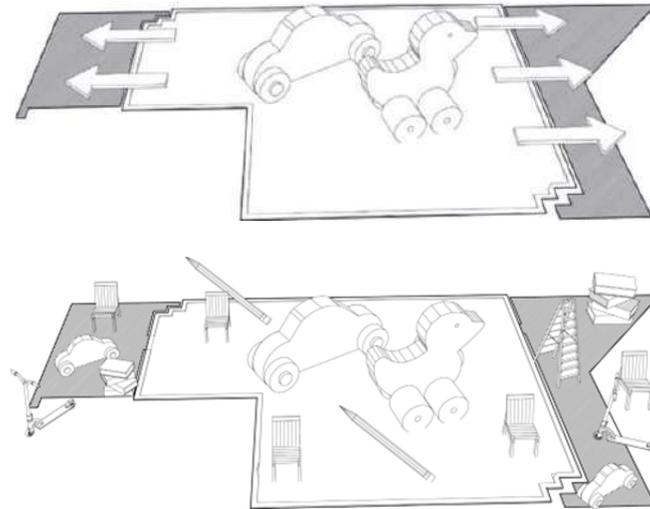


Figure 8.: Conventional approach to playscape (above)VS. The multi-use approach (below), by Author



Figure 9. General rendering of Houch Ygamaana installation, by Author

b) Ambiguity for Imagination

On the contrary to most play spaces in Damietta and Egypt as a whole, The design intentionally lured away from direct symbolization in an attempt not to limit the user's interpretation of the space. Thus, the design encourages the multiuse of the space depending on the will and imagination of the user. The effectiveness of this concept was revealed during the construction period. When the installation was set up, it instantly raised discussions amongst passers-by on its exact function and purpose, some of which perceived it as a stage, a temporary kiosk, a pergola...etc.

Turning the preceptors of the space from passive to active recipients, not only simulated their imagination but also lead to the emergence of several unplanned activities which in turn induced a sense of control and ownership.

c) A Mobile Structure for A Shifting Space

Due to the indecision by the local authorities on the final site of the installation and possible relocation in the future, the installation was designed to be modular - rather than site specific - and to facilitate dismantling and transportation. The installation was also designed to evolve according to the user's needs where mobility extended to the design and furnishing elements. Bishop (2000) gives two convincing reasons for "the loose pieces" design concept. The first "...change and novelty is able to stimulate interest and alertness and so children may be much more attentive". The second reason is that "...our senses are designed to monitor changing sensory input, not constant input".

Therefore, the following items were included in the design:

- A series of 18 mobile cubes that accommodate various uses and activities,
- 170 Interlocking rubber floor tiles to provide an alternative soft surface,
- A wood block play kit with repetitive modules and measures for children to create forms and enclosures while playing.
- Eleven colourful bean bags were also provided to allow freedom in the seating arrangement.

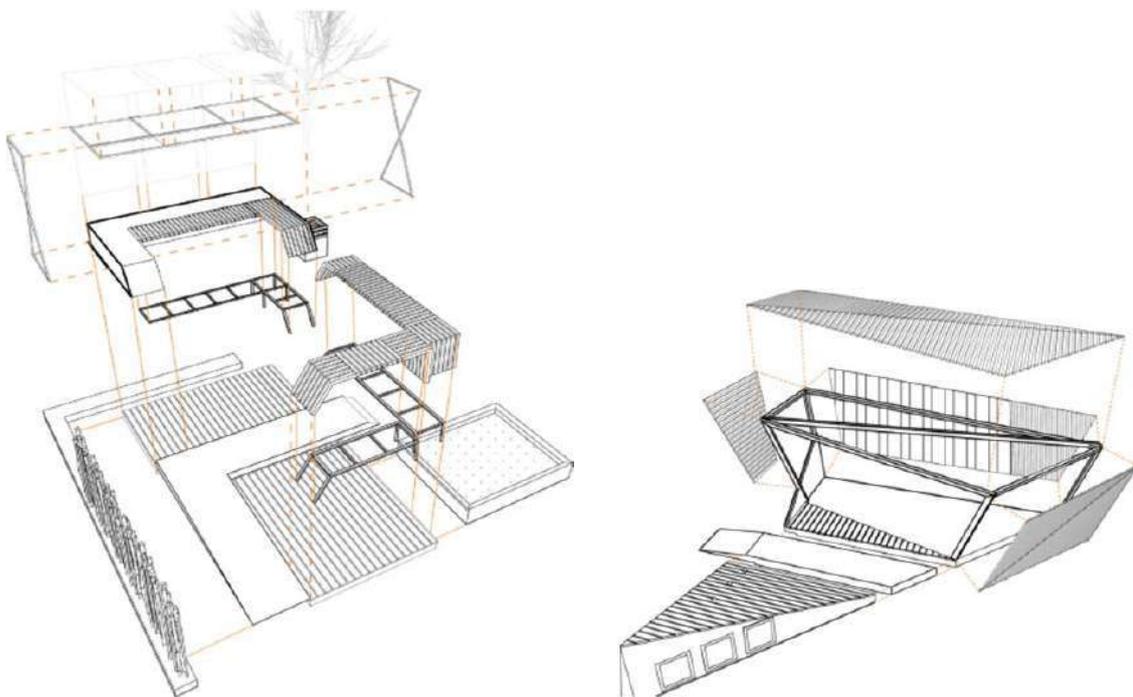


Fig. 10: The dismantling of the installation, by Author

5. Lessons Learned and Reflections

The project was a practical manifestation of the socio-spatial dimension to placemaking where the produced public space is “both a product and producer of change”(Gottdiener M., Hutchison R., 2011) as not only is the created space a collaborative effort by the local community but also a tool within the overall process to achieve the project’s overarching goal of TDH to reach vulnerable Syrian residents.

- An inclusive participatory process is vital for the success of projects within the public realm where having several local actors on board from the kickoff of the project aided in facing uncertainty and unexpected obstacles.
- Ambiguity of playscape induces the user’s imagination and allows him to form his personal idea about the physical intervention and by so acquire a sense of mental connection with the designed item.
- Flexibility of the design and leaving intentional design gaps to be filled by the users is a key for the physical sustainability of the project as through appropriating the space the user acquires a sense of ownership and bonding with the playscape element and by so decrease the risk of vandalism.









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